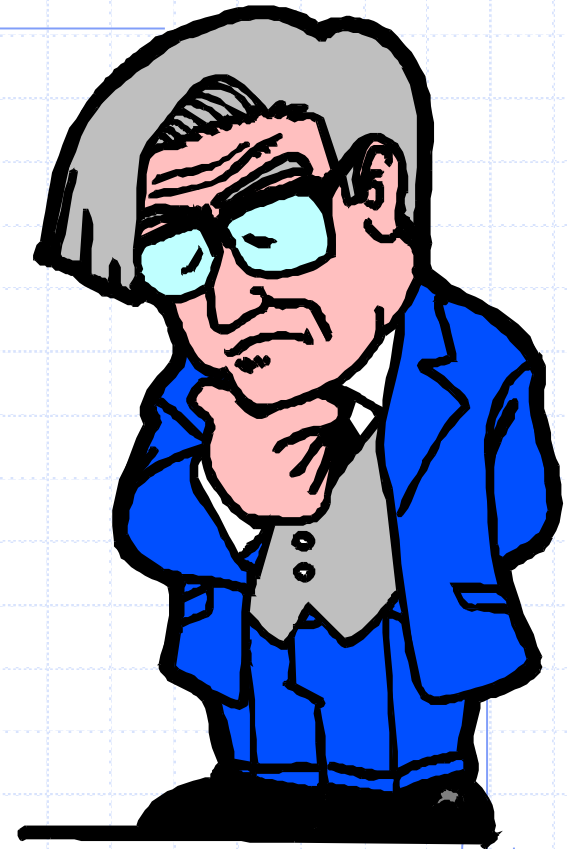


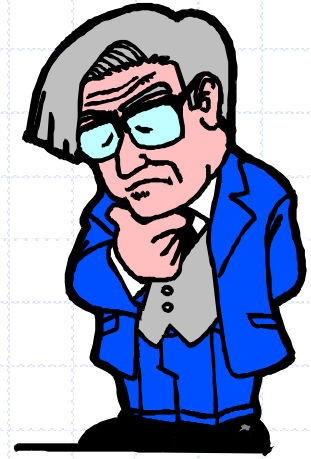
If God exists...

Why so many atheists?

Robert C. Newman



A fair question...



- ◆ ...deserving a fair answer.
- ◆ I believe biblical Christianity to be true...
- ◆ ...so I am not going to answer this question from the perspective of Islam, or liberal versions of Christianity, but from that of the God presented in the Bible.

The argument appraised

The structure of the argument:

- ◆ Consider an alternative question, which has the same structure:
 - If God doesn't exist, why so many theists?
- ◆ This is usually answered by claiming that theists are engaging in wishful thinking.
- ◆ Atheists, it is said, are not afraid to look at the facts, accepting reality in all its harshness.
- ◆ Let's see.

The argument appraised

- ◆ This may be true for some theists and for some views of God...
- ◆ ...but the God of the Bible does not look like the god a wishful thinker would invent:
 - ...needs nothing, so his favor cannot be earned.
 - ...sees even the most righteous as deserving punishment.
 - ...holds those who know him to a higher standard.
 - ...forgives the worst who repent, but condemns the most righteous who trust in themselves.

The argument appraised

- ◆ Seems more likely the atheists are wishful thinkers, who would hardly want a god who...
 - ...restricts their behavior and condemns their sins.
 - ...judges their actions and thoughts.

The argument appraised

In fact, there are not many atheists in the US, where:

- ◆ 44% are creationists
- ◆ 38% are theistic evolutionists
- ◆ 9% are uncertain
- ◆ 9% believe evolution was not guided by God



Wm Provine, *The Scientist* (9/5/88)

The argument appraised

- ◆ Let us return to the main argument.
- ◆ Would the Bible give us any reason to expect that atheists, whether few or many, might exist?
- ◆ I suggest there are two features in the Bible that would lead us to expect atheists:
 - The "silence" of God
 - The sinfulness of humans

The "Silence" of God

- ◆ Meaning: God is relatively hidden, as he does not continually intervene in the universe in an obvious way.
- ◆ Result: God allows his existence & presence to be ignored or his nature to be misinterpreted.
- ◆ This may be seen clearly in:
 - Psalm 50:21
 - Proverbs 14:12

The "Silence" of God

"These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought I was altogether like you."

