

Review: Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, Crossway, Wheaton, IL, 2004

Pages: 442

Covers Many Bases Well

This lengthy book posits a twelve-step syllogistic argument to prove God's existence and hones in on why the Christian God is the one true God.

A clever box-top analogy of correct *a priori* philosophical assumptions shows how the materialist errs from the beginning and will never be able to discover truth. The Bible puts this well in II Timothy 3.7 as people who are, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth".

The only downside of the authors' ontological position is an acceptance and use of the Big Bang model, which, given its fudge factors like cosmic inflation, dark matter, dark energy, the Nebular Hypothesis, etc., is patently absurd.

Foreword (pp. 8-12)

Preface (pp. 13-14)

Introduction (pp. 17-33)

The five most important questions in life are:

1. Where did we come from.

2. Who are we?
3. Why are we here?
4. How should we live?
5. Where are we going?

Some people *volitionally* reject Christianity.

Agnostics are not really agnostic because they have faith that agnosticism is true!

A twelve-step progression or syllogism is proposed:

1. Truth is knowable.
2. True and false are opposites (i.e. the Law of Non-Contradiction.)
3. God exists because of the Cosmological, Teleological, and Moral Arguments.
4. If God exists, miracles are possible.
5. Miracles can confirm God's Word.
6. The New Testament is historically reliable (i.e. Early Testimony, Eyewitness Testimony, Authenticity).
7. The NT claims Jesus is God,
8. Jesus' claims were confirmed by His miracles (i.e. prophecy fulfilment, sinless life, and resurrection).
9. Jesus Is God.

10. Whatever Jesus says is true.

11. Jesus taught the whole Bible was the Word of God.

12. Anything against the Bible is false.

Friedrich Nietzsche said, “It is our preference that decides against Christianity, not arguments.”

God has provided enough evidence in this life to convince anyone willing to believe, yet he has also left some ambiguity so as not to compel the unwilling.

I) Can We Handle Truth (pp. 35-50)

People demand truth in everything but morality and religion.

Truth is: discovered; trans cultural; unchanging; unaffected by attitude; absolute by definition.

It is highly useful to be able to detect self-defeating arguments (like “nothing-but statements” and “everything is relative” which fallaciously beg the question).

Frank Morison wrote *Who Moved the Stone*.

Religious pluralism erroneously states that “all religions are true”.

The issue with judging is always whether or not we make the right one.

II) Is Religion Evil? (pp. 51-69)

Believing error can have deadly consequences.

In the mid-1960s, A. J. Ayer created Logical Positivism, which states that something is only meaningful if can be empirically verified (which fails its own criteria!).

Immanuel Kant claimed that the truth is we cannot know any truth about the real world (again, which defeats itself as it is making a truth claim about the real world).

Discovering truth begins with knowledge of logic's first principles.

All laws legislate morality, the only question is whose!

III) In the Beginning There Was a Great Surge (pp. 73-94)

Those who don't believe in the law of causality must answer what *caused* them to come to that conclusion!

SURGE stands for the:

-Second Law of Thermodynamics.

-Universe which is expanding. Aristotle said nothing is what rocks dream about. This was first discovered by Bell Labs in New Jersey on their antenna.

-Radiation of the universe (cosmic microwave background).

-Great Galaxy Seed. This hypothesises that variations ("ripples") in the CMB allowed galaxies to cluster [?!?]

-Einstein's Theory of General Relativity which demands an absolute beginning for time.

The Cosmic Rebound Theory suggests the universe has been expanding and contracting forever, however, it denies the Second

Law of Thermodynamics as there is no net energy loss between 'cycles'.

Science is meant to be a search for causes.

If all uranium atoms were infinitely old, they would all be lead by now.

IV) Divine Design (pp. 95-112)

Apollo 13 had its disastrous mission on April 13, 1970. Oxygen tank 2 exploded and damaged oxygen tank 1. To save power, the astronauts left the command module and went into the lunar module, however, they still had to circumnavigate the moon to get back to earth.

At 25% oxygen atmospheric content there would be spontaneous fires.

