

IS OUR FAITH BLIND – PART II

Atheists Question: Isn't our faith in God blind. After all, what evidence is there that a God you cannot touch or see actually exists?

We began by examining the veracity of the Bible (a personal love letter from God in which our history, intimate details of how God created the world and our relation to Him) and concluded based on the evidence found it to be the absolute truth. We now turn to other evidence that God exists such as: our conversion stories, answered prayers, creation and the ongoing existence of the church.

Conversion Stories

The way in which people's lives are radically changed when they give their heart to Christ is truly a miracle! Acts 4:13 tells us of the story of Peter and John's encounter with the Sanhedrin. Peter and John were preaching the Gospel message to the Jewish people. The captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them and had them thrown into prison for having preach Jesus and His resurrection. When questioned by the Sanhedrin the next day they stood their ground and boldly proclaimed the Jesus Christ crucified and raised from the dead. The people were astonished by their courage and wisdom! How could two unschooled men take on the Sadducees or the priests and yet still make more sense than they did concerning Christ? Schooling does not mean we are wise. It is not until we take what we have learned, allow the Spirit of God to examine and approve that learning, and put it into action does it become true wisdom. The point is simply that when God says "if anyone is in Christ they are a new creation, the old has gone and the new is here" He is stating being born again is the most radical transformation process one can ever go through! It is this radical transformation process that is proof that God exists.

Some of the most insignificant, lost and broken people have defied all odds and have done great things in God's kingdom. This is why Scripture says: After all, 1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (NIV) - ²⁶ Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. Let us look at some of these exciting people that God chose to demonstrate His power.

Paul is one of those radical conversion stories that is a true miracle! Paul's reaction to hearing about Jesus Christ initially was one of indignation and violence. He got letters from the high priests to take anyone who belonged to the Way and have them imprisoned at Jerusalem. Paul spoke murderous threats to Christians and he was present for the stoning of Stephen with full approval even though sentencing someone to death was illegal for the Jewish people to carry out. Then, on the road to Damascus Paul meets Jesus Christ and he does a 180 degree turn and instead of persecuting Christians he proclaimed the Gospel message while others

persecuted him: 2 Corinthians 11:23–28 (NIV) - ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

When God touched Moses he was radically changed. When Moses first met God at the burning bush he was full of excuses! First, he said he was not qualified (Exodus 3:11). How could this be when he was second in command of Egypt so he had the leadership skills. He was trained by the very best Egypt had to offer so he was well equipped to run a nation. The second excuse was that he did not have enough theological training (Exodus 3:13). Who shall I tell them sent me? Moses who had received one of the best educations Egypt had to offer was afraid he was not educated enough? Moses then said what if they will not believe me (Exodus 4:1). God told Moses that he would perform miracles in the name of God and then they would believe. Finally, Moses says he is not an eloquent speaker so send someone else (Exodus 4:10). God then told him Aaron could speak for him, which of course we find out later this was unnecessary because Moses was an eloquent speaker. All of these excuses point to the fact that Moses started out very timid and unwilling to lead Israel. After the burning bush, we find Moses is one of the boldest leaders that God ever chose. After all, it was Moses who asked Pharaoh to let his people go and then through the power of God issued in 10 plagues on Egypt!

Answered Prayers

People talk to God everyday and ask Him to fulfill their requests. Often God performs miracles that defy the laws of human nature and leave the atheists and us absolutely stunned in His glory! A miracle is something an event that happens by the hand of God in which the laws of nature seem to be set aside. Being of heavenly origin, miracles are not verifiable by the human senses and as such are not verifiable by scientific reason. An atheist at this point would object to miracles because the laws of nature to them are absolute. This logic of course only holds true when the laws of nature cannot be changed. When a man raises a weight from the ground, the law of gravity is neither suspended nor violated, but counteracted by a stronger force. The same is true as to the walking of Christ on the water and the swimming of iron at the command of the prophet. A greater force Jesus Christ commands the laws of nature to obey Him.

