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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Bereans “received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.”

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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

**James 1:19
Lesson #2
Is God There?
06/1/2025**

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A child is asked to define faith



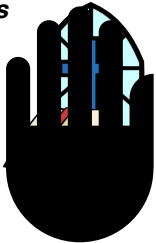
“Faith is believing something you know isn’t true.”

This view is shared by many adults as well?

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popular, serious, critics of theism



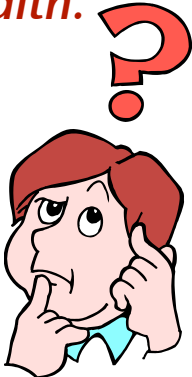
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Three challenging questions for the Christian faith.

✓ **Is God there? (materialism)**

✓ Does God care? (suffering)

✓ Is God fair? (pluralism)



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Respecting God’s existence is important for both skeptics and saints.

1 Peter 3:15

“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, **always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you**, yet with gentleness and reverence;”



One needs to recognize God the other needs to ratify God.

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A healthy Christian faith is:



- ✓ Intellectually **convincing**.
- ✓ Spiritually **satisfying**.
- ✓ Morally **transforming**.
- ✓ Socially **connecting**.
- ✓ Culturally **inspiring**.

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Three witness to the living God

1. God's image in our conscience. 
2. God's image in the creation. 
3. God's image in the Christ. 

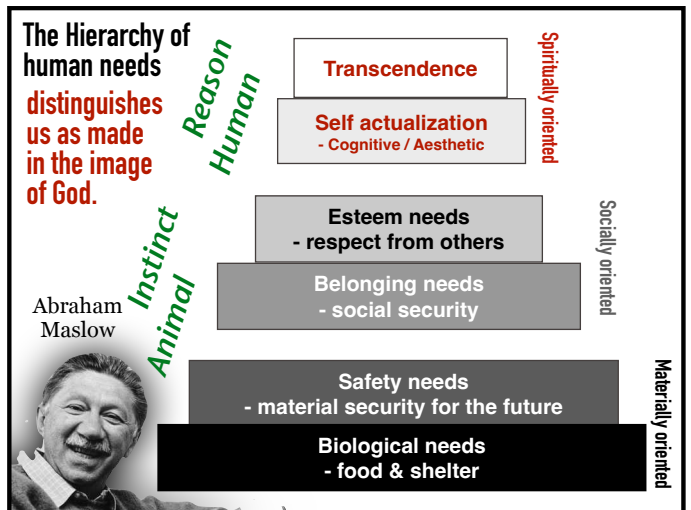


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1. God's image is in all humans.
Acts 17
 "26 and He made from one, every nation of mankind ... 27 **that they should seek God**, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though **He is not far from each one of us**; 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For **we also are His offspring**.'"
 Our "spiritual antennae" is **tuned to God's station**, but we tend to **change the channel**.

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The Hierarchy of human needs distinguishes us as made in the image of God.



The pyramid levels from top to bottom are:

- Transcendence** (Spiritually oriented)
- Self actualization** - Cognitive / Aesthetic (Spiritually oriented)
- Esteem needs** - respect from others (Socially oriented)
- Belonging needs** - social security (Socially oriented)
- Safety needs** - material security for the future (Materially oriented)
- Biological needs** - food & shelter (Materially oriented)

Labels on the left side of the pyramid: *Reason Human* (top), *Instinct Animal* (bottom).

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God's image in us includes:

- Antennae** - ability to connect with God.
- Appetite** - a longing for life and peace.
- Faith** - commitment to presuppositions that are unseen but necessary for a worldview.
- Reason** - a mental ability to make sense of data in life.
- Conscience** - an inner sense of right & wrong.
- Responsibility** - an inner sense duty & ability.

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2. God's image in creation gives us clues.
Romans 1
 "19 because that which is known about God is **evident within them**; for God made it **evident to them**. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, **have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made**, so that they are **without excuse**. ... 25 For **they exchanged** the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,"

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2. **God's image** in creation gives us clues.

- ✓ The universe had an **origin**.
- ✓ The universe is **ordered**.
- ✓ The universe is **designed for life**.
- ✓ The universe is seen as **beautiful**.
- ✓ We have a **moral / spiritual sense**.

The creation is not worthy of worship,
but it points us to the **Creator**,
who is worthy of worship.

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For many
the creation is
like a cut-flower

where we
embrace
its glory
and beauty

while denying
its root basis.



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3. **God's image** in Christ
reveals God in living color.

Colossians 1

"15 And He is the **image of the invisible God**, the first-born of all creation. 16 For **by Him all things were created**, ... 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the **fulness to dwell in Him**, 20 and through Him to **reconcile all things to Himself**, having made peace through the blood of His cross;"

Jesus is the visible form of God
Creator, Redeemer, Lord

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3. **God's image** in Christ
reveals God in living color.

John 1:9

"There was the true light which, coming into the world, **enlightens every man**."

