

God
is ~~not~~
Great

Atheism Isn't

~~Christopher
Hitchens~~

By John T Polk II

GOD Is Great, Atheism Isn't

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I have been asked if Christians should 'witness' to atheists, in light of Christopher Hitchens' book *God Is Not Great*. **Let me address two points: firstly, the concept of 'witnessing', and secondly, the claims made by atheists like Hitchens.**

1. LEAVE "WITNESSING" TO THE WITNESSES!

When the Bible itself (or its teaching) is attacked, the Christian reply should always begin with: "The Scripture says" (**Romans 10:11**) or, frequently, "It is written." Unfortunately, many people have been convinced, falsely, to present their own "Christian witness" instead of Scripture. Their subjective response leaves the attacker with personal opinion that is no better than the attacker's person opinion to the contrary!

A Christian should not attempt to "witness" to an atheist, if by "witnessing" one intends to give one's own personal testimony of what one has done to become a Christian, for it would be meaningless to an atheist. Truth be told, that is the same for all people!

We must share Paul's understanding that "we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake" (**2 Corinthians 4:5**), the reason being that "not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends" (**2 Corinthians 10:18**).

It is only by obeying the Holy Spirit-inspired word that one becomes a child of God (**Romans 6:1-7; 8:12-17**). A “witness” is someone who personally has seen an event or been miraculously given its facts (such as past prophets have been), but *no one living today has seen Jesus Christ's life and death in the flesh, or His resurrection, nor have they been given inspired knowledge of the Gospel apart from the written Word of God* (**1 Corinthians 14:37; Galatians 1:6-9**). Peter preached the miracles in Jesus' life and could claim:

We are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins (**Acts 10:39-43**).

It is only by preaching and teaching what is written in the Bible that anyone can be converted to its faith.

THE BIBLE IS A
"CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE" TEXTBOOK!

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (**Hebrews 11:1**) Faith is based upon "evidence" and it is a solid conviction of "things not seen." Since "faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (**Romans 10:17**), then *the best "evidence" for faith is "the word of God!"* **If not, why not?**

The Bible makes statements that point to external data, and that makes it a "Christian evidence" textbook. For example:

1. Every effect must have an adequate cause.

"For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things *is* God" (**Hebrews 3:4**); "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (**Genesis 1:1**); "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (**Hebrews 11:3**). All scientific evidences and facts prove that matter is not eternal and must have had a beginning.

2. There is magnificent design and order to life.

Jesus pointed to the inherent order in agriculture when He said:

For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come. (Mark 4:28-29)

Such order is impossible without the imposition of law from a Higher Power.

Speaking of the intricacies of human development and birth, **David** said:

You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. (Psalm 139:13-16)

The millions of details involved in each human's normal birth are mind-boggling, and faith-building, indeed. The birth of one human demands an imposing

attention to details totally impossible without completing the plan of God, the Maker.

Abraham “waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder [Greek, “technician, craftsman,” jtpII] and maker [Greek, “framer,” jtpII] *is* God” (Hebrews 11:10). Truly, the “technology” of life is impossible and nonsensical without the All-powerful, All-intelligent Creator God!

3. Life cannot/ has not/ will not come from non-living matter.

It is the “God, who made the world and everything in it...gives to all life, breath, and all things.” (Acts 17:24-25). There is no construction of material substance that has been brought to life without adding some living components to the experiment. Scientific fact shows that life had to be added to the material earth from an outside source in order for anything living to exist. It is only prejudiced ignorance that would attack Christian faith without dealing with what the Bible, itself, says!

2. ATHEISM EQUALS IGNORANCE

Speaking of “prejudiced ignorance,” one readily thinks of an “atheist,” a word meaning, “without faith in deity,” hence a person who is without faith in God. *No one can be an atheist without denying all the evidence for God's existence and the scientific conclusion that necessitates it is fact.*

In other words, atheists are known for what they confess they do not or cannot know. "Ignorance" is defined as "the absence of knowledge." *It is practically impossible, then, for any atheist to ridicule a believer's "faith" because a Bible-believer has evidence for that faith, but an atheist has reduced his or her intelligence to denial!*

The evidence for God is so abundant that an atheist can believe there is no God only by closing his/ her mind to the factual evidence that would prove otherwise! Atheists have a big void throughout their core intellect, and are as Gentiles,

In the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart (**Ephesians 4:17-18**)

By willfully omitting God from their consideration, the Atheists have "blacked out" their understanding, "gutted" their rationality, and grope about like blind people who have rejected any assistance they have been offered! Belief in God is a normal conclusion of a natural mind that has been given all the evidence.

Atheism is, thus, an unnatural response.

ATHEISTS ARE NOT CONSISTENTLY MORAL

Those who do “not like to retain God in *their* knowledge” are also known for their lack of redeeming qualities. They are “disobedient to parents, **undiscerning**, **untrustworthy**, **unloving**, **unforgiving**, **unmerciful**” and “deserving of death” (**Romans 1:28-32**). The “death” here is spiritual, not physical, because “God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.” It describes their spiritual separation from Him.

The “un” in the original text is an “a” in front of a word, thus negating the term used, just like “a-theist.” Listing sins of those who love themselves rather than God, Paul included “disobedient to parents, **unthankful**, **unholy**, **unloving**, **unforgiving**” (**2 Timothy 3:2-5**). Atheists are known for what they lack because they have a big, void throughout their moral core.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS IS NOT GREAT

Christopher Hitchens, an atheist writer of some note, is listed in **Wikipedia**, the free encyclopedia on Internet as: “known for his iconoclasm, anti-clericalism, atheism, antitheism, anti-fascism and anti-monarchism:” *all negative attitudes!* His objective case and kickative mood is manifestly “anti-.” A petulant child must learn to accept authority imposed by someone greater than the child, but

it's sad to see "adults" fighting against all authority but their own!