Spaceship reentry must be between an angle of 5.5° and 7.3° against the horizon, otherwise it will either bounce off or burn up. The Apollo 13 crew had to use the command module for this as the lunar one didn't have a heat shield. Parachute deployment was also essential, otherwise the capsule would have impacted the ocean at 300mi per hour.

Atmospheric transparency is a design feature so we can see the universe with the naked eye.

Moon-Earth gravitational interaction helps with sea current movement and rotational stability.

CO₂ levels and gravity must be precise.

Solar system planetary centrifugal forces precisely equilibrate gravitational forces so that there are orbits.

Jupiter's huge gravitational field acts as a cosmic vacuum cleaner.

The earth's 23.5° axial tilt towards the sun allows for seasons to exist.

Seismic activity allows mineral recycling from the sea back onto the continents.

On 1 February, 2003, *Columbia* disintegrated at 12,500mi per hour upon reentry into the atmosphere.

V) The First Life: Natural Law or Divine Awe? (pp. 113-135)

The four nucleotides have nitrogen bases.

The information in the nucleus of a one-celled amoeba is more than in 30 *Encyclopaedia Britannicas*, and the whole cell as over a thousand.

Forensic science [dangerously] relies on the principle of uniformitarianism.

DNA relies on protein for its production yet DNA codes for protein construction creating a vicious circle for the atheist. Fred Hoyle invented "panspermia" ("seeds everywhere").

Reductionism posits that life can be reduced to its chemical constituents completely.

Science cannot prove the existence of any of the following:

1. The laws of mathematics and logic.
2. Metaphysical truths (e.g. that minds exist).

3. Objective ethical judgments.
4. Objective aesthetic judgments.
5. The scientific method itself.

This proves that science requires philosophy in order to work.

Further, if just one spiritual experience in the world is true, then materialism is false.

Defense of the existence of reason by using reason itself is self-defeating.

An effect cannot be greater than its cause.

VI) New Life Forms: From the Goo to You via the Zoo? (pp. 137-167)

The human brain can contain information equivalent to twenty million books.

Tautologies don't prove anything.

An irreducibly complex system (ICS) is one in which the removal of a certain number of parts will permanently incapacitate the functioning of the whole (e.g. a car engine).

Darwinism cannot tolerate an ICS as the 'evolving' organism must always be function by definition.

Transitional forms are nonviable.

The two main features of the fossil record are stasis and sudden appearance (i.e. the Cambrian explosion or biology's 'Big Bang'). Ninety-nine percent of an organism's biology resides in soft anatomy.

Allowing the possibility of God would relinquish the atheist's claim of superior authority. Darwinists would also risk losing financial security and professional admiration.

Sexual freedom is also a popular motivation behind evolutionary dogma.

VII) Mother Teresa vs Hitler (pp. 169-196)

Without justice, injustice is meaningless.

Making excuses is a tacit admission that Moral Law exists.

Sociality is *descriptive*, where morality is *prescriptive*.

Indians believe that cows may possess the souls of deceased human beings.

Ronald Reagan said, "I've noticed that all those in favour of abortion are already born".

Prescriptions always have prescribers.

VIII) Miracles: Signs of God or Gullibility? (pp. 197-219)

Revelation of God may be natural or general.

Multiple infinite Gods are ruled out by deductive reasoning since two beings by definition must differentiate, and to be different either must lack something in which case it would be inferior.

Jewish pantheist Spinoza's (1670) objection to miracles was that natural laws are immutable.

The four fundamental forces are gravitation, magnetism, strong, and weak nuclear forces.

David Hume (1711-1776) said that because miracles are rare occurrences their probability is always lower than non-miracles and so could never happen.

“If there is a God who can act, there are acts of God.”

God causes *providential* events indirectly (e.g. a fog before the D-Day invasion).

Evil is like rust to a car.

Pharaoh's magicians couldn't imitate the third miracle of creating life.

Satanic materials are *supernormal* acts.

Psychosomatic cures are psychological.

IX) Do We Have Early Testimony About Jesus? (pp. 221-249)

In AD66, General Vespasian (father of General Titus) was sent to quash the Jewish revolt.

Flavius Josephus finished the *Antiquities of the Jews* about AD93.