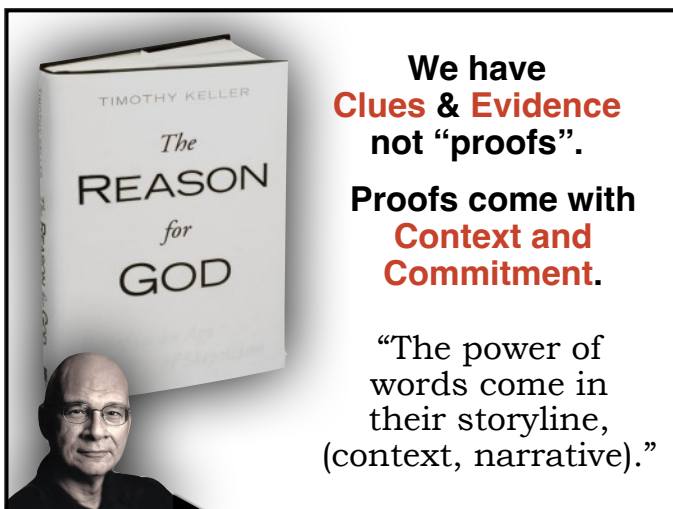
Jesus reveals the **nature of both God and man**.

John 6:68

"Lord, to whom shall we go? **You have words of eternal life**."

A strong "witness" to the Christian narrative may be **the hopelessness associated with the alternatives to it**.

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We have
Clues & Evidence
not "proofs".

Proofs come with
Context and Commitment.

"The power of words come in their storyline, (context, narrative)."

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Four views of Biblical inerrancy

	Treatment of information		Results of correct interpretation
	Scientific historical	Theological spiritual	
Absolute	perfect	perfect	perfect
Full	through human eyes	perfect	perfect
Limited	reflecting ancient culture	perfect	perfect
Purpose	reflecting ancient culture	reflecting ancient culture	perfect

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Tim Keller's clues for the existence of God:

1. The **existence of the universe** that is "Cosmos" not "Chaos" suggests a Creator. (Cosmological Argument)
2. The **conditions necessary for life** are so precise that they suggest intentional design. (Teleological Argument)
3. Objective **moral values** exist and require a moral lawgiver. (Moral Argument)
4. Belief in universal **human rights** requires a transcendent grounding. (Social Justice Argument)
5. The human experience of **beauty, love, and meaning** suggests something beyond the material world. (Human Longings Argument)
6. The **resurrection** is a historically credible event that validates Jesus' divine identity. (Resurrection Argument)
7. The **personal experiences of individuals** transformed by faith provide practical evidence. (Existential Argument)

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"As an atheist I believed that everything that made my life exciting and worth living was an illusion and that reality (philosophical materialism) was in the end intolerably boring."

"I know the sun exists not because I can see it but rather that by it I see everything else. I know that God exists, not because I see Him but because by Him I make sense of myself and the world."

C.S. Lewis



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"Today, we are learning the language in which God created life. We are gaining ever more awe for the complexity, the beauty, and the wonder of God's most divine and sacred gift."

"Collins' book reveals that a stellar career in science offers no guarantee of a scientific frame of mind."

Both are RIGHT?



Francis Collins



Sam Harris

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The tension between **science** & **theism** needs to be clarified.

1. Both need and use **FAITH & REASON**.

2. They differ in two areas.

- The "faith" assumptions they make.

Science limits reality to material data

Christianity adds the spiritual world

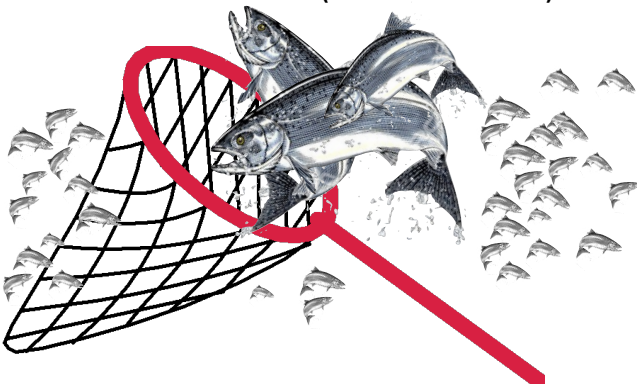
- The database they work with.

Science considers (material data only)

Christianity is open to (a broader database)

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Science is like a net with a mesh that will catch some of the fish (material data) but is too big to catch all the fish (nonmaterial data).



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We can understand a lot about cars by visiting a factory.



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But the factory does not reveal two important parts of the story.

Its Purpose



Its Operation



(the factory)

The factory offers a helpful but very **limited** perspective



The factory offers **hints** at possible origin and use

25

Understanding humanity

(origin)

The concept, design



(purpose)

The meaning, dignity



(what science cannot see)



(what science can see)

Science tells us about the **natural processes** of the physical body.



Science offers only **hints** at possible design and purpose beyond the biological.

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If there is no God
how do we answer
life's deepest
questions?



- ✓ **Mortality** - WHY do we die?
- ✓ **Meaning** - WHY are we here?
- ✓ **Morality** - WHY do we have morals?
- ✓ **Mysticism** - WHY are we spiritual?
- ✓ **Mankind** - WHY are we so unique?

NOTE: There are alternative answers but do they really make more sense?

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When we fail to see
beyond the cosmos
to the Creator God,
do we lose the sense of

**meaning,
purpose,
dignity,
& hope?**



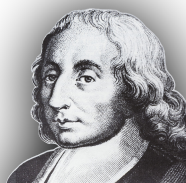
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"There is a **God shaped vacuum** in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but **only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus.**"

"Christianity does not simply make sense **to us**; it also makes sense **of us.**"

Blaise Pascal
(17th cent. pioneer scientist & theist)

Alister McGrath
(Anglican Priest &
Christian apologist)



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Hard Questions



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