

FIVE  
SMOOTH  
STONES

Third Draft

By Ed Levy

*Five Smooth Stones – Third Draft*

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To my Four Sons,  
Joseph, Daniel, Matthew and Joshua.

To Your Children, Grandchildren,  
Great Grandchildren

and

Beyond.

May you all have the courage to walk with God

In this fallen world,

Facing and defeating the Goliaths of your day

as

David faced and defeated his.

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# PREFACE

I have read many books, heard many sermons, read articles online, and I have never been fully satisfied with most of the answers I have been given on the topics in the following pages of this book. That is probably why I wrote this book, if it is even a book. It is really more of a collection of ideas strung together to try to get you to think. To think about why you believe what you believe and don't believe what you don't believe. To get you to think deeply about what the real implications are if you really lived out what you believe. It is an attempt to get you to use reason and logic. As an illustration, it is popular in today's world for people to say things like "You have to be stupid to believe in God or to be a Christian".

But the truth is the other way around. It requires a great amount of thinking and reason to really believe in God and to be a Christian, especially today. To drift along with the culture believing the popular ideas of the day requires very little thought, very little reason, very little effort. And the popular cultural ideologies of our day actually collapse if you give them any serious thought. Materialistic Atheism for example doesn't stand up to reason, logic or rational thinking at all. It is a house of cards. So firstly I am writing this to provoke you to think for yourself, and to think deeply. To contemplate truth, the meaning of life, God and whether or not He exists, etc. Big ideas, big thoughts, things worth thinking about.

But the information in these pages is also a sword, or rather five smooth stones. It is my intent to destroy the five false ideas that this book addresses. These false ideas have wreaked havoc in the lives of a lot of people. They have led to the decline of our world in many ways. They have led to great evils and the death of over one hundred million people. They have caused many followers of Christ to be less of a follower, hiding their faith out of fear of having to deal with the proponents of these false ideas. And most importantly, these five false ideas have shipwrecked the faith of many people. It is time for this to end. And so I offer this up to you, to set your mind free from the tyranny of these five Goliaths. To deliver you from the mockery of these giants.

I selected the story of David and Goliath for this book because that is how the idea came to me. I was with a group of guys and we had just watched a video

that referenced the story, and I felt that God was saying that there was more than just the historical story of David killing Goliath here, more than the analogy of the underdog taking out the big powerhouse. I felt that God was saying that there are still giants among us. And they are terrorizing the people of God - His people - just like Goliath was terrorizing the Israelites in the Bible story. These are not giant people, but rather they are giant ideas that have gotten so big that people cannot deal with them anymore. People are scared to even face them, just as the Israelites were scared to face Goliath. This book meets them head on and takes them down, one by one, by simply slinging a stone at them. That is the intent, to set people's minds free from these tyrannical ideas so we can get on with life. It is to deliver us from the evil of these ideas and where they ultimately lead us as individuals and as a society.

Another thing worth mentioning in the introduction is that this book does not go into great detail or even begin to address every single issue that each of these five subjects raise. Rather, I have tried to focus on one or two big ideas that in my mind absolutely devastate these false statements. If you need more information on any of the five ideas, there are dozens of really good books on each of these which more fully address all of the objections in great detail. At the end of this book there is a list of books that you might be interested in. You can also go online and find hundreds of resources and more information on any of these topics, on both sides of the issue.

Throughout the body of this book I quote the Bible, sometimes exactly, sometimes loosely. In most instances, rather than providing the chapter and verse in the text of the book, I plan to include a list at the end of the book where these quotes can be found in the Bible in case you are interested in looking them up yourself. I did this to keep the body of the text from getting filled with references so it reads better. I hope you are okay with this.

This book is written with the assumption that if there is a reference to something in the text that you do not understand you will go to the internet and do a search and learn about it on your own. There are a lot of Christian terms and phrases in this book, because I am writing from the perspective of a born again Christian. Often I make reference to ideas, events, concepts, teachings, stories, etc. and I do not go into detail or expound on it but just refer to it and move on. I have done this to keep the book short, so if you read something and wonder "What is he talking about?" please do an internet search on it so you know what I am referring to. There will also be end notes eventually for a lot of these where I

go into a bit more detail, so you may check the end notes as well once I add them to the book.

I need to give credit to those whose teaching and ideas led to the ideas in this book. I acknowledge that every idea in this book probably came from someone else originally. So I need to give credit to Tim Keller, John Ortberg, Bill Hybels and Ravi Zacharias – these are the men whose ideas I have been studying most recently and they have been very influential in my thinking over the last six years. Before them it was AW Tozer, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, CS Lewis, Dallas Willard, Robert Lewis, John Eldredge and several others. Many of my ideas came from the work that God has done in my life through their teaching. You will see their ideas in the words of these pages. I owe these guys big time. I have learned so much from them, and thank God for them and the work He has done in my life through them. I could not have written any of this without spending the last 30 years learning from these men through their teaching and writings.

I also want to thank the many people who read the first drafts of this book and gave me feedback: Mary, Joseph, Jerry, Mark, John and Pam to name a few. I could not have done it without your input and help. Thank you.

Finally, I really owe God big time. I was a wild and crazy party animal and He snatched me from the fire and set me on a path to eternity with Him. My life has never been the same. There have been a lot of ups and downs. It has been one amazing thing after another, even during the bad times. I have studied, memorized and meditated on His word (the Bible) like my life depended on it for over 30 years now. And I can tell you it has been one of the very best things I have ever done. God changed me. His word changed me. After I met Him I was never the same. He set me free. I hope that you can experience Him like I have. Perhaps this book will be a beginning for you, a starting point in your walk with God. May it be so.

Ed Levy

# INTRODUCTION

“The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.””

*Psalm 14:1*

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart  
And do not lean on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge Him  
And He will make your paths straight.”

*Proverbs 3:5-6*

These two verses highlight two ways of living. Two views of the world. Two mindsets. One way is the way of unbelief. It is a life that says “there is no God”. The other is a life characterized by belief in God, trusting God, even if it goes against our understanding of a situation. The second is a life that acknowledges that there is a God. Two ways: Belief vs. Unbelief, Wisdom vs. Foolishness, trusting God or trusting in ourselves and our own understanding. Each of us must choose which of these two worldviews we will embrace and live by.

This book assumes that there are certain truths that are self-evident, and that there are certain false ideas aimed at suppressing and destroying these self-evident truths. In writing this book my hope is to set the reader free from the tyranny of these five false ideas so that they can be free to fully believe and embrace the truth, living a more wonderful, joyous and profound life in truth’s light.

This is not a book for die-hard supporters of the false ideas this book addresses. I have found that those who are fully given over to and heavily invested in these false ideas do not really want the truth, and that no matter what arguments are made to answer the objections raised by the false ideas they can find some obscure loophole, word game, or other way to get around the truth and cling to the false idea. The objection to Pascal’s wager is a good illustration of this phenomenon. I have also found that even if I spend years with a Carl Sagan junior or a Richard Dawkins wanna-be, answering all of their objections to their satisfaction one by one, on the day that we address the last objection still

standing in their mind and it falls, they usually turn to me and say “I still do not/cannot believe in God.” And they often cannot tell me why. It is not their objections keeping them from God, it is something else. The objections appear to have been a smoke screen, and the real issue is somewhere else. There is something beneath the objections that is keeping them from God. The objection is just a symptom of the real problem. The issue beneath the issue is what this book is about. But what of the die-hard Atheist or Darwinist? Many have asked me how to respond to someone like this.

My answer is there generally is no response we can give to the die-hard Darwinist or Atheist that will change their mind on God. The Bible is clear that anyone who says there is no God is a fool, and it goes on to say that we are to avoid arguing with a fool and to not answer a fool according to his folly lest he be “wise in his own eyes”. Jesus goes on to say that it would be better for this person if they had not been born or if a heavy millstone were hung around their neck and they were cast into the sea, as they are a stumbling block to faith for others. Harsh stuff indeed. But God can cut through even the toughest armor, and has done so many times. For example, C.S. Lewis, Ravi Zacharias and many others started out as die-hard Atheists, so there is hope.

Typically, a person who is heavily invested in one of these false ideas needs a Damascus road experience of some kind to come to faith in God. And that is usually something only God can do. The die-hard supporter of Atheism or Darwinism has an issue with God Himself, and there is usually nothing we can do but point them to God, pray for them, and warn them of the judgment they will face one day when God judges the world. We must remind them of the eternity that they will spend in hell, whether they believe it or not. My heart goes out to you if this describes your situation, and I wish there was some way I could set you free from the tyranny of false ideas that rule your mind. Ravi Zacharias’ book “The End of Reason” might be of interest to you, or Tim Keller’s “Reason for God”. But for now, just know that if you do not believe in God, you are headed for a Christ-less eternity in hell, and eternity is a very, very, very long time.

The majority of us do not base our lives on these false ideas but rather we are bullied around by them, waiting to be delivered from their tyranny. We want to be free from the tyranny of these false ideas. Perhaps you believe in God but struggle with a good answer for one or more of these false ideas. Or perhaps you want to believe in God but just need to be set free from this tyranny in order to take the step of faith that you want to take. Maybe you are an earnest seeker looking for answers to life’s tough questions, looking for meaning and purpose in

life. Or maybe you are like I was and you have never really given God much thought, but you have an open mind, are interested in truth and in knowing things for yourself and thinking for yourself and not just blindly believing what you have been taught. If any of these describes you, or your situation is similar in some way to this, then this book is written for you.

# FIVE SMOOTH STONES

## Chapter 17 of 1 Samuel New American Standard Bible

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. <sup>2</sup> Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array to encounter the Philistines. <sup>3</sup> The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them. <sup>4</sup> Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. <sup>5</sup> *He had* a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze. <sup>6</sup> *He also had* bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin *slung* between his shoulders. <sup>7</sup> The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron; his shield-carrier also walked before him. <sup>8</sup> He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. <sup>9</sup> If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us." <sup>10</sup> Again the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together." <sup>11</sup> When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

<sup>12</sup> Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced *in years* among men. <sup>13</sup> The three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and the second to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. <sup>14</sup> David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul, <sup>15</sup> but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem. <sup>16</sup> The Philistine came forward morning and evening for forty days and took his stand.

<sup>17</sup> Then Jesse said to David his son, “Take now for your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves and run to the camp to your brothers. <sup>18</sup> Bring also these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of *their* thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers, and bring back news of them. <sup>19</sup> For Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.”

<sup>20</sup> So David arose early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper and took *the supplies* and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the circle of the camp while the army was going out in battle array shouting the war cry. <sup>21</sup> Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle array, army against army. <sup>22</sup> Then David left his baggage in the care of the baggage keeper, and ran to the battle line and entered in order to greet his brothers. <sup>23</sup> As he was talking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard *them*.

<sup>24</sup> When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid. <sup>25</sup> The men of Israel said, “Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father’s house free in Israel.”

<sup>26</sup> Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?” <sup>27</sup> The people answered him in accord with this word, saying, “Thus it will be done for the man who kills him.”

<sup>28</sup> Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab’s anger burned against David and he said, “Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle.” <sup>29</sup> But David said, “What have I done now? Was it not just a question?” <sup>30</sup> Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing; and the people answered the same thing as before.