In the OT the miracles are mostly associated with creation, Israel's deliverance from Egypt and establishment in the promised land. The only other major category of miracles in the OT came from the prophets Elisha and Elijah. In the NT there are three kinds of miracles:

healings, exorcisms and nature miracles. The Bible Encyclopedia lists 124 major miracles but John states at the end of his Gospel that “if you wrote down all the miracles Jesus did the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written” (John 21:25).

The miracles written in the Bible testify to God’s existence and power over this world. Who could ever hear the following miracles and not remain speechless at the amazing power of God:

1. The destruction of **Sodom and Gomorrah** (Genesis 19:24) in which God rained down sulfur from the heavens completely destroying all but Lot and his daughters.
2. The **Red Sea** that was divided just in time to save Israel but later collapses and consumes the Egyptians (Exodus 14:12-31).
3. The **WALLS OF JERICHO** fall down at God’s command, after the Israelites prove their faith in Him (Josh. 6:6-20)
4. **SUPERNATURAL FIRE** in response to Elijah’s prayers (1 Kings 18:19-39)
5. **EXORCISM**—Jesus Casts out a legion of demons and allows them to go into the pigs that rush into the water and drown (Matt 8:28; Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26)
6. **FOOD**—Jesus feeds 5,000 “in a desert place” (Matt 14:15; Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10; John 6:1-14)
7. **RESURRECTION**—Lazarus raised from the dead after (John 11:38-44)
8. **MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION**—the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35)

All of these miracles had substantial primary witness to attest that they really happened. Since the NT was almost fully written by AD 70, people who were alive at the time of Jesus could have refuted His miracles – especially His resurrection!

Creation

Romans 1:20 (NIV) - ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

1. **Universe.** The diameter of the observable universe is approximately 96 billion light years. This number of course means little to us unless we can understand what constitutes a light year. 1 light year represents six trillion miles. At a salary of \$60,000 it would take 100 million years to make 6 Trillion Dollars or a light year. Travelled in a car at 60 miles an hour, 18 hours a day it would take 17 million years to travel one light year. The universe is 96 billion of these units! It literally beyond our comprehension in size and complexity.

2. **Humanity.** There are approximately 3 billion DNA letters that represent the mapping of a single cell in our bodies. To write these letters out one would fill approximately 8,000 books. The body has approximately 100 trillion cells that must work in tandem to allow the body to function.

Both the universe and the body testify to God's existence because this kind of complexity must be governed by someone: GOD!

Ongoing Existence of the Church

The church's existence even in the face of incredible persecution is a testimony that Jesus exists and has been protecting His body. During the Roman times of the first century persecution of the church was rampant. Having been accused of atheism (they did not believe in all gods but only in one God), treason for not wanting to participate in emperor worship, immorality for incest (loving their brothers and sisters) and cannibalism (drinking the blood and eating the body of a person); the Roman empire persecuted early church fiercely.

1. **Nero (54-68 AD)** – Christians were torn apart by dogs and lit on fire so that his guests could see at parties.
2. **Domitian (81-96)** – Buried Christians alive
3. **Trajan (98-117)** – Executed all Christians who refused to recant their faith to worship the emperor
4. **Decius (249-251)** – Executed anyone who did not worship multiple gods and the emperor
5. **Diocletian (284-305)** – Determined to kill all Christians before his emperorship was done

Even though Christians faced approximately 250 years of intense persecution a lawyer named Tertullian stated the following: "The blood of martyrs was seed for God's kingdom – no matter how many the Emperor killed more and more said yes to God!" God truly does build His church and the gates of hell can't touch it (Matthew 16:18)!

Conclusion

When an atheist asks: Is our faith blind the following points can be given as to reasons why we have hope in Jesus Christ:

1. The Bible, a personal love letter exists that has been proven to be supernaturally written by Him to us explaining that He does indeed exist
2. Conversion stories of people radically changing their lives is proof God exists
3. Answered prayers in the form of miracles is proof God exists
4. The complexity of the universe and the human body is proof that God exists

5. The perseverance of the church despite the desire of Emperors to destroy it is proof that God exists

Our faith is far from blind for the Gospel message is the power of God that has brought us salvation!