It is, therefore, surprising to note that Hitchens gained an American citizenship on his 58th birthday (April 13, 2007), obviously not "for God and country," but only "for country." His British anti-religious upbringing wasn't distinctive over there, and he must have realized only in a "religious" country could his negativism make a splash and cash!

His book titled, **God Isn't Great: How Religion Poisons Everything**, supposedly attacks the concept of religion altogether. It is interesting, however, that he wants to ridicule every religion's "god," but singles out "God" for his title. He wrote:

There still remain four irreducible objections to religious faith: **[1]** that it wholly misrepresents the origins of man and the cosmos, **[2]** because of this original error it manages to combine the maximum of servility with the maximum of solipsism, **[3]** that it is both the result and the cause of dangerous sexual repression, and **[4]** that it is ultimately grounded on wish-thinking." (ibid, p. 4, *bracketed numbers added, jtpII*)

To these "charges," we reply that:

1. He states, "...religion should simply add an apology for foisting man-made parchments and folk myths upon the unsuspecting..." (*ibid*, p. 205). He thus ignores or

“waves his hand at” the physical evidence for the creation and the flood in Noah’s day (Genesis chapters 1-3; 6-9), exactly what Peter said “scoffers” would do (2 Peter 3:1-9). *The “origins of man and the cosmos” in the Bible is the only account of such origins that is scientific and factual!*

What has Hitchens to offer that is better (more harmonious with scientific fact) than the Bible?

2. It is precisely because of the Creation and Flood accounts, that the worth of humans may be ascertained. God breathed man into “a living soul” (Genesis 2:7) and after the Flood, murder is forbidden because God made man “in His own image” (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6). The death penalty to murderers is sustained throughout both Old & New Testaments! Humans are *not* merely animals but should “have dominion” over the rest of the creation. No “solipsism,” here, it must exist in atheist Hitchens’ solipsistic mind!

[**so-lip-sism**, *noun*. Etymology: Latin *solus* alone + *ipse* self: a theory holding that the self can know nothing but its own modifications and that the self is the only existent thing; *also: extreme egocentrism*]

What reason can atheists give for the dignity and worth of humans?

How many “soulless” hospitals and ambulance services do they maintain?

3. Sex is repressed only to those who refuse God's plan for sexual happiness. Sexual intimacy is kept pure by:
 - a) One man's and one woman's devotion to each other for life (**Genesis 2:24; Hebrews 13:4; Romans 7:1-4**);
 - b) Condemning sexual abuses before and during marriage (**Matthew 19:9; Ephesians 5:22-33**); and,
 - c) Children being taught this purity (**Ephesians 6:1-4**).

People who try multiple marriages often abandon God or blame His marriage pattern as unworkable, rather than accept their own personal failure to thoroughly work God's way. Many seem to muddle through life without God's guidance, and when (or *if!*) they finally find God, they think He failed to find them first and seem to hold Him accountable for their sins!

Why do any atheists respect “marriage law” as constituted by God?

We might also ask:

Why do any atheists “marry”?

4. Rather than accepting the factual evidence for one God, one wife, one religion, one worship, and one Lord, Hitchens is the “wish-thinker” who fantasizes it to be otherwise. Jesus warned against following “many” into

their common destruction (**Matthew 7:13-14**), and Peter warned against those who “promise them liberty, [while] they themselves are slaves of corruption” (**2 Peter 2:19**). Hitchens may wish there was no God, no Creation, no end of the world, no Judgment, no sins, no need for salvation, no Jesus Christ, no Heaven and no Hell; but these cannot be “wished” away!

What have atheists “wished” in their place? If there is nothing beyond this life, then of what purpose is life itself?

TAKE OFF THOSE “GODLESS-COLORED” GLASSES!

This writer has never personally known, or known of, an ***atheist whose criticism of God didn't center outside the Bible and almost entirely dwelt upon the paganism, ritualism, weaknesses, sins, hypocrisies and, yes, idolatry, of the false practitioners of God's Way.***

Scripture itself acknowledges these, from the Garden of Eden in Genesis all the way through to the churches of Asia in the Book of Revelation. Jesus Christ also condemned the Pharisees, hypocrites, and sinners who either ignore or abandon God's principles (**Matthew chapters 23, 6, & 15**). How narrow-minded must one be to take *some* Scriptures as true accounts of the failures of faith and *not consider other* Scriptures as true accounts of the faithful?

The religions that are either based upon perverted Bible teachings or teachings from outside of the Bible altogether, mean nothing as arguments against what the Bible actually teaches. Hitchens begins every argument from his knowledge of worldly corruption and then he brings in an often-misrepresented Scripture to be falsely interpreted or misapplied! He may have memorized some Scriptures as a child, but has never learned to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15)!

WHO IS "GREATER"?

What makes the God of the Bible "Great" are not the people who practice in His Name, but the great things He has done to distinguish His Name! Since "our great God and Savior [is, jtpII] Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13), is Hitchens claiming by his book title that Jesus Christ is NOT "great?"

Jesus' wisdom made Him "greater than Solomon," and His resurrection from the dead made Him "greater than Jonah" (Matthew 12:39-42). Hitchens is not as wise as Solomon, nor has he been delivered from "the belly of the great fish," so if Jesus is "not great," then Hitchens is not as great as those of whom Jesus is "greater!"

We can only pray that the eyes of Hitchens, and those like him, will be opened before it's too late.

----- **John T. Polk II**

All Scriptures and comments, unless otherwise noted, are based on the New King James Version.

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