

# Why Atheism Cannot Be True

Robert C. Newman



# Atheism Cannot Be True

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- Because it cannot explain a universe with a beginning.
- Because it cannot explain the origin and complexity of life.
- Because it cannot explain Jesus.

# It cannot explain the universe

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- In an atheistic worldview, the universe must in some sense be eternal.
- The evidence of cosmology points strongly to a universe that had a beginning.
- Atheists are now reduced to postulating that outside our visible universe (which had a beginning) is a larger universe (we will never see) which had no beginning.
- Isn't this just blind faith?

# It cannot explain the universe

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- Recent discoveries indicate that the universe is very precisely put together to allow for life to exist.
- Obviously, if the universe didn't allow life, we wouldn't be here to observe it!
- But this precise "fit" is enormously more precise than anyone would have guessed.

# It cannot explain the universe

- This "fit" is more precise than one part in  $10^{100}$ .
- How big is  $10^{100}$ ?
  - $10^{28}$  grains sand 1 mi deep over whole earth
  - $10^{22}$  planets per universe
  - $10^{50}$  number of universes needed for enough grains of sand
- Our universe looks designed!

# It cannot explain life

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- Life is far more complex than anything else in the universe.
  - A simple bacterium would require 100 million pages to specify its structure.
    - Carl Sagan, "Life," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*
  - Life appeared rather suddenly on earth, just after it had cooled enough not to cook meat.
  - It looks like life was planted on earth.
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# It cannot explain life

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- The complexity of the simplest living things is far beyond the resources of our universe to have happened by chance.
  - More complex living things typically show up rather suddenly in the fossil record.
  - The major body plans of the animals all appear within 5 million years at the Cambrian explosion ~525 million yrs ago.