<sup>31</sup> When the words which David spoke were heard, they told *them* to Saul, and he sent for him. <sup>32</sup> David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” <sup>33</sup> Then Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are *but* a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth.” <sup>34</sup> But David said to Saul, “Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued *it* from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized *him* by his beard and struck him and killed him. <sup>36</sup> Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.” <sup>37</sup> And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you.” <sup>38</sup> Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor. <sup>39</sup> David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested *them*. So David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested *them*.” And David took them off. <sup>40</sup> He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd’s bag which he had, even in *his* pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.

<sup>41</sup> Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. <sup>42</sup> When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. <sup>43</sup> The Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. <sup>44</sup> The Philistine also said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field.” <sup>45</sup> Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. <sup>46</sup> This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, <sup>47</sup> and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD’S and He will give you into our hands.”

<sup>48</sup> Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. <sup>49</sup> And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung *it*, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground.

<sup>50</sup> Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David’s hand. <sup>51</sup> Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. <sup>52</sup> The men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the slain Philistines lay along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron. <sup>53</sup> The sons of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines and plundered their camps. <sup>54</sup> Then David took the Philistine’s head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent.

<sup>55</sup> Now when Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, “Abner, whose son is this young man?” And Abner said, “By your life, O king, I do not know.” <sup>56</sup> The king said, “You inquire whose son the youth is.” <sup>57</sup> So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine’s head in his hand. <sup>58</sup> Saul said to him, “Whose son are you, young man?” And David answered, “*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.”

### *1 Samuel 17*

## GIANTS? REALLY?

Today, in our modern world, there are still giants. They are not physical giants like David's Goliath, but they are just as real in their impact on us. Taunting the people of God, the Goliaths of today stand in the distance and mock God, mock the people of God. "Who will come against me?" they say. And usually the people of God are filled with fear. Some shrink back. They get quiet and settle back into the background of life, trying to avoid being noticed. Others ignore the giants, hoping they will go away, avoiding them altogether. Still others charge out and attempt to fight Goliath on his terms, only to be defeated and made to look foolish and weak, a mockery, just as anyone who went out and fought David's Goliath on his terms would have been massacred. But David didn't fight Goliath on his terms.

He tried on Saul's armor and concluded, "This isn't going to work," and he took Saul's armor off. Then he selected five smooth stones and went out to face the giant. And it worked! He took Goliath down, and Israel went on to be free from the oppression of the Philistines. This book is intended to sling some stones and slay a few of the Goliaths of our day in order to liberate those who are being oppressed by these giants. It's goal is to set our minds free from slavery to and the oppression of the Philistine Goliaths of our day.

So what am I talking about when I refer to the giants of our day? I am referring to ideas. False ideas. Misconceptions and lies. They are untruths meant to undermine and destroy faith, destroy belief in God, and mock anyone who does believe in God. They are meant to undermine our humanity and reduce us

to animals and barbarians. They enslave our minds just as the Philistines physically enslaved the Israelites. They are meant to scare us into not being who God created us to be, not living the way God intends for us to live, not believing what God says about life, death, eternity, heaven, hell, the meaning of life and so on. These giants are there to terrorize us into not following God. They rob us of hope. As David said, so we can also say, "Who are these uncircumcised Philistines that mock God, mock the people of God, mock His word?"

While these Goliaths are armor plated and well prepared for a conventional attack, the good news is that like Goliath, they can all be toppled with slingshot and a smooth stone. And once they go down, we will be free from their tyranny. Free to live lives of faith. Free to give glory to God openly and without shame or embarrassment. Free to live as God intended.

The five Goliaths that this book throws stones at are:

- Evolution.
- There Are Many Ways To God.
- Christians Are My Problem, Not Christianity.
- What About People That Have Never Heard The Gospel?
- How Can God Exist When There Is So Much Evil In The World?

Five smooth stones for five Goliaths. There are many books written on each of these subjects that go into great detail, and I have listed some at the end of this book. You can also go online and do a search and find hundreds of books, websites, articles, magazines, etc. that will go into great depth if you need more information on either side of any of these false ideas. In this book, I am just throwing rocks. I am hoping to cut through all of the minutia and endless arguments and go after the most basic foundational issue that I believe lies beneath each of these five Goliaths. Once the foundation is gone, they each collapse from their own weight and you are free from their tyranny in your life. I hope that you will experience the freedom that the truth in these areas can bring to your life. And if not, well, that is your choice.

# 1

## EVOLUTION

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

*Genesis 1:1*

“Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

*Genesis 2:7*

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,<sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.<sup>21</sup> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.<sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools,<sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

*Romans 1:18-22*

My oldest son and I were sitting on the river a few months ago, smoking cigars and discussing God and evolution. In college he majored in biochemistry, and shared with me that in one of his college textbooks there was a sentence that said, “Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved.” (Francis Crick, co-discoverer of the DNA double-helix). Now why on earth would we need to remind ourselves of this? Because the evidence of the created world and the fossil record points to God, not to evolution. Belief in Darwinian evolution is a choice, not a logical conclusion based on the observable scientific data. This is the stone that will bring down this Goliath.

We have a lot of animals at our house, and one of the animals we have is a gray tabby cat. It is our third gray tabby. It's name is Kugli (pronounced like coolie). If you look at the fur patterns in Kugli's fur, then look very closely at some of the individual hairs and see that each hair has multiple colors within it as well, you know there is a God that designed it. It is just too amazing to have done it all on its own.

Look at an eye sometime. Look really closely into someone's eyes. Look at the detail and the design. Look at a drawing that illustrates how the eye works. Think about the eye and how it

**The evidence of the created world and the fossil record points to God, not to evolution.**

works, and try to imagine that it formed all by itself with no design, no creator, no God. Then go look at something beautiful like a sunset or your wife or a marvelous work of art. Go from a light room to a dark room and see how your eye can adjust to the light. Or go to a crowded place with a friend and have your friend stand in the crowd somewhere and see how quickly your eyes and mind are able to pick that person out of the crowd. Or dig through a box of legos looking for a specific piece – in no time you have found it. It is amazing. The eye did not happen on its own, it was designed and created by God.

I often commute to and from work on my bicycle, and much of the ride is along a river through a park that is filled with trees. Almost daily I am overwhelmed at the beauty of the trees along my ride - the order of their branching structure, the delicacy of their leaves, the changing colors throughout the year. They look like they are reaching out and grabbing the air the way they grow and branch out. I think about the photosynthesis going on inside them, creating energy from the sun. It is amazing. This didn't happen by accident. God created it.

In this same river we have ducks, seagulls, eagles and pelicans that migrate south for the winter every year. How do they know to do this? How do they find their way back every year? When the pelicans land and take off, they do this amazing circle thing where they form a line 100 or so pelicans long and fly in a circle until they have gotten low enough to land or high enough to fly away. It is one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen. These big long-beaked birds flying in a long line, ripples running through the line as they move up and down, left to right. Birds didn't just magically develop flight all on their own. Feathers didn't invent themselves. God did it. He created them.

I could go on, but I think you get the point. Darwinian evolution was not developed as a way to explain the origin of species. It was developed as a way to explain the origin of species without God. That is why Thomas Huxley was such a strong proponent of Darwin's work. As a matter of fact, I am not sure we would even know who Darwin was if it were not for Huxley and other men like him who were looking for a way to explain the world without God.

But science is about God. It is learning about Him by studying His creation. When as children we marvel at an animal or an insect or stare into the night sky and ponder the size of the universe, we automatically think of God. We have to be taught and trained not to attribute the creation to a creator. We have to "suppress the truth" as the Romans verse above states. We have to "constantly remind ourselves" that God didn't do it as Crick says. And in so doing we become fools. I was reminded of this when I was watching Ben Stein's movie "Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed". The pro evolution scientists in the movie seemed quite foolish – especially Dawkins. Maybe it was just the way the movie was edited, maybe not. So what is some of the evidence that points to a creator rather than to Darwinian evolution as being the explanation for life on our planet?

The fossil record actually points to a creator more than it points to Darwinian evolution as an explanation. For example, I remember when we finally realized that there were no intermediate transitional life forms in the fossil record. If the theory of evolution is correct, then there should be many fossils of intermediate stages of life forms as they transition from a mud puddle to a monkey to a man for example. But these needed intermediate transitional animals are simply not in the fossil record. "The absence of fossil evidence for intermediary stages between major transitions in organic design, indeed our inability, even in our imagination, to construct functional intermediates in many cases, has been a persistent and nagging problem for gradualistic accounts of evolution." (Steven Jay Gould, Evolutionary Paleontologist) The transitional stages are simply not there for any of the animals. Most of the animals just appear in the fossil record, fully formed and fully functioning as they do today, with no intermediate stages leading up to them at all.

**The fossil record actually points to a creator more than it points to Darwinian evolution as an explanation.**

Even more problematic to Darwinian evolution is the gap in the fossil record between single cell organisms and functioning animals. It is enormous with no transitional stages. It is estimated that there are 8.7 million species of plants and

**The fossil record indicates that the primary mammal orders burst onto the scene fully formed rather than the long gradual metamorphosis described by Darwinian evolution.**

animals in the world today. And it appears that they burst onto the scene rather than the long gradual metamorphosis necessary for Darwinian evolution. There should be a lot of fossils of intermediary plants and animals in the fossil record. But there

are none. Not even one that can without a doubt be labeled a transitional species. They could just as easily be a separate animal that has since gone extinct. A short-lived new theory was developed called punctuated equilibrium to explain the missing fossils. It stated that changes occurred rapidly rather than over long periods of time. It was short-lived though, possibly because it pointed to a creator making changes to His design, which would likely lead to a belief in God in the minds of many people. And we can't have that.

As we learn more about plants and animals and how they work on a cellular and molecular level, Darwinian evolution is running into even more problems. Scientists such as microbiologists are discovering things on the cellular and molecular level that point to design. Things that appear to be intentional - so intentional that they look like someone designed it to function that way. A creator or designer is the best explanation for it. For example, the molecular engine that creates ATP in the cells in our body. This amazing nano-engine that cranks out ATP is more complex than the engine in your washer or dryer. And there are tens of thousands of them in your body right now, busy cranking out ATP so you have energy to live.

On a larger scale we are realizing that certain parts of living organisms are irreducibly complex. That is, they cannot be formed gradually over time. They either have all their parts and work, or they don't exist. For example, how would an eye create itself over millions of years? Why would it develop a cornea or a lens or a retina when it didn't have the rest of the eye there for those things to make sense and function?

Then there is the evidence of DNA and mutations. The entire theory of Darwinian evolution depends on random accidental mutations in DNA resulting in positive changes occurring to an organism. And this wouldn't have to happen just once, but millions of times.

**To date there has never been a random DNA mutation that resulted in a positive change to an organism, much less one that led to a new and improved organism.**

Maybe billions of times if you consider all of the organisms on the planet and the number of changes they would each have to undergo to change from a mud puddle to a giraffe, an elephant, a bee, a person, a rhinoceros, a T-rex, a tree, a cardinal, etc. Millions, maybe billions of DNA mutations. And how many times have we ever observed a DNA mutation resulting in a positive change? Zero. To

The second law of thermodynamics states that all systems go from order to chaos, not the other way around, chaos to order, as evolution teaches.

date there has never been a random DNA mutation that resulted in a positive change to the organism, much less a random mutation that led to a new and improved species of organism. Random DNA mutations are always negative, and often result in the death of the animal or in a life-long negative health condition.