Psalm 50:21

The "Silence" of God

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."

Proverbs 14:12

The "Silence" of God

- ◆ Why would God do this?
 - To demonstrate the true character of sin
 - ◆ Romans 1:21-32
 - To give room for genuine moral behavior
 - ◆ Ecclesiastes 8:11; Deuteronomy 13:1-3
 - To lead people to repentance
 - ◆ Romans 2:4
- ◆ Thus, according to the Bible, God has good reasons for not making his existence as obvious as he could.

The Sinfulness of Mankind

- ◆ Humans often suppress the truth to justify unrighteousness (Romans 1:18)
 - Fred Hoyle, *Galaxies, Nuclei & Quasars*
 - ◆ Don't waste time investigating cosmos with a beginning.
 - Barrow & Tipler, *Anthropic Cosm. Principle*
 - ◆ Avoid designer via multitude of universes.
 - Julian Huxley, *Ends & Means*
 - ◆ Meaningless universe lets us do what we want.
 - Robert Jastrow, *God & the Astronomers*
 - ◆ Einstein, *et al*, seeking to avoid a beginning.

The Sinfulness of Mankind

- ◆ Humans are easily deceived by others
 - 2 Timothy 3:13
 - Problem of specialization
 - ◆ Few know what the data looks like outside their own field.

- ◆ Thus, according to the Bible, humans have reasons for seeing the evidence for God as less obvious than it really is.

Why So Many Atheists?

- ◆ If the God of the Bible exists, and if humans are as described in the Bible, we should expect many atheists.
- ◆ So far, have only considered force of:
 - If God exists, why so many atheists?
- ◆ Is there any evidence for the existence of the God of the Bible?
- ◆ Yes, let's see.

Evidence for the Existence of the God of the Bible



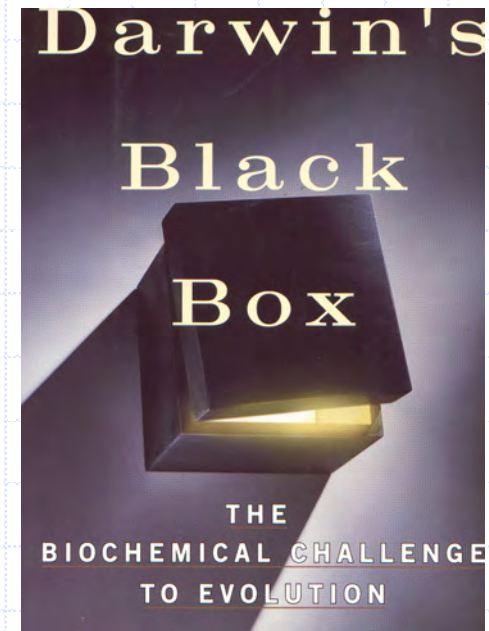
Design in Nature

- ◆ Organization of the simplest life
 - And the problem of random processes producing order.
- ◆ Design in complex organisms
 - And the problem of mutation + natural selection producing such
- ◆ Design in inanimate nature
 - "Fine-tuning" of the basic forces of the universe
 - Our privileged planet in this universe (a "rare Earth")

Design in Nature

Some books on this:

- ◆ Dembski, *Mere Creation*
- ◆ Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*
- ◆ Denton, *Nature's Destiny*
- ◆ Ross, *The Creator & the Cosmos*
- ◆ Ludwig, *Computer Viruses, Artificial Life & Evolution*



