

How Can I Be Sure God Exists?

David Halbrook

Modern society is filled with skepticism instead of trust (sometimes for good reason), and as a result, many people doubt the certainty of everything, even the existence of God. This is growing with the popularity and publicity of some atheists, some of whom are starting a cable TV channel!

Some skeptics become cynical and suspicious, but others dig hard for answers and require evidence before belief—these can learn the certainty of God's existence. How?

Order in the physical world (day/night, seasons, and other cycles) makes us sure *someone* had a plan since accidents, chaos, and disorder never produce order, much less ongoing, uninterrupted order. Man could not build or order the earth or heavens, so we can be sure that a non-human being set them in order. Herein is certainty that God exists (knowing which god is the true God is a separate, worthy issue).

The Bible similarly reasons with us: "...every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4). Using facts, evidence, and reason, the world and the Word can persuade us of the certainty of God's existence. Send us your questions or comments: WWW.QVCOG.COM

Editor's Note: For various reason, modern media keeps this question in the mind of many people but less often offers the evidence and reason which answers this question. Atheists are not the only people needing to consider basic topics like this. We all can prepare ourselves to give a *reason* for the hope within us that is built upon God's existence. Use our article in *Arkansas Weekly* to encourage others to learn or remember the certainty of the evidence which answers this question.

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians among us.

Is anyone willing to fill the signboard by the road during October? (Eph. 4:16)

Join us each Sunday at 10AM (classes), 10:45AM, & 5PM and Wednesday at 7PM.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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For The Truth's Sake: Shun Hypocrisy

Ron Halbrook

For the Truth's sake, we must learn to avoid hypocrisy in all forms. God condemns it repeatedly. Preachers and teachers of the Word can be as guilty as anyone else. Jesus told the Jews, "All therefore whatsoever (the Pharisees) bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matt. 23:3). Paul asked, "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" (Rom. 2:21) When Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," he referred to hypocritical judgment (Matt. 7:1-5). We must "judge righteous judgment," not condemning what we allow or allowing what we condemn for the sake of man's favor (Jn. 7:24).

Hypocrisy comes in many forms. (1) Men often try to appear "better" than they are. Men "join the church" of their choice, because the community "expects" it, without ever examining the Bible to see what God's choice is! (Matt. 7:15-27). Meeting community standards in religion, while disobeying God's Word, is hypocrisy. Community approval is the only "reward" for such religion, for God rejects it (Matt. 6:1ff).

(2) Men often try to appear "worse" than they are. Peter tried to blend in with unbelievers, by denying the Lord. When the Lord "looked upon Peter," he "went out, and wept bitterly" (Lk.11:54ff). Some Christians today need that same repentance: "let your laughter be turned into mourning" (Jas. 4:9). To laugh with our friends at immoral jokes, to have a "social" drink with them, to smoke with them, and to use their cursing, is to destroy our influence by hypocrisy! God's children are to be "without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:15f).

(3) Men often claim sincerity in religion, but refuse discussion, examination, and debate. A child who works math problems but refuses to have his work discussed or examined, is NOT a sincere student. Jesus freely debated and discussed his doctrine

in public, as did his Apostles. There was a time when Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others would submit their doctrine to public debate "for the truth's sake." Now they generally refuse to debate such things as sprinkling for baptism, the purpose of Bible baptism, their creeds, instrumental music in worship, human organizations, etc.

(4) The sacramental system encourages hypocrisy. Some men teach that God "infuses grace into the soul" of one who partakes of the "sacraments" (certain religious acts). Unwittingly, this encourages people to think they can sin to their heart's desire and then "make it all right" by use of the "sacrament." Human sacraments are worthless to begin with, and only obedience "from the heart" to God's Word cleanses from sin (Rom. 6). (5) Modernism IS hypocrisy personified. Modernists claim to honor Christ while saying he was "wrong" on certain things, and to honor the Bible as God's Word while saying it contains contradictions and falsehoods (cf Heb. 4:15; 2 Tim. 2:16f). This is bald-faced religious hypocrisy, as practiced by Judas when he gave Christ the kiss, of death. Let us examine ourselves, that faith may work by love (Gal. 5:6). [Truth Magazine XXI: 21, pp. 332-333; 5-26-77]

The Jewelry Store Caper

One night, a group of thieves broke into a jewelry store. But rather than stealing anything, they simply switched all the price tags. The next day no one could tell what was valuable and what was cheap. The expensive jewels had suddenly become cheap, and the costume jewelry, which had been virtually worthless before, was suddenly of great value. Customers who thought they were purchasing valuable gems were getting fakes. Those who couldn't afford the higher priced items were leaving the store with treasures.

In our world someone came in and switched all the price tags. It's hard to tell what is of value and what is not. Great value is given to the accumulation of material wealth and the power that goes with it. The world puts a high price on popularity, prestige, beauty, and fame. But Jesus taught that such things are virtually worthless in the only "jewelry store" that matters: the kingdom of God. "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal*" (Matt. 6:19, 20).

[author unknown, Lafayette Heights Observer 4-18-10]

Created by God, Corrupted by Satan

Steven F. Deaton

The first chapter of the Bible records the creation of the world and all things in it (Gen. 1). The third chapter introduces the corruption of Satan (Gen. 3:1-6). This pattern of perversion has held true from that point on. However, this does not make creation itself a bad thing. When God finished making all things, including man, He considered it "very good" (Gen. 1:31). More specifically, God established the home (Gen. 2:24). From the beginning the devil has labored to destroy the home. He does so through a host of sins. Uriah's home was torn apart by adultery (2 Sam. 11). Other homes have fathers who turn against their own children, as Saul did with Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:30-33). There are homes in which the wife becomes the head, with the husband abdicating his duties, like Jezebel and Ahab (1 Kgs. 21:25). The list could go on and on. When some people see difficulties in families, they think the problem is the home itself, not sin. Thus, they work to undermine the home. Rather than attacking the home God created, people should attack the sin that contaminates it.

Further, God ordains government (Rom. 13:1-7). This, too, has been used by Satan to turn people against God. He has enticed men in positions of power to condemn the innocent (Matt. 27:24). Revelation shows how the Roman government was used by the devil to persecute Christians (Rev. 13). From this, some conclude that governments are inherently evil. Therefore, they condemn its very existence, like the "Jehovah's Witnesses." Instead of castigating the institution authorized by God, men should censure the corruption of the devil.

Additionally, God founded religion (Matt. 16:18). Satan, of course, did not leave this alone. In fact, perverted religion is a master weapon of the god of this world. He promotes everything from paganism to denominationalism to liberalism. Such distortions or praise leads men to condemn religion. It is ironic, though, that in condemning religion men create their own religion of worshipping man or nature in humanism/atheism. Rather than turning against religion, people should assault the error that adulterates it.

God created the home, government and religion. Thus, they are good. It is only through the corruption of the devil that these institutions become bad. Therefore, let us respect the things God established and condemn the sin that perverts them.