Other evidence that there is a creator rather than life “evolving” randomly over millions of years all on its own include the second law of thermodynamics which states that all systems go from order to chaos, not the other way around as evolution teaches (chaos to order). Evolution relies on atoms and molecules organizing themselves into highly complex structures and systems, and doing it over and over again for hundreds of millions of years. This is counter to the observable universe. Everywhere we look we observe systems going from order to disorder. Even in an abstract way of seeing this phenomenon at work, my room gets messier – it does not randomly clean itself and get more organized over time. It seems that even things like this are affected by the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics. It takes outside intervention on my part to keep my room organized, just as it took outside intervention to create life on our planet.

**In addition to the impossible odds against evolution occurring as described, it also requires that it beat impossible odds over and over again for hundreds of millions of years to explain life transitioning from a mud puddle to the finished plants and animals on our planet today and in the fossil record.**

The mathematical calculations of the probability of life emerging and developing on its own also disprove Darwinian evolution as a viable explanation for the origin of life and the diversity of species on our planet. The chance of life evolving as described by Darwinist evolution is basically beyond the realm of possibility mathematically. The number that represents the odds of life developing on our planet as described by Darwinian evolution is so big that it

**The chance of life evolving as described by Darwinian evolution is beyond the realm of mathematical possibility.**

is incomprehensible. Fred Hoyle (astronomer and mathematician) calculated that the odds of a single celled self-replicating organism springing from the primordial ooze are 1 in 10 to the 40,000 power. When the odds of something occurring exceeds 1 in 10 to the 50<sup>th</sup> power it is no longer considered mathematically possible. Hoyle stated

that it is more likely that a tornado would assemble a working jumbo jet from a junkyard.

But just for the sake of argument, let's say that planet earth experienced a mathematical miracle and we beat the odds. Now what? Well, we have to beat the odds again. And again. And again. And again. We have to beat the odds hundreds of millions of times. Maybe billions of times. Over and over, like rolling 4 sixes with the dice 100 times in a row in a million different games, maybe in a billion different games. It is just not possible, not probable. It would never happen without outside intervention.

There are many more problems with evolution, such as the stability of life forms, the limits of variation, the elasticity of species, our cluelessness regarding the origin of life, etc. Darwinian evolution is a theory full of holes. It is more like a sieve

than a bowl. You could drain pasta in it. It simply does not explain the dataset on planet earth well at all. In many cases the observable data contradicts the theory of evolution, such as the fact that random DNA mutations result in problems or death, not better organisms. Many of the laws of science contradict the theory of evolution, such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics. Even the fossil record contradicts the theory of evolution, showing a bunch of different animals with no

**“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”**

*Jeremiah 2:13*

**To believe in the current theory of Darwinian evolution is an act of faith, not a rational conclusion based on evidence. It is a choice that requires us to suppress the truth we see in the observable world.**

intermediate steps – it appears to be more of a record of extinction rather than a record of evolution. Darwinian evolution does not explain life and the origin of species in our world very well at all.

But there is a theory that does explain life and the origin of species on

our planet extremely well. It is the theory that God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in it. Whether He did it in 7 days or 4 billion years, that is something for science to figure out. But there is no question that God was behind

**The theory of evolution as taught today is not science, but a worldview. It is a belief system created to explain the origin of life on earth without God and has nothing to do with correctly interpreting the data.**

it. God created life on our planet. There is no other current explanation that holds water. It explains everything we see, it solves problems like how did life overcome the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics. It explains how DNA could be manipulated positively rather than the negative mutations we see when it does it randomly. To deny that God created life on earth is to choose to believe in Darwinian evolution in spite of the facts, not because of them.

Belief in evolution is a choice. It is a choice to suppress the truth that there is a God who created life in all of its splendor and grandeur. The evidence points to God, to a creator. The fossil record points to God, to a creator. All of the plants

**The evidence of biology, the fossil record and the stability of living organisms all point to the fact that life on our planet was designed and created by God.**

and animals around us point to God, to a creator. Microbiology points to God. Physics points to God. All of science points to God in one way or another. It is our choice – we either believe the evidence and conclude that life on our planet was created by a creator, or we choose to believe that

life on our planet is the result of random chance as taught by Darwinian evolution, in spite of the evidence to the contrary. With so much evidence against the theory of evolution, why would anyone, especially a scientist, choose to believe in it? This brings us to our next Goliath.

# 2

## THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GOD

“No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.”

*John 1:18*

“I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me”

*John 14:6*

It is very popular to say, “There are many ways to God”, and we hear it often when discussing God in conversation. Sometimes we say this to sound superior to others, like we know better, like perhaps we have special inside knowledge and have risen above the ‘common people’ who believe their way is the correct way. We know better than to think there is only one way. And I suspect that some people really do sincerely believe that there are many ways to God. But the truth of the matter is, there are no ways to God, there is only the man Christ Jesus. He **IS** the way, the only way to God. God sent Him to us to explain this to us. You ask how do I know this? Because Jesus said it, and I believe Him.

**The truth of the matter is, there are no ways to God, there is only the man Christ Jesus. He is the way, the only way to God. The way to God is a man, not a path.**

What stone do I throw at this Goliath? I throw the Rock Himself at this Goliath, the chief cornerstone which the builders rejected, Jesus, and the main thing He came to end, Religion – specifically man-made Religion.

At this point we may be asking the question, “But isn’t Christianity a man-made religion?” It is not. Paul wrote in Galatians, “For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a

revelation of Jesus Christ.” Christianity is made by Jesus, who is God. It is God-made religion, if it can even be said to be religion at all, and is the only one. It is totally unique in this respect. There is no wise sage who discovered a secret path to God in Christianity, only Jesus. Man-made religion includes every religion except biblical Christianity in my opinion. It even includes man-made versions of Christianity unfortunately. This will come up in a later chapter. If you need more information on this and are struggling with the idea that all religions are man-made except biblical Christianity, perhaps further study is needed beyond what is in this book. So when I use the word “Religion”, I am referring to man-made religion, as opposed to biblical Christianity, which was made by God.

All man-made religions, without exception, teach a way to reach God, heaven, bliss, a meaningful life, nirvana, cosmic consciousness, happiness, paradise, an end to existence, whatever their “thing” is. Each religion has their version of what “it” is and their way to get there. The ways that all religions teach are always based on our effort, something we do and/or don’t do usually. Do this, don’t do that, read this, go here, practice this, follow this path, on and on, and you will get there, wherever or whatever “there” is for the particular religion.

Only Jesus came and said, “Don’t do anything, I will do it for you. Do you believe this?” He goes on to say,

**The message of Jesus that, “He has done it for us. Do you believe me?” is too hard for us to accept? What is wrong with us? Why can’t we accept His invitation to believe? One word – Religion.**

“If you believe Me you will become a new person and will know God and be with Him in eternity. I did this for you. Believe me and I will make it so in your life.” That’s it. So what is our deal? I mean, if Jesus had said go climb the highest mountain, rescue a princess, slay the evil emperor and cross the narrow stone bridge over the burning lava lake – we would be all over that. But, “I have done it for you. Do you believe me?” is too hard for us to accept? What is wrong with us? One word - Religion.

Religion divides us. It says I am better than you, my way is better than your way, my truth is better than your truth, my beliefs are better than your beliefs, and so on. Religion focuses on me – on my accomplishments, my doctrines, my path, my enlightenment, my holiness, my “rightness”, my beliefs, etc. “I, I, me, me, mine” as the Beatles put it. In religion we get wrapped up in ourselves, not God. We don’t even need God in religion really. He is optional. God looked down and saw that we just were not getting it, so He sent us His Son to explain Himself

to us, and to deliver us from man-made Religion, and to enable us to connect with God without needing a religion, with all of its do's and don't's, etc.

Jesus explained God to us, and the explanation was this – God loves people and loves the world but hates religion. God is a God of relationships, not religion. And to take religion out of the equation, He did it all for us so we can focus on our relationship with Him and our relationship with others. Basically God said, “Getting to Me is about Me, not about you, not about your effort.” He said, “I will do it for you, because you can't do it yourself, because you and I are just too far apart, you won't make it.” He continued by saying, “All your religious effort is a waste. And not only that, it actually pushes you farther away from Me.” And while Jesus was here explaining God to us, telling us this, He absolutely slammed religious effort to reach God. For example, just look at the way He spoke to the Scribes and Pharisees (the people who were very religious in Jesus day). Interacting with them one day, Jesus said:

**God is a God of relationships, not religion. He took religion out of the equation by doing the work for us so we can focus on our relationship with Him and the people around us.**

<sup>42</sup> “But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every *kind of* garden herb, and *yet* disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. <sup>43</sup> Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places. <sup>44</sup> Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over *them* are unaware *of it*.”

<sup>45</sup> One of the lawyers \*said to Him in reply, “Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too.” <sup>46</sup> But He said, “Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.”

*Luke 11:42-46*

Jesus was harder on the religious types than he was on anyone else when He was here. Why? Because when we are religious, we are working our way to God. Essentially if we practice some religion to get to God, then ultimately God owes

**Jesus was harder on the religious people of His day than He was on anyone else.**

us, we earned it. We are in control. We are our own savior. We work our way to God. We earn it. One of the main problems with being this way (religious) is either we are a nightmare to be around (self-righteous) or we are forever

depressed because we can't measure up. Either way, we don't get to God and we are miserable in the process.

The only other option to being religious is just to walk away from it all and live like an animal (I have been there, done that). Looking around we can see how well that is working for people - Not! The only benefit to going the way of the animal is from that vantage point at least we know we need help – and everyone agrees - we need God or something to deliver us from our party animal ways when we go down this road. Read the story of the prodigal son in the Bible for example. At least the wayward prodigal son figured it out at the end and returned to the father in the story. The self-righteous older brother (the religious one) never got it and wouldn't even go in to the party at the end of the story.

But Jesus came and provided a better way to live than any of these options. He came to explain God's intent for us. Jesus said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life." He said, "I am the Door," "I am the good Shepherd," "Believe in Me and you will live even if you die." He told us that God loves us and wants to have a personal relationship with us so much that He is going to do everything necessary to "make it so" as Jean Luc Picard would say. "Do you believe me?" He asks. And people say no to this? My God what is wrong with us? What on earth is going on here? One word - Religion.

If we are saying no to Jesus, it is because we are religious. It is that simple. But you say "wait a minute, I'm an atheist, I'm an agnostic, I don't go to church, I believe in Evolution, I'm not a Buddhist or a Muslim or a Hindu or any other religion, I'm a wild and an intellectual, I'm a Dawkins, I'm a whatever can you call me religious?" excuse we have for not crazy party animal, I'm scientist, I follow Richard (fill in the blank) – how The truth is, whatever believing Jesus' words, that has become our religion. We just don't know it yet. It is our way to manage and be in control of our life, manage our happiness, it is what we live for, it is what we are looking to for meaning and purpose, and ultimately it will fail us. If we do not believe in Jesus, we will someday realize we have been living like an animal, a religious failure, a self-righteous person, or some combination of these three. That's it, there are no other options.