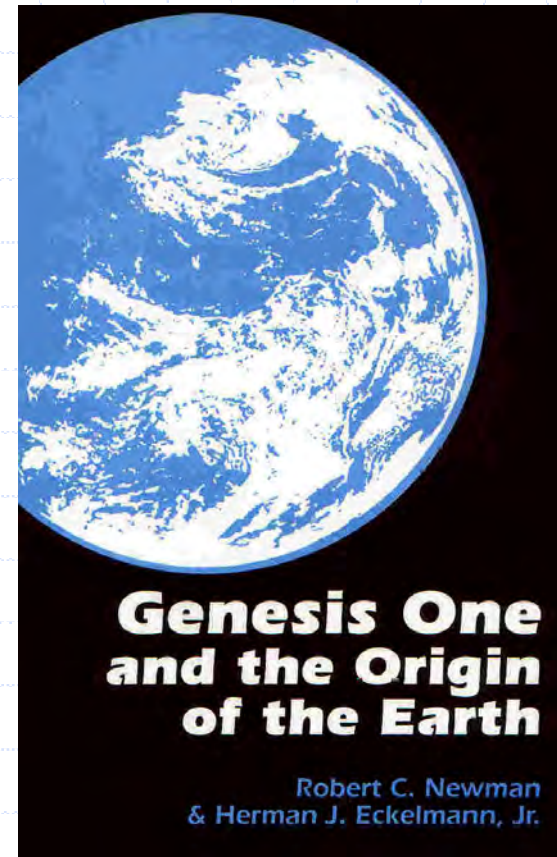
Cosmology

- ◆ Universe gives every indication of having a beginning in the finite past.
- ◆ The details of the best scientific model for the origin of the earth have a striking fit with Genesis One.

Cosmology

Some books on this:

- ◆ Ross, *The Fingerprint of God*
- ◆ Heeren, *Show Me God*
- ◆ Newman & Eckelmann, *Genesis One & the Origin of the Earth*



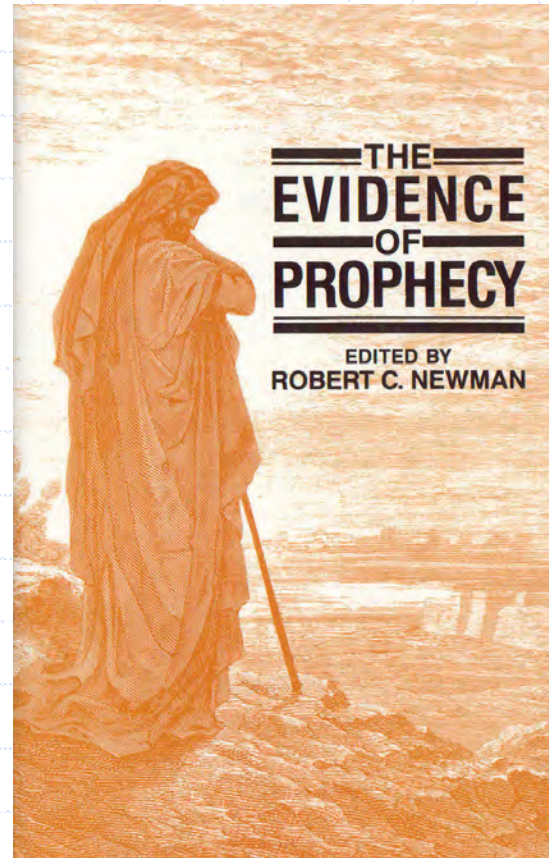
Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy

- ◆ The Bible contains numerous examples of fulfilled predictions.
- ◆ These are historically testable.
- ◆ Many of them can be shown to have been made before the fulfillment occurred.
- ◆ Many of these are beyond the power of humans to cause to happen.

Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy

Some books on this:

- ◆ Newman, *Evidence of Prophecy*
- ◆ Barfield, *The Prophet Motive*
- ◆ Montgomery, *Evidence for Faith*



Conclusions

- ◆ There is excellent evidence for the existence of the God of the Bible.
 - This has moral force, not deductive force.
 - It is not beyond quibbling.
 - But remember:
 - ◆ Silence of God
 - ◆ Sinfulness of humans
 - It is sufficient that we will have no valid excuse at the judgment.

Conclusions

◆ Pascal's Wager:

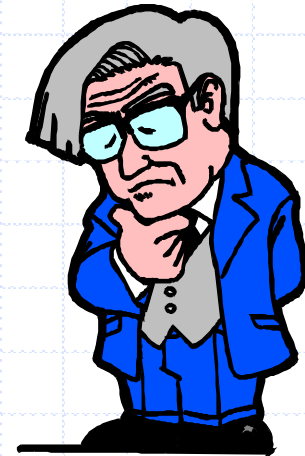
- There is an infinite loss if one bets against Christianity and is wrong.
- So at least spend your time in this life investigating religions with no second chance!

Conclusions

◆ The Gospel (Good News)

- All of us are in bad shape to stand before God on our own merits.
- God is just, and he will give us what we deserve.
- But God has provided a substitute, Jesus:
 - ◆ To provide our righteousness
 - ◆ To pay for our sins

The End



May it be the beginning of a new
life for you!