

IS GOD ON TRIAL?



By Larry Siekawitch

Many atheists and agnostics today claim there isn't enough evidence to state that God exists. They put the idea of God on trial, and their verdict is "not around" for the atheist and "probably not around" for the agnostic. But is God or the idea of God on trial? I want to begin my answer with an interesting passage of Scripture in Romans 9:19-21:

You will say to me, therefore, "Why then does he still find fault? For who resists his will?" On the contrary, who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? Will what is formed say to the one who formed it, "Why did you make me like this?" Or has the potter no right over the clay, to make from the same lump one piece of pottery for honor and another for dishonor?

The context of this passage is the sovereignty of God and the thorny issues that this doctrine entails in Romans chapter 9, perhaps the most difficult chapter in the entire Bible. The Calvinists and the Arminians each have their interpretations and the answers to the questions the opposing side inquires. We won't get into that question today, but I do want to suggest that Paul is using excellent logic here. If there is a God, then who are mere humans to challenge Him? Let's put this logic to our question: "If there is a Supreme Creator of all (God), then it is illogical for the creation to put Him on trial." The atheist will often retort that this logic isn't sound, because when we substitute something else in the place of God, it reveals that it is perfectly acceptable to question its existence. For instance, substitute "Flying Spaghetti Monster" for "God," and we reveal that there is nothing wrong with questioning the existence of a Flying Spaghetti Monster, so there is nothing wrong with questioning the existence of God. Allow me to show why this substitution is not acceptable.

In the field of philosophy called apologetics, there is an age-old debate between presuppositionalism and evidentialism. Presuppositionalism is the idea that God's existence must be presupposed, because God exists and therefore should not be the subject of a laboratory experiment; He should be worshiped. If God does exist, it is hard to refute this argument. Genesis 1:1 presupposes God's existence: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Since God is omnipresent, to argue that He doesn't exist while He is standing right next to you, is kind of silly. I can hear Him say, "Who are you, a human being, to claim that I don't exist?" Evidentialism claims that since we can show logical arguments of God's existence, we should start there. We should assume that it is our responsibility to convince the agnostic or atheist that they are indeed wrong. Both views seem to have some good points. David Clark wrote of what he calls "soft evidentialism," where the points of presuppositionalism are true, but since God has given good evidence, we should show the evidence, without going so far as to say that the agnostic is justified if the apologists can't show a convincing argument. Though the Bible presupposes God's existence throughout, it gives a test for the true God (Isaiah 41:21-24) and wrestles with difficult questions surrounding our existence in a broken world (Job, Habakkuk, Psalm 73). The Flying Spaghetti Monster is something Richard Dawkins made up and has no evidence supporting it. It doesn't exist, so we do not find ourselves in the conundrum of denying its existence in its presence.

If God exists, then the scenario we have today is similar to a commercial for a bank I saw several years ago. In the commercial it starts with these giant bankers looking down on a few tiny, ant-sized borrowers and laughing at them. The point of the commercial was that their bank treated people with dignity and respect, unlike those giant banks. How is this commercial like what I am describing? God is the giant banker who has every right to look down on tiny humans who are complaining that God didn't give them enough evidence, but He is also the new bank that reaches out to the tiny people, showing them respect. God is God, and we are not, but God became a human to show us His care and concern for us. There is enough evidence for the honest enquirer, even though God didn't have to stoop down to our accusations. As I have argued in my books, God has given enough evidence to the open-minded to believe, but not enough to force the unwilling to capitulate. He didn't have to give us any evidence, He could have left us in our sin, but He did give us general revelation in nature, special revelation in the Bible, and He came down to visit us in the person of Jesus Christ. The mic drop is the resurrection of Jesus. The most likely conclusion after reviewing all the evidence is that Jesus rose from the dead. If He did, then God exists. We don't need endless solutions to all the supposed problems atheists and agnostics throw at us with their cute memes and blasphemous diatribes. Bertrand Russell was asked what he would say if after he died, he found out God did exist. He smugly stated, "Not enough evidence." He is dead. If he met God, I guarantee that is not how he responded.

*Why am I saying all of this? God is not on trial. He never has been, and He never will be. He does exist, and atheists and agnostics would be wise to practice humility and continue seeking after God. Don't give up. Your eternal existence is at stake. The stakes are way too high to casually stop searching in honest inquiry. There certainly has not been any evidence given that is overwhelmingly in favor of the non-existence of God. Most atheists and agnostics have a philosophical bent to them, so digging into the arguments given by Christians should at least be interesting. Have an open mind; what do you have to lose? William Lane Craig has resources to get you thinking. Check him out at Reasonable Faith (Reasonablefaith.org). Hugh Ross is another resource at Reasons to Believe (Reasons.org). Paul Copan has some interesting articles (<http://www.paulcopan.com/articles/>). Pride is the one thing that will keep us from discovering God. He has spoken clearly in His word (see my book *The Uniqueness of the Bible*) and in creation (see my book *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*). He has come down to rescue us in His Son Jesus Christ who loves us and wants to save us from our pride and sin.*