**If we are saying no to Jesus, it is because we are religious.**

And what is worse, our man-made religion is keeping us from knowing God and enjoying Him today. It is keeping us from walking with God right now. It is keeping us from knowing the greatest freedom, joy, meaning, purpose, life, peace and love we can imagine on a daily basis. Our man-made religion is keeping us

from living forever with God. We must give it up. Like a character in Police Academy, I get out my bullhorn and yell, “Step away from the man-made religion! (pause) Put your hands up, where we can see them! (pause) Surrender your life to the Son of God, who gave His life for you.”

In order to become “The Way”, Jesus died for us. All we have to do is believe this and we’re in. He did the work, took our punishment. In His death on the cross, He was separated from God so that we could be joined to God. He gave up His freedom so that we could be free. He died in our place. Buddha didn’t die for us. Marx or Nietzsche didn’t die for us. Mohammed didn’t die for us. Darwin didn’t die for us. None of the other world religious founders or great atheists died for us. Only Jesus died for us so that in Him we can have abundant life. And all we have to do to get this life is believe. Why is this so hard for us to do? One word - Religion.

**There are no ways to God, only the man, Christ Jesus. We must let go of our religion and believe in Him if we want to know God and have a relationship with Him.**

Each one of the religions of the world have developed a wheelbarrow load of stuff for us to do – good luck with that. Jesus simply asks “Do you believe Me? If so, then you have life.” Why can’t we just believe Him?

**The truth is, whatever excuse we have for not believing Jesus’ words, that has become our religion.**

All of the other “ways to God” do not work. No one makes it. No one has ever been able to do it all, get it all right, live the perfect life, walk the perfect path, etc. - it can’t be done.

They all fall short, every one of them. Just read history, read the life stories of the founders, research the religions of the world. The founders fell short of their own ideals, fell short of their own teachings and ways, and many admit it openly. Perhaps it is because we are not perfect, we all make mistakes.

But Jesus was perfect. He did what none of us can do - lived a perfect life. There was never a man like Jesus, before Him or after Him. He stands unique in the history of humankind. He did the work, lived the perfect life, gave His life as a ransom for us. He is the only one. He did it to end Religion and provide a way to God – the only way according to Him. And it is not a path, but a man. He did not come to show us a way to God, like all of the other sages and religious leaders. He came to BE the way. He is the way. God is not lowering a rope down to us and saying “Come on, climb up, you can do it”. Rather God came down to us and said “You can’t do it for yourself so I will do it for you. I will do what needs to be

done so you can have a relationship with Me. Do you believe me?” When He was here Jesus said “My yoke is light and my load is easy”. Do you get it? Do you see it? It’s your choice – to believe or not to believe. There are no ways to God, only the man, Christ Jesus. Let go of your religion and believe.

So the second Goliath falls. There are not many ways to God, only the man Christ Jesus. He is the way, the only way. Stone two delivered. The primary objections to this are usually questions regarding the veracity of the Bible, the historicity of Jesus, and other similar objections. If you need more information, an excellent book for further study of these types of objections is Josh McDowell’s book titled “Evidence that Demands a Verdict”. You may also want to read a book on comparative religion that illustrates the differences between the major religions. It is very interesting stuff.

But remember, whatever is keeping you from believing Jesus right now has become your religion. And it can be anything. It doesn’t have to be one of the major world religions. It can be sex, money, Darwinism, family, work, a sport, a hobby, Marxism, hedonism, whatever. There is no limit to our ability to elevate something to the status of Religion in our lives. We can make anything our god. Once we do this, we become a slave to it. Belief in Jesus sets us free from the man-made religions and false gods we create for ourselves. That is why Jesus said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” So what is holding you back? Maybe it is the next Goliath.

# 3

## MY PROBLEM IS WITH CHRISTIANS, NOT CHRISTIANITY

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.”

*John 14:12*

I have to confess that I have said this more than once. I even said it to someone a few months ago. And it made me later realize that I had still not fully done my work on this false idea, I had not really thought deeply enough about this or I would not have said it.

When we say that our problem is not with Christianity but with Christians, we are usually thinking about things like the inquisition, the crusades, a televangelist or some hypocrite we personally know. Usually the person saying this to me grew up in a Christian home and I just tell them, “You think you have complaints, try being Jewish” (yes, I am a Jew – didn’t know a thing about Jesus until College except what was on the album Jesus Christ Superstar).

**How can anyone believe in Jesus after all of the bad things that have been done in the name of Christianity?**

Then I usually go on to share with them the fact that there were Nazis who would say to Jews before they killed them things like “Jesus wants me to kill you”. And don’t even get me started on the inquisition, the pogroms, the European

ghettos, Martin Luther's book on "The Jews and their Lies", the current Muslim hatred of the Jews, etc.

There is the European persecution of Jews for centuries in the name of Christianity. Times when all of the Jews in a city were expelled from the city they lived in simply because they were Jewish, their possessions and homes taken from them. We were murdered en masse over and over again throughout history. We were locked up at night, like in the Jewish Ghetto in Rome, only to be let out each morning.....maybe. We were run from our homes, raped, beaten, robbed. Christian persecution of Jews over the centuries has been bad, really bad. So what is going on here? How can a Jew believe in Jesus? How can anyone believe in Jesus after all of the bad things that have been done in the name of Christianity? While there are many good answers to this, there are two really good ones:

1. For all of the bad done in the name of Christianity, the amount of good done in the name of Christianity greatly outweighs it.
2. You can make this statement about almost anything. Just because something is associated with evil does not necessarily make it evil, it just means that someone tried to make an association between their evil and whatever is in question. (Another way to say this is that we shouldn't judge a philosophy by those who abuse it.)

So we will start with the truth that for all of the bad that has been done in the name of Christianity, the amount of good that has been done in the name of Christianity greatly outweighs it. Imagine that Jesus never lived. He never came to Earth. He never explained God to us. He never gave us the Sermon on the

**For all of the bad that has been done in the name of Christianity, the amount of good that has been done in the name of Christianity greatly outweighs it.**

Mount or taught us to turn the other cheek, care for the weak, care for the sick, care for the dying, care for children, care for orphans, treat women with the same dignity as men, love our neighbor as ourselves, love God, care for the poor, care for those in prison, be kind to strangers, etc.

And now also imagine that all of the stuff God did to set Jesus up never happened either – no Moses, no Ten Commandments, no David, no Psalms, no Prophets, no Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, all of the teaching, all of the

people, all of the stories, etc., never happened, never lived, never occurred. Imagine what our world would be like today. It is a pretty scary thought if you really imagine it. We have seen what countries look like when they attempt to eliminate God completely from within their borders, and it has proven to not be a good thing. The Soviet Union comes to mind. We also see it in some of the cultures we observed before they were exposed to the gospel – just do a little bit of research on the Mayans or the Aztecs and how they lived for example. So we see that the Bible, the Jews and most significantly the life of Jesus and Christianity changed the world forever, and changed it in a good way.

God used the Israelites and the Old Testament to set the stage and get things going. But we Israelites were just not getting it. We were kind of missing the point of the whole God thing and what He was trying to do. We had turned our relationship with God into a religion and it wasn't going well. (The story is in the Old Testament and in Jewish history books if you care to learn more about this.) Because we weren't really getting it, and we weren't really helping all of the people outside of our community get closer to God, God sent His Son to explain Himself to us, and what a difference it made.

You can look at the world and it is like two different planets, one before Jesus and one after Jesus. Everything changed. And it changed for the good. When Jesus said He came "That we might have life and have it abundantly", He was not kidding. Almost every humanitarian endeavor, every good thing, every scientific discovery, every modern convenience, every awesome gadget, every great idea, things like hospitals, orphanages, the concept of adoption, the idea of forgiveness, the abolition of slavery....I would go so far as to say that almost every truly good thing in the world today, can be traced back and connected in some way to this man Jesus and the life He lived and the words He spoke. The amount of good that has been done by the people who believe in Jesus is so great that it may be unmeasurable at this point. Did you get that? Did you hear what I just said? Jesus came and explained God and then He left. And all this great stuff was done by the people that believed in Him. **THE CHRISTIANS.** They did it because of Him, because they believed Him, because they believed what He said was true. This is amazing if you think about it. So there it is, stone three delivered.

**The amount of good that has been done in the world by the people who believe in Jesus is so great that it may be unmeasurable at this point.**

Another aspect to this stone is that we can say this about almost anything. For example, some of the Nazis liked classical music and even played it in the death camps while they were rounding up and killing the Jews, so we could just as easily say “Well, I am okay with classical music itself but I have a real problem with “people who listen to classical music”. I mean, those Nazis, they played classical music in the death camps. That’s why I don’t listen to classical music and neither should anyone else.” We can make this argument about almost anything we want. “Those crusaders rode horses, those Spanish inquisitors took naps, those tele-evangelists drive cars, etc.” We can say this about almost anything.

We need to also add that all of the evil that was ever perpetrated in the name of Christianity goes against the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. This is an important point to make, because it clarifies that Christianity has been wrongly

**Jesus and the Apostles taught love for God and love for others. Anything that violates this teaching goes against the most basic tenets of Christianity and reveals that the perpetrators are not true Christians.**

associated with the evil. They tacked on Christianity like a mafia Don pays penance to cover his murders. Jesus and the Apostles taught love. Love for God and love for others. Anything that violates this teaching goes against what Jesus said was the most important thing in life. If you are not familiar with the teachings of

Jesus and the Apostles, they can be found in the New Testament. I recommend you read it for yourself if you have not ever done so. It is good stuff.

We must also point out that in many cases when Christianity has been abused it has been reduced to a man-made religion and the relationship with God part is non-existent. This enabled the “Us-Them” mentality to work its magic, dividing people into two groups, vilifying one group while justifying their persecution to the other. As stated previously, Jesus came to end this type of “Us-Them” behavior by ending man-made religion. Jesus would reject them just as He rejected the Pharisees when He was here the first time. He came so that we could have a relationship with God, not a new religion. True Christianity would never perpetrate the atrocities that have been done in its name. A person who truly has a relationship with God would die opposing such evil rather than join in and be a part of it. History is full of such people, one of the most famous being Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his opposition to Hitler.

Just because people through their actions manage to associate something with evil does not necessarily make that thing evil. We cannot judge a philosophy

by those who abuse it. And as a Jew who believes in Jesus, it became clear after several years of studying Messianic Judaism that the real question to ask is why evil people and evil organizations are constantly

**Just because people through their actions manage to associate something with evil does not necessarily make that thing evil.**

trying to associate their evil with Christianity. What are they trying to accomplish by this? What is the end game here? Why are they trying to take the greatest, best, and most awesome thing the world has ever received, and associate it with evil?

And even more importantly, who or what power would be behind such an endeavor? Perhaps now we are beginning to see what is really going on here when we ask the right questions about this Goliath. What are the Philistines really up to with this strategy? What god are people serving when they perpetrate such evil upon the world and try to associate it with this man Jesus? Is it the God of the Bible or some other false god? My conclusion on this is that it is a false god, one who is opposed to the God of the Bible that is actually the unseen power behind this phenomenon of associating evil with Christianity, perhaps in an effort to hinder people from belief in the man Jesus. And it appears that he particularly wants to hinder Jews from believing the gospel. Hmmmmm.