Ananus the younger took advantage of a gap in Roman rule to kill James in 62AD.

All authors mentioning Jesus outnumber mentioning Tiberius 43-to-10.

Homer's *Iliad* has about 1,800 manuscripts.

Counting all the Fathers, there are a million NT manuscripts.

Bruce Metzger said the *Mahabharata* is 90% accurate and the *Iliad* 95%.

Tests of historical reliability include:

- Early sources.
- Eyewitness testimony (multiple and independent is best).
- "Coherence with dissimilarity".
- Eyewitness character.
- Corroborating archaeological evidence.
- Enemy attestation.
- Inclusion of embarrassing or self-incriminating details.

Common objections to reliability are:

- History cannot be known (no jury could ever reach a verdict!). Every negation implies an affirmation.
- The NT contains miracles which are impossible.
- The NT writers were biased.
- Converted people are too biased.

Jude was almost certainly dead by AD100.

Clement wrote from Rome AD95.

Ignatius was writing from Smyrna in Asia Minor c107AD, and Polycarp from AD110.

Most NT books were written before AD70 (the date of the destruction of the Temple which is not mentioned in any book).

Paul was executed during Nero's reign which ended AD68, and James in AD62. This means Acts was written before AD62.

Luke references Acts and so must be antecedent (perhaps one or two years).

The Dead Sea Scroll fragments somehow prove Mark's gospel was written 50-70AD.

The first letter to the Church of Corinth is accepted as AD62 at the latest.

Those in an oral culture can easily remember events fifteen to forty years-old.

A myth cannot crowd out historical events while the eyewitnesses are still alive. This is why Holocaust denial is only able to arise in modern times.

The five hundred witnesses in I Corinthians 15 are not named since many people weren't literate and they would have passed on their stories only orally.

X) Do We Have Eyewitness Testimony About Jesus? (pp. 251-274)

A Roman cohort was called a *chiliarch*.

In Acts, Luke recalls thirty-five miracles with eighty-four details.

With haematopoiesis blood vessels rupture due to extreme stress.

Archaeology confirms the use of stone water jars.

Bethany is precisely fifteen stadia (~two miles) to Jerusalem.

Caiaphas was in office from AD18-37. His ossuary was found in 1990.

Annas was high priest from AD6-15.

The crucifixion was recorded in Josephus, Tacitus, Lucian, and the Talmud.

From 20BC to AD70, the Jews would exhume bodies and place their remains in a small limestone box called an ossuary.

XI) The Top Ten Reasons We Know the New Testament Writers Told the Truth (pp. 275-297)

The Gospel of Peter is an apocryphal forgery.

XII) Did Jesus Really Rise From the Dead? (pp. 298-326)

The last recourse of the sceptic is that the NT authors were deceived:

-The Hallucination Theory (large groups experience hallucination).

-The Witnesses Went to the Wrong Tomb.

-The Swoon Theory (it is highly unlikely Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus embalmed a still-alive Jesus).

-The Disciples Stole the Body.

If 'extraordinary' means repeatable no historical event can be proven.

XIII) Who Is Jesus: God? Or Just a Great Moral Teacher? (pp. 327-354)

The Great Isaiah Scroll is dated from 100BC.

Schlomo Yitzchaki (c1040-1105) first posited that Israel itself was the Suffering Servant.

The Trinity may be beyond *understanding*, but it is not beyond *reason*.

XIV) What Did Jesus Teach About the Bible? (pp. 355-376)

The Apostles appear to have lost the ability to perform miracles in the mid-60sAD.

XV) Conclusion: The Judge, the Servant King, and the Box Top (pp. 377-388)

Appendix I) If God, Why Fail? (pp. 389-401)

If God were to do away with evil he would have to do away with free choice.

Forced freedom is self-contradictory.

Love takes risks.

Appendix II) Isn't That Just Your Interpretational? (pp. 402-408)

Appendix III) Why the Jesus Seminar Doesn't Speak for Jesus? (pp. 409-411)

The Jesus Seminar was founded by an atheist Robert Funk and seventy-plus other “Scholars”) in 1985.

Notes (pp. 412-447)