So this idea that Christians are bad is false. It is just not true the majority of the time. There has been so much good done in the name of Jesus by Christians that I believe it would be difficult if not impossible to completely document it at this point. And the times in history that Christianity was wrongly associated with evil are tragic and terrible, but they are no more reason to reject Christianity than it would be to reject eating breakfast because the perpetrators ate breakfast.

**To reject Christianity because of its wrongful association with evil is like not eating apples because we once saw a rotten one.**

Further, by doing evil of the magnitude we are usually talking about here, they clearly demonstrate that they do not have a relationship with God, have reduced Christianity to a man-made religion to serve their own purposes,

and they are not acting in accordance with the most basic teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. To use this as an excuse to say no to the greatest man who ever lived, walk away from the greatest information available on life that there ever was (the Bible), and say no to a relationship with God would be a mistake. We might as well give up food as well, and everything else associated with the

perpetrators that are causing us to have problems with Christianity. And of course that is what God's enemy wants us to do. That is why he has made this association between Christianity and some of his evil work. To put it another way, if a Jew can believe in Jesus, anyone can. Today there are thousands of Jews who believe in Jesus, maybe hundreds of thousands.

# 4

## WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE THAT HAVE NEVER HEARD THE GOSPEL?

Opening his mouth, Peter said:

“I most certainly understand *now* that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.”

*Acts 10:34-35*

Millions of people have lived and died without having a chance to hear the gospel. What about them? How can you believe in a God who would let people go to hell just because they were born in the wrong country or at the wrong time in history and they didn't have access to the gospel message? What about the pre-Columbian Native Americans, people today in Muslim countries, people in the 10/40 window, all of the unreached people throughout history? Are they going to hell even though they never had a chance to hear the gospel? It just doesn't seem fair. It doesn't seem right. What about people that have never heard the gospel?

This is a great question that most people

**The question we are really asking is whether or not God is fair?**

struggle with at one time in their life. What does God's word say about this? Are they going to hell even though they didn't have a chance to hear the gospel? And what is the question beneath the question here? Why does this bother us? Why do so many

resort to this as a reason to reject God or reject Christianity? What stone will take down this fourth Goliath? And finally, what is the answer to this question? Is there an answer to this question? I will first slay the giant, then answer the question.

The real issue that underlies this question, what a person is really asking when they say this, is that they have access to the gospel while others do not, which does not seem fair, and since God is fair what is the ultimate fate of those who have never heard. This argument falls apart when we realize that in no other area of our life would we ever use this as an excuse to not do something.

Are we saying that we will not work for a living because there are poor people in other places or in other times in history that cannot find work so we

**In no other area of our life would we ever use this as an excuse to not do something.**

should not work either? Are we saying that we will not play ball, even though we are a gifted ball player, because others were not born with our gift and it is unfair for us to play ball since they

were not born with the same giftedness? Are we saying we will not use electricity because many people lived in a time when they did not have electricity, so we will not use electricity since the Native Americans for example did not have it? Are we saying we will not eat because there are people starving in parts of the world, and it is unfair for us to have food and eat when they do not? Are we saying we will not go to the doctor when we are sick and dying, because there are people in the world that do not have access to medical care and it is not fair for us to go to the doctor when they cannot, so we will just stay home and die? We see that in no other area of our life would we ever say this, or use this as a basis for action or inaction.

No one lives this way with respect to any other issues of life. Why should truth be different? We are not absolved of truth just because others have not been exposed to it, anymore than we are not free from the law of gravity because earlier generations did not have the truth about gravitational theory. Truth is truth, regardless of who has or has not heard it. We are responsible to live by and to embrace the truth that we know. So why would we use this as an excuse to say no to God and His truth?

**We are not absolved of truth just because others have not been exposed to it. Truth is truth, regardless, and we are responsible to embrace and live by the truth that we know.**

Is it to rationalize not doing something we know we should do? It

is apparent that on the surface this is not an excuse to reject anything, including God. So why does this argument get used at all? What is beneath the surface of this question? Is it an attempt to avoid God by dismissing the truth that we know? Is it an attempt to deny the truth we have access to for some other reason? If we ignore truth, will it go away? Is there some aspect of the truth we don't like? Maybe it means we are going to have to change something that we do not want to change if we acknowledge the truth. Whatever the case, ignoring the truth does not make it go away, just as ignoring a medical condition does not make it go away (it usually gets worse).

Perhaps the reason this objection gets so much airtime is because we have in us this God given desire for the world to be fair. We are either concerned about people who are born into situations that put them at a disadvantage, or we can at least see that it makes a good argument so we use it. Which raises the question, "Is there an answer to this for people that are honestly asking this question, honestly struggling with this issue?" And I would like to add the following question, "What about those of us that have the truth and use this excuse to ignore it?"

Ravi Zacharias points out that "If a person is born poor, would you tell them to try to make a living or would you tell them to stay poor since they were born poor? If a person was born into a family that teaches them to hate, murder and kill would you try to change them or would you tell them to go ahead and be that way since that is what their father taught them to do?" If there is a better way to live, should we not seek that better way and follow it with our life regardless of our starting point, encouraging others to pursue it as well? If truth exists, absolute truth, should we not seek to acquire it, regardless of where we are starting from, and encourage others to apply it to their lives as well?

I was raised Jewish and knew nothing of Jesus or the gospel for the first 22 years of my life. But that is no excuse. I was still a sinner and needed salvation. My lack of knowledge did not relieve me of the burden of my guilt.

When I heard of Jesus, and looked into it for myself, and realized it was true, I acted on it, regardless of where I was starting from, regardless of what I had been taught, or not been taught, regardless of the fact that I did not know that much about the gospel or Jesus. It didn't matter, because truth showed up in my life

**If truth exists, absolute truth, should we not seek to acquire it, and regardless of where we are starting from, live by it and encourage others to live by it as well?**

and trumped everything I had ever known or learned. Regardless of the fact that I did not have all of the truth on this man Jesus, I acted on the little bit of truth that I did have.

My ignorance was no excuse. When I get a ticket for speeding even though I did not know the speed limit, the policeman says, “You were still speeding. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. Here’s your ticket.” If I tube down a river and it

turns out there is a waterfall that we did not know about, and we end up going off the waterfall, not knowing about the waterfall does not change the reality that I am going to go over it. The only thing that keeps me from tubing over the

**Truth is truth, regardless of whether or not I know it, and it is my job to discover it and live by it or suffer the consequences.**

waterfall is if I discover the truth that there is a waterfall, and then take action – perhaps get out of the river well upstream of the waterfall. So we see that truth is truth, the law is the law, regardless of whether or not I know about it, and it is my job to discover it and live by it or suffer the consequences. This is true of all kinds of things. For example, it is true that if we eat unhealthy food it will make us unhealthy, maybe even overweight. It is our responsibility to learn about healthy eating, or we will likely suffer the consequences. These illustrations also reveal that it is not enough to just know the truth. We must also act on the truth. We must live by it for it to do us any good. Paul speaks to these concepts in Romans when he says:

<sup>12</sup> For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; <sup>13</sup> for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. <sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup> in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, <sup>16</sup> on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

*Romans 2:12-16*

Not only does Paul point out that all have sinned and will be judged. But he also implies in this passage that we will all be judged based on what we know. God is fair. And it is a two edged sword, cutting both ways. The one who lives in a part of the world or a time where they do not have the light of the gospel will be judged accordingly. But additionally he says that the one who lives in a place where there is the light the light of the gospel will be judged according to what

they did have. It speaks to both the one who has light and the one who does not. So here we see that the original argument of “avoiding truth because there are people who don’t have it” may actually backfire on us.

We are concerned about people that don’t have the light of the gospel, when in reality we need to be just as concerned about people living life exposed to the gospel and not acting on it. And it sounds like greater condemnation is possibly in store for the one who knew better and did not act on it. The person who does not have access to the gospel may actually be better off if in the end they are going to reject the gospel.

This argument, when thought through, actually makes a very strong case for turning to God based on what truth we have. If we know the truth, and still deny it, our judgment is likely to be more severe than the judgment for those who never heard the gospel at all. It is the Justice league “With great power comes great responsibility” quote. Jesus even said in Luke 12:41-48 that “to those whom much has been given, much will be expected”. Truth is truth, whether we are taught it or not, whether everyone is exposed to it or not. It is still truth, and if we know it, no excuse remains for us. We must either accept it or reject it at that point. And we are accountable for what we do with the truth we have.

We cannot appeal to the fact that somewhere out there someone doesn’t know it and until every person knows it I can ignore it. That is just not an excuse for anything, it is absurd. To use a similar type of analogy to the ones used previously, it would be like being sick and dying but unwilling to take the medicine that will cure me because there are people in the world that do not have access to the medicine. No one lives like this. Medicine is medicine, and if we have access to it, we take advantage of it, regardless of the fact that the majority of the people throughout the history of the world did not have the amazing medicines we now have. We act on it – we take the medicine. We apply it to our life, and we become well (hopefully), which illustrates the need to act on truth for it to have its positive effect on us. If we do not act on truth, it does us no good. Jesus spoke to this when He was here in Matthew 7:24-27.

Truth exists independent

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

*Matthew 7:24-27*

of our knowing or not knowing about it and is applicable regardless of who does or does not know it. Like gravity, truth affects us all. Whether we understand it

**It is not enough to just know the truth. We must also act on the truth. We must live by it for it to do us any good.**

or not, believe it or not, agree with it or not, it doesn't matter. It just is. It exists independently of us. And for it to do us any good, we must act on it.

Jesus went so far as to say that He is the "Way, the **Truth** and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by Me." He said that He is "The Truth" implying that truth is eternal and has existed as long as God has existed - forever. Here we see that in contrast to all of the religions of the world, that have a package of "truth" that they have developed and come up with themselves and must be adhered to, in Christianity we see that truth is a person, the man Jesus, and that it/He has existed forever. He is the truth. When Christians talk about "surrendering your life to Christ" what they are really saying is "Give in to the Truth (Jesus), believe the Truth, believe Jesus." When Pilate asks Jesus "What is Truth?" Jesus remained silent. But He could have said "I am," because Jesus is "The way, the **Truth** and the life."

This also reveals to us that we put our faith in a person, Jesus, rather than in teaching or arguments. This is also different from all of the other religions. The other great teachers say "believe my teaching", "follow my teaching". But Jesus says "Believe in Me. Follow Me. I **AM** the truth." This is a profound difference. The Christian is putting their faith in a person, not an argument or a teaching. So what about the Bible, often referred to as "God's truth"? Where does it fit in?

**The Christian puts their faith in a person, Jesus, rather than in teaching or arguments.**

Not only was Jesus "The Truth", but His words were full of truth as well. He came to explain truth to us. To help us understand it more fully. To make truth clear. Just read the words of Jesus sometime recorded in the Bible. Never did a man speak like Jesus. I remember the first time I read the New Testament. I was amazed. I thought it was the best stuff I had ever read. The most true words I had ever read. All I could think was "Who has been keeping this from me my whole life?" "Why have I not been told about this before?" "Who has been hiding this from me?"

His words were the best, most true, most beautiful, most life filled words I had ever read. How could I say no to this man Jesus? How could I not believe what he said? How could I not believe in Him after reading His story? After

hearing His truth? After learning He died for me? His words rang true in the deepest part of my being. They were like a cup of cool water on a hot day. They brought color to a gray world. They brought life to my whole being.

When Jesus said some hard words to the multitudes and a lot of them quit following Him, he turned to the disciples and asked, "Are you going to leave me also?" And Peter answered Him, "To whom shall we go, you have words of eternal life." Jesus words (His truth) lead to eternal life. Something bigger than medicine is here. We are talking about words, truths, that have the power to change people's lives. We are talking about truth that has the ability to transform the world - to turn it upside down. Jesus, who is God's truth, changed everything about our planet for the better forever. And now his truth is everywhere. It is so ingrained in the world at this point that much of it has become ubiquitous.

People often say they believe in a God of love and that the God of the Bible is just "too judgmental" for them, usually referring to an Old Testament story or two. Where did we get this idea that "God is a loving God"? Tim Keller points out that we didn't get it from any of the man-made religions out there. None of them teach a personal loving God. We didn't get it from looking at nature – nothing but dog-eat-dog there. We got this truth from Jesus. He is the one who said that God is love, who taught us that God is love, who showed us that God is love. Before Jesus, that was an absurd and unheard of idea for most people. So Jesus came to make it crystal clear that God is love, and now we know it. We have His truth. In John chapter 1 we read that, "No one has seen God, but Jesus, the Son of God, has explained Him." Jesus came to tell us the truth about God, to explain Him to us.

And Jesus didn't just teach truth to us or explain it to us, He lived it, He showed us the truth of how much God loves us by laying down His life for us. That is profound. He became the love of God for us. Next time someone says they "believe in a God of love..." ask them where they got that idea from? Or better yet, perhaps we say to them "So you are telling me you are a Christian?" Because Jesus is the one who revealed that truth to us and made it crystal clear. And there are many more things like this. Many more truths that Jesus revealed to us that we take for granted now. In many cases we don't even realize the truth came from Him.

**Jesus didn't just teach truth to us or just explain it to us, He lived it. He showed us the truth of how much God loves us by laying down His life for us. He became the love of God for us.**

One final thing to add is that this knowledge motivates us to spread the truth. If we are truly concerned about those who have not heard the gospel, I have a question: "If this is true, then what are we doing about it?" There is a great story about the young man and the starfish. I am not sure who wrote this story, but it is one of my favorite stories and goes something like this:

"Once upon a time there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work. One day he was walking along the shore. As he looked down the beach, he saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself to think of someone who would dance to the day. So he began to walk faster to catch up. As he got closer, he saw that it was a young man and the young man wasn't dancing, but instead he was reaching down to the shore, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean. As he got closer he called out, "Good morning! What are you doing?"

The young man paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish in the ocean."

"I guess I should have asked, why are you throwing starfish in the ocean?"

"The sun is up, and the tide is going out. And if I don't throw them in they'll die."

"But, young man, don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach, and starfish all along it. You can't possibly make a difference!"

The young man listened politely. Then he bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves and said, "It made a difference for that one."

We can't go back in time and tell the Pre-Columbian Americans about Jesus, but there are plenty of people today that have not heard the gospel that we can share with. If this is truly our concern, then what are we doing about it? What are we doing to reach people with the truth that do not have access to it yet? I would contend that if our answer is nothing, then our concern may not be real. We may not really care about people not having access to the truth, or we would have done something about it. Even something minor, but something. It may be a mental exercise to avoid the truth ourselves, or a diversionary tactic, a way to side step the issue. I am not trying to make anyone feel guilty, but rather to point out that if we really cared about the starfish, we would throw a few back in the ocean, or at least try to.

**What kind of a difference are you making in the world? Are you throwing starfish into the Ocean or are you just letting the ones around you die?**

So what to do? Just because someone else may not have as much truth as we have access to is no excuse for us to not embrace the truth we do have. We should believe the gospel that is available to us. Believe the truth we have. In

reality, none of us has all of the truth. But we must embrace and live by the truth that we do have. And that is my challenge to you on this Goliath. Embrace the truth you do have and let it affect your life. Act on the truth you do have. And share it with the people you can, so that they can also have access to the truth.

When I was first born again, I did not know anything about the gospel. I was really ignorant even though I grew up in the southern United States in the Bible Belt. It took me years to learn what the gospel was, what God said, what God

**We never know it all, no one has all of the truth. So, we must embrace the truth that we do have, and act on that truth for it to do us any good, encouraging others to act on it as well.**

wanted of me, how I should live now that I am a child of God, what it means to be a Christian, how to have a relationship with God, etc. But I started the journey with what truth I knew. I read the gospels and I went from there. And that is my challenge to you - believe the truth

you do know, and start walking with God now. The Proverbs say “Acquire truth, and with it get understanding”. We must work to gain more truth, and with it understanding. And if we really are worried about those that don’t have access to the truth, we must take action to make a difference and do something to change that as well.

# 5

## HOW CAN GOD EXIST WHEN THERE IS SO MUCH EVIL IN THE WORLD?

This question or “problem” that many claim as their reason for not believing in God is really interesting. The response to it is even more interesting. First I am going to kill the giant, then I will answer the question that underlies this question, which is “If there is an all-powerful good God, why is there evil in the world.”

So evil bothers you. It bothers me. It bothers most people. Even evil people are bothered by evil, if that makes any sense. We read a tragic story, something terrible happens to us, to a friend, to a family member, to a co-worker, even to a complete stranger, and we are shaken to our core. “Where was God?” we ask. “How could He let this happen?” “Why me?” “Why them?” Evil, when we are exposed to it and its results, often rocks us to our core. We want justice. We wish there was some way to go back in time and keep it from happening. “If only I’d done this, or “If only I’d done that,” we say to ourselves (I hate the “If

**The fact that evil bothers us is proof that God exists. Without God defining a reference point, there is no benchmark for good and evil, right and wrong. It becomes a matter of opinion.**

only I'd's"). The problem of evil is a problem we will all face in this life to one degree or another. It is inevitable. So how do we kill this Goliath?

It turns out, that the stone that kills this giant is actually the question itself. What I mean by that is that the very fact that evil bothers us reveals to us that God exists. Put another way, if we are just animals, just a random collection of atoms and energy, and that is all there is to life and being human, which is what an Atheist or a Darwinist might say, then what is evil? Evil doesn't exist in a world without God. There is no benchmark in a world without God by which something can be measured against and compared to so that we can determine if it is evil and to what degree.

The lion or the tiger does not feel bad because it brutally killed the beautiful gazelle or baby zebra, or worse, it sat down and started eating the gazelle while it was still alive (ouch). The crocodile is merciless in its catching and killing of prey. Look at any part of the animal world, and it is dog-eat-dog, bug-eat-bug. The animal kingdom is filled with a brutality that if the idea of good and evil were applied to it, well, pretty much every animal out there would be considered as bad as a Nazi working at Auschwitz.

But when we get to humans, something is different. When a person mistreats another person, say kills their neighbor and eats them (this was actually in the news on one of my trips to Asia a few years ago – they caught a guy who had been killing and eating his neighbors), most of us are shocked, horrified, we

**God has put His law in us, and it serves as our basis for morality, our basis of good and evil.**

want justice. Hopefully the perpetrator is arrested, has a trial, and is punished for their evil, punished for their crime.

“But he was hungry” you say. He may have been hungry, but there is something in us, in people, in you and me, that tells us that this is wrong. It tells us that this is evil and that it should be opposed, corrected, changed, punished - something must be done. There is something in us that wants restitution and justice to be applied to the situation. It is in us all. Even evil people are often appalled by evil, just not the evil that they approve of and are busy doing. So what is this we find in ourselves and where did it come from?

It is God's law, and it came from God. He said that He has put His law, His word, in our hearts. There is a substance in us from God that contains all of the unmeasurable stuff that we carry around with us. Stuff like truth, justice, love, beauty, goodness, liberty, equality, etc. For the purpose of our discussion we'll

call these God things. These God things can't be weighed on a scale. They can't be physically seen. They can't be smelled or touched or tasted. We can't pass an electric current through them and measure their resistance. We can't do a spectral analysis of them. We can't shoot electrons or protons at them to see what happens or study their diffraction pattern. But nevertheless they are real. Everyone has experienced these God things at one time or another. Love is real. Justice is real. Truth is real. Beauty is real. These are the things in us that hurt when we witness evil.

When I pulled my arm apart moving a giant log up a hill, it hurt. It hurt so bad that I had to lie down for about thirty minutes and just enjoy the stars I was seeing (not the kind in outer space, but the kind like on Bugs Bunny). I had to have surgery to reattach the muscles to the bone, and it took months to heal, years to rehabilitate. When we see evil in the world, it hurts too.

**If God doesn't exist evil would not bother us because we wouldn't be full of God things like truth, goodness, beauty, justice, liberty, equality, love, etc.**

It doesn't hurt like a ripped apart arm does. It is a different kind of pain. But it hurts nevertheless. And we may need to go through a healing process just like we do for a physical wound. Evil injures us, and we don't like it. It injures that part of our being where these God things reside. It damages us, and sometimes it can take years to get over it – a bad break up, a murder, a betrayal, etc. And no, I have no idea where these God things reside or how to even explain them. Maybe we are talking about our soul or our mind or our emotions or maybe it is some part of us that hasn't even been named yet. Whatever it is, it is real, and it is injured by evil.

So how does this apply to this giant? Namely, that if God doesn't exist evil would not bother us because we would not be full of God things like truth, goodness, justice, liberty, etc. In other words, the fact that we even ask the question "How can God exist with all of the evil in the world?" means that we know the difference between good and evil which means that there is a standard for defining what is good and what is evil built into me, built into my being, and it was put there by God.

If one thinks very deeply about this, and studies the great thinkers of history and what they wrote about this, it becomes apparent that there is only one explanation for this. God exists and He set the standard for these things and put His standards into us, into our being. But that is not all.

There is also the problem of justice. I know someone who was attacked in her home by a rapist. As she fought him off, he shot her. Fortunately he fled and she lived. But he got away. He never got caught or punished for his crime to my knowledge. And we are left to ask, where is justice in that situation? I'll tell you where. In the final judgment. The desire for justice that God put in our being demands that there is a final judgment. A judgment of all people from all time for all things. It is necessary, and I will show you how I know this.

**For everything we want and need, there is something in the world that God has made that fulfills it.**

For everything we want and need, there is something in the world that God has made that fulfills that need. For hunger and our stomach there is food. When we are tired, there is sleep. For our desire for beauty there are beautiful people and animals and sunsets, etc. Everything we need, desire, want, etc. has something that God put in the world that can fulfill it. So why should justice be any different?

I see in myself, and in others, a very strong desire for there to be justice. Ultimate justice. The only way that this is possible is that there is a God who is going to judge the world some day. Heaven and hell. The whole sheep and goats thing in the Bible. So in this we see that my pain from seeing evil, especially when the perpetrator gets away with it, is rooted and grounded in the fact that I need justice like I need food or beauty.

And that someday there will be justice and my need for it will be satisfied. So again, the very fact that evil in the world bothers us is proof that God exists, and that He will someday judge the world. Our inner longing for justice will ultimately be satisfied by Him. He put that longing in us so we would know He exists and we would know there is a coming judgment. It is like a pilot light that tells that there is a light on in a part of the house that we cannot currently see.

**The fact that evil in the world bothers us is proof that God exists, and that He will someday judge the world. Our inner longing for justice will ultimately be satisfied by Him.**

If we are an Atheist or Darwinist though, and we simply must hang on to our belief that there is no God for some reason, then the problem of evil is a much bigger problem for us. How do we define what is evil without God and

His definitions. Who decides what is evil and what is good. What standard do we use? And what is worse, to the Darwinist we are just animals. Natural selection

teaches us to kill or be killed. Murder is how we survive in the evolutionary jungle of a world without God. The survival of the strong Darwinist worldview suggests that if someone has something we want, we should take it from them. And since this life is all that there is, if we are bored with our spouse, we just leave them and get another. In a godless worldview, there is no judgment for anything that we do, so we say things like, “if the ref doesn’t see it, it didn’t happen” or “you only go around once in life, so you’ve got to grab all the gusto you can”. These become the mottos by which we live our lives when we embrace Atheism or Darwinism. If this life is all there is, eat, drink and party, for tomorrow we die.

A godless Evolutionary worldview creates a world with no good or evil, no right or wrong, and as a matter of fact, these two worldviews when actually lived out fully lead us to do terrible things, great evils, like kill babies if they exhibit weakness or are retarded or deformed, because they should be removed from the gene pool. It leads us to let sick people die, to euthanasia, etc.

The Nazi Eugenics experiment makes sense from the viewpoint of Darwinism or Atheism. Eugenics is actually the natural conclusion and outworking of these worldviews. There is even a book titled “From Darwin to Hitler” that illustrates how Darwinist thinking led to Nazi Germany and enabled it to occur. The lack of belief in God actually leads to evil. History has shown this over and over again.

**Belief in Jesus and the gospel actually changes us on the inside. Where we once wanted to do evil, we now want to do good.**

And it has led to some of the greatest evils the world has ever seen. Look at the fruit of the communist movement in Russia. Stalinist/Communist (pronounced ‘godless’) Russia killed more people

in the name of “There is no God” than all the people in all of history combined that have been killed in the name of “religion”. Rather than saying “How can I believe in God because of all the evil in the world?” we should really be saying “We need more belief in God in the world because evil appears to be increasing”. People believing in God and His word are our only hope of ever stopping evil. Of ever changing our hearts so that we choose not to commit evil.

It is those who believe in God who oppose evil. People like Bonhoeffer, Wilberforce, King, Lincoln, Mother Teresa, etc. gave a large portion of their lives and energy to opposing evil and suffering. There is an enormous list of people who have dedicated their lives to opposing evil and suffering to make the world a better place. And the majority of them were Christians, believed in God, believed

His Bible, believed Jesus, etc. True belief in the God of the Bible reduces evil, personally and socially.

**How can you believe in God when there is so much evil in the world? Because God and the gospel of Jesus Christ are the only real solution to the evil in man and in the world.**

Belief in Jesus and the gospel actually changes us on the inside, and where we once wanted to do evil, we now want to do good. This is the final proof for the stone that the very question kills this giant.

Convicts, liars, thieves, murderers, embezzlers, corrupt politicians, even plain old hedonists and party animals, have all been radically transformed from being what most would label as “evildoers” to being “good people” by one thing. The power of God and His gospel in their life.

They have been changed on the inside. They no longer want to do evil. They want to do good now, because God has changed them on the inside. This is one of the most powerful proofs that the question is the answer. How can you believe in God when there is so much evil in the world? Because God and the gospel of Jesus Christ are the only real solution to the evil in man and in the world.

He is the only one I know that can change anyone from having an inclination to do evil to having a new inclination to do good. History is filled with stories of men and women who have been changed in this exact way by God through the gospel of Jesus. I am one of these people. God changed me. And he can change you.

So the problem of evil in the world proves that there must be a God in order for us to even know what evil is and that it exists and bothers us. And the justice we demand and long for deep in our being proves that God will one day judge the world.

We have also seen that to not believe in God actually leads to great evil and is the reason there is evil in the world. And finally we realized that belief in God and specifically the gospel is the only true lasting solution for evil, changing people on the inside so that they actually want to stop doing evil, and want to do good. The question is backwards. The question is really “How can you not believe in God with all of the evil in the world?”

**The question is really “How can you not believe in God with all of the evil in the world?”**

And I promised to answer the underlying question, the question beneath the question, which is:

“If there is a God, why is there evil in the world?”

This is what we are usually really asking when we say “How can you believe in God when there is so much evil in the world.” And Jesus answered this question when He was here. He answered it with a parable:

<sup>24</sup> Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. <sup>26</sup> But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. <sup>27</sup> The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ <sup>28</sup> And he said to them, ‘An enemy has done this!’ The slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?’ <sup>29</sup> But he said, ‘No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.””

*Matthew 13:24-30*

In this parable, Jesus answers the question beneath the question. God allows evil to exist in the world because He doesn't want to lose even one of His children during harvesting. I have a garden, and when I am pulling weeds, especially weeds that have gotten established (which doesn't take long at all), I often accidentally pull up one of my plants along with the weed even though I am not even touching the good plant. The roots of the weed have gotten all intertwined with the roots of my good plant below the surface of the dirt, and the good plant just comes right out with the weed I am pulling. It is very frustrating. Jesus says that our situation is similar to this.

He is saying that our lives are so intertwined that if He reached down from heaven every few days and just pulled all the Hitlers, Stalins, sons of Sam, Columbine killers, etc. out of the world, a lot of His children would accidentally get damaged, uprooted, or even killed as well. Our lives are just too intertwined and connected. We are all growing on this planet together for now.

But He does not want us to grieve over this situation, because at the end of the story He says that there will one day be a great harvest when the garden of humanity will be mature. And at that time he will pull us all out of the earth and separate us into wheat (His children) and tares (not His children). The wheat gets put in His barn (heaven), but the tares are burned with fire (hell).

So the question beneath the question beneath the question is where are you headed, to the barn or to the fire? The good news is that our destiny is our choice. We can choose right now to be wheat or we can choose to be a tare. To be “God’s” or to be “not God’s”. It is our choice. If you want to be God’s then I would encourage you to pray the prayer below (or you can go online and find dozens of different “sinner’s prayers” to choose from and just pick the one you like – the main thing is talk to God and get on the road to life). Ask God to change you on the inside, to make you want to be a part of the solution instead of part of the problem of evil. And He will.

Lord God almighty, I confess to you that I am a sinner and that I need you to save me from the fire of judgment Jesus mentioned in the story of the wheat and the tares. I want to be your child. I want to be born again. I want to be changed on the inside forever by Your Holy Spirit. I believe in Jesus. I believe that He died for my sins, was buried, and rose from the dead, and that He was the first fruits of your harvest. I want to rise from the dead and be a part of Your harvest. I surrender my life to You now, in the name of Jesus, and ask that You please forgive me and cleanse me of my sins. Wash me with the blood of Jesus, that I may be clean in Your sight forever. I confess to You that I have lived my life for other things up until today (name whatever it is that you live for, that you long for, daydream about, your reason for living up til now) but now I am rejecting that as my reason for living, and I am asking that You would become the reason that I live. To know You, to be with You, to learn about You, to accomplish Your will on earth, to walk with You - that is my new reason for living. I put my trust in You right now, and make You the Lord of my life and ask that you would direct my steps from this day forward and forever. I ask these things in Jesus name. Amen.

## WHY DO THESE THINGS MATTER

“Why does any of this matter? What’s the big deal? You live your life and I’ll live mine,” you say. Well, it matters. The way we live our lives matters. We are all in this garden together, wheat and tares, and our lives are intricately intertwined. What I do affects you and what you do affects me. Maybe it’s the six degrees of separation or something like that. But the way we live our lives matters. The fundamental underlying worldviews that we ascribe to determine how we live. They matter. The false ideas discussed in this book are designed to keep us from acting on God’s truth in our life. Correcting these false ideas can free us up to act on God’s truth in our lives.

In sports our coaches and trainers are always telling us stuff like “Keep your eye on the ball’ and “The ball will go where you are looking” and “Follow through to where you want the ball to go”. When we learned how to do 360’s on snow skis, the instructor told us to go off the jump, turn your head and your body will follow. We all looked at each other and said “Righttttt” and kind of laughed. But one after another we went off the jump and turned our heads and we all did 360’s (or at least 270’s – a few of us didn’t get the full 360 degree experience the first time off the jump). The concept I am trying to illustrate in this is that we go where we are looking.

We become what we are focused on. As a person thinks, so they become. Ideas matter. They matter big time. The ideas that are foundational to our being are the ideas that are shaping our life. We become what we focus on, what we believe. And if our beliefs are wrong, if our worldview is simply incorrect, then our life is going to be less than it could be at best, and more than likely it is going to be really screwed up. We are likely to hurt ourselves and those around us.

What we believe matters because it shapes us into the people we are. We become what we are focused on.

And so, maybe you read this book and you are still holding out, still holding on to Darwinism for example. You just can't let go. The brainwashing has just been too thorough and you are a scientist and what will the guys in the lab think and I would lose my job if I quit believing in Darwinism and so on. Well, I used to play a lot of poker when I was younger. And if someone had been in our poker game and gotten a royal strait flush 100 hands in a row, we would have run them out of the game for cheating. Sure, it is possible that someone could get that many royal strait flushes in a row – I suppose anything is possible. But is it reasonable? Is it probable? Is it even remotely likely that they got that many strait flushes in a row without cheating? No, it's not.

Neither is it reasonable that we are here by an accidental, random, godless Evolutionary process. It's not reasonable. It's not probable. It's not even remotely possible according to the mathematical statistics. So why on earth would anyone base their entire life on something that is not even remotely possible according to every mathematician that has ever done the probability calculations? To adhere to the evolutionary worldview as the basis for our life is like choosing a thread over a climbing rope as we go over the side of a cliff. It just doesn't make sense. What is going on here?

We're back to the second Goliath. It has become our religion and we just don't know it or won't admit it. We must "Step away from the religion". Step away from it, and step into a relationship with God (basically this is what repentance is). The evidence that belief in the God of the Bible, and specifically the gospel of Jesus Christ is a good thing for us and for the world is overwhelming. The results of believing in Him have been proven over and over again in life after life to be dramatically good and positive, not just for the person who believes but for the entire world. But maybe you are still just not there. You are still just not convinced.

Tim Keller said something really funny in one of his sermons. He said "Saying that you are looking for God is like a mouse saying that it is looking for the cat. The mouse doesn't find the cat. The cat finds the mouse." That is often the way it is with God. I know it was that way in my case. I wasn't looking for God. I didn't find God. He found me. Like a cat catching a mouse, God caught me. There was nothing I could do but believe in Him once I came into contact with Him, just as there is not much the mouse can do when the cat gets him.

When God showed up in my life, I had about as much power to say no to God as a mouse does to a cat that just caught it. I was overwhelmed. Overwhelmed by the amazing words of this man Jesus. Overwhelmed by the power of God that I could now all of a sudden see everywhere I looked. Overwhelmed with God's love for me, even though I was a heathen to the core. To say no to God I would have had to lie to myself and deny what I now knew to be true. Once God showed up in my life, even though I had very little information on the matter, it was practically impossible for me to say no to Him. He was that convincing. So what is keeping you from stepping into a relationship with God?

Many times what is stopping us from being found by God is that we are scared of Him. We don't believe He has our best interest at heart. We think He is going to take away our toys, send us to our room, make us sell all of our stuff and go be a missionary in the middle of nowhere, and so on. Not believing God has your best interest at heart is as old as the Garden of Eden. It is the same lie that the serpent used on Adam and Eve. They fell for it then, and we have been falling for it ever since. It is the lie that God does not want what is best for us. So how do we move from not trusting God to trusting God so that we can be found by Him?

It's called faith. This is what everyone is referring to when they say you just have to take a step of faith. Does a small child have to read books and do research and get second and third opinions in order to trust that his mother or father will catch him when he jumps? Typically, no. His parents love him and will catch him. Similarly, we teach our child not to touch a hot stove because it will burn them. We do this because we love our child and don't want them to hurt themselves. Similarly, God warns us of things like adultery, lying, stealing, etc. so that we won't burn ourselves. We think He is holding back on us, keeping us from "having fun" or "doing what we want" but really He is just trying to keep us from getting hurt or hurting the people around us, just like a loving parent or a friend would do for us.

Parents want what is best for their child and typically will do everything they can for the duration of the life of that child to help them. God is the same way, except even more so. "If we being evil know how to give good gifts to our children, then how much more will your Father in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him." This is what Jesus was referring to when he talked about us needing faith like a child. It is trusting God, trusting that he has our best interest at heart. So we see illustrated here that faith is believing that God means what He says and has our best interest at heart. When we believe this, often we are

able to come out of hiding and be found by Him. We are able to trust Him with our life. Believe that God has your best interest at heart and wants what is best for you.

You might say, “My parents weren’t loving, I couldn’t trust them, what about that?” This is a good point, and illustrates the importance of what we put our faith in. If I am rock climbing and above me are two hand holds, the strength of my faith in either of the handholds is irrelevant as to the success of my climb. Rather, it is the strength of the handholds that matters. It is what I am putting my faith in that matters.

If one of the holds is loose rock and barely attached to the rock face I am climbing, I can have all of the faith in the world in that hold, but when I transfer my weight to it, I am toast – the hold gives way and I fall. But if I barely have enough faith to reach out to the other hold, but it is a good solid piece of rock, then I am good to go. I reach out, grab it, transfer my weight, and continue up the face. The objection of bad parents illustrates the problem of the false gods and false religions that are out there that many put their faith in.

Whether it is the false god of Evolution, Religion, Materialism, Money, “Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll”, self-righteousness, whatever, they will let us down. When we don’t believe the gospel, we turn to these false gods and put our trust in them to bring us the life we want, to bring us happiness, to give meaning to our life, to be the purpose for our life, etc. And no matter how strong our faith is in these false gods, they will fail us. They will disappoint us. Only the true God, the God who came to earth to explain Himself to us, who died on the cross and was broken for our sin, who rose from the dead - He is the only one we can safely put our faith in. He is the only sure and tested handhold that we can transfer our full weight to as we climb the rock face of life.

So what is keeping you from taking that step of faith? What is keeping you paralyzed on the rock face, unwilling to reach out to the handhold God has provided in His Son? Ask God to reveal to you what is keeping you from Him. And then take a step of faith towards Him in some way. You won’t regret it. Ask Him to show up in your life today. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

Born deaf dumb and blind, Helen Keller’s life was unlike most of our lives. She was at a disadvantage from the day she was born. But she persevered, she pushed through the obstacles, she beat the odds and became one of the most amazing people we know about. In one of her speeches she said that “Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing at all.” I challenge you to be bold, start living the adventure of a life of faith in Jesus. A life of believing Jesus, trusting

Him and believing what He said. A gospel centered life. It may be scary, just like climbing a rock face can be. But the experience is exhilarating, and the view is amazing.

## CONCLUSION

How did we get here? Where do we come from? Why are we here? What happens to us when we die? Is there such a thing as good and evil? Does truth exist? These are the big questions we all must come to grips with in our life. The answers that we choose for these questions stem from our worldview and shape our lives. And the five false ideas in this book are aimed at wreaking havoc in your life by giving us bad information and a false worldview.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me". He also said that if we come to Him we will "Know the truth and the truth will make us free." The story of David and Goliath is a story about freedom. About the Jews gaining their freedom from the oppression and tyranny of Goliath and the Philistines. This book is also about freedom. About gaining freedom from the oppression and tyranny of false ideas. Bad ideas. Incorrect ideas. Untrue ideas.

God saw that we needed to be delivered from these untruths, and so He sent us His Son. And His Son has set us free. In Jesus we see that truth is a person and not an argument or a teaching or a theory or an idea. Jesus is the truth, the truth that sets us free. Free from sin, free from death, free from judgment, free from doing evil, and even free from the tyranny of the Goliaths of our day.

### **Evolution.**

Slaying the first Goliath is about gaining our freedom to believe that God created the world and all that is in it, which brings meaning and purpose to our lives. Freedom from the tyranny of the false idea of the current theory of Evolution allows us to be human, to be men and women rather than just animals as Darwinism teaches. We are not just a random collection of atoms and energy,

but were designed and created for a purpose by a loving God. Freedom from this false idea protects the sacredness of life, both personally and in society at large, and restores hope to our lives. There are answers to the big questions in life once we are free from this Goliath. Nations that have let this Goliath rule have become very evil and are responsible for the deaths of tens of millions of innocent people (Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, North Vietnam, Cambodia, North Korea, etc.). They are all recent because the worldview is relatively recent, having been founded on the book by Darwin published in 1859. By breaking free from the chains of an evolutionary worldview, we move from foolishness to wisdom, from a downward moral spiral to a life transformed by the spirit of God created for good works.

## **There Are Many Ways To God**

Slaying the second Goliath is about becoming free from man-made religion and the enormous burdens it places on us, the divisiveness it causes, the guilt it places on us, the rebellion it inspires in us, the strife it brings to the world, the misery of falling short of its demands and the self-righteousness of keeping the rules. It is about moving into a gospel centered life of freedom and confidence. Once this Goliath is dead, we experience the freedom to live life knowing that “It is Finished” as Jesus said on the cross, referring to His doing everything needed for us to have a relationship with God simply by believing in Him. We are free to fail, free to enjoy life, free from the power of sin, we are even free from death. Jesus said “Whoever believes in Me will live even if he dies.” Even death is swallowed up in victory when we step away from our man-made religion and step into a relationship with God through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Freedom from this Goliath is deliverance from a complicated set of do’s and don’ts that come with man-made religion. In its place we now live a life of grace, knowing that our relationship with God is based on what Jesus did and not anything we must do or achieve to earn it. He has already done it. All we have to do is believe Him and we can have a relationship with God because of what He has already done. It is finished.

## **Christians Are My Problem, Not Christianity**

Slaying the third Goliath gives us the freedom to not let others define us but rather to let God define us. It is about the freedom to be ourselves, to believe what we want to believe, to believe what God says about us, and to not judge others. It is about the freedom to not let the misuse of a good thing limit our freedom to enjoy it, to enjoy its benefits. Christianity is good. It has been good for the world. It is the best thing that has ever happened to the world. Killing this Goliath allows us to live the abundant life Jesus wants us to experience, and encourages us to work to ensure as many people as possible on this planet get to experience that abundant life as well.

### **What About People That Have Never Heard The Gospel?**

Slaying the fourth Goliath frees us to believe and act on the truth that we have. None of us has all of the truth, so what are we waiting for? We are delivered from the false ideas that we must know everything before we can take action. We see that indeed God is fair, and will be fair in His judgment of the world. But we also see that we are not absolved of responsibility because of ignorance on our part, and that it is our responsibility to discover truth and act on the truth we have to the best of our ability during our brief life on earth. We are delivered from the false idea that fairness is a basis for action or inaction regarding what we do with the truth we have been given. As this Goliath falls, we are free now to take that critical step of faith based on the truth that we do have, entering into a relationship with God. We see that if there is a better way to live, we should pursue it and encourage others to pursue it as well.

### **How Can God Exist When There Is So Much Evil In The World?**

Slaying the fifth Goliath frees us from evil and its grip on our lives and the world. By realizing evil and the capability for evil is in all of us, and that the only thing that can cure the evil inside of us is the gospel of Jesus Christ, we realize that God has provided the cure for the dilemma of evil in the gospel of Jesus Christ. By believing in Jesus and turning to God through the work that Jesus did, we become a part of the solution rather than continuing to be a part of the problem of evil in this world. We are transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. We are set free by His power and grace to walk in

newness of life. We are a new creation, hence the term “born again” used so often to describe a true believer in Jesus. It is truly like we have been born again – I can attest to this. And we are delivered from the certainty of judgment for our sins to the certainty of eternal life with Him. Becoming free from this Goliath frees God’s power to work in our lives to change us and shape into good people, enabling us to make a difference for good in this world while we are here.

Freedom is a great thing, but it comes at a cost. Just as many have died for the freedom we have in the world, so Jesus died for our freedom from the tyranny of these giants, and for our freedom from the judgment that we deserve for our sin. The first giant (Evolution) mocks that there is no God, creating a hopelessness in our hearts. The fifth giant (of evil in the world) mocks that there is no judgment, causing our desire for justice cry out within us. But God assures us that He exists and that there will be a judgment of the living and the dead. He tells us there will be justice, ultimate justice, for all who have ever lived.

So I urge you to put your faith in Christ now while you can. For all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We all like sheep have gone astray. None of us seek God, no, not even one. But Christ died and paid the penalty for our sin, that in Him we might have life and have it abundantly. That in Him we might pass out of judgment into life. That in Him we might have a relationship with the God of creation. Put your faith in Him, and you will truly be free.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; <sup>15</sup> so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.”

<sup>16</sup> “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. <sup>18</sup> He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. <sup>19</sup> This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

*John 3:14-21*

# RESOURCES AND LINKS

## **Books**

Reason for God - Tim Keller

Faith and Doubt - John Ortberg

Mere Christianity – C.S. Lewis

Who is this Man? – John Ortberg

Jesus was a Jew – Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

Prodigal God - Tim Keller

The End of Reason – Ravi Zacharias

Why Jesus – Ravi Zacharias

Jesus Among Other Gods – Ravi Zacharias

Evidence that Demands a Verdict – Josh McDowell

When the Game is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box – John Ortberg

Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus – Michael L. Brown

The Great Divorce – C.S. Lewis

Six Great Ideas - Mortimer J Adler

Nothing Created Everything – Ray Comfort

You Can Lead an Atheist to Evidence But You Can't Make Him Think – Ray Comfort

Any Book by Ravi Zacharias or Tim Keller that looks interesting to you

## **Links**

<http://www.jewsforjesus.org/welcome>

<http://www.jewsforjesus.org/apologetics-links>

<http://discover.redeemer.com/>

<http://sermons2.redeemer.com/>

<http://www.redeemer.com/#whois>

<http://www.mppc.org/learn/sermons>

<http://www.ariel.org/>

<http://www.mppc.org/sermons/sermon-library>

<http://vimeo.com/30771866>

## **Bible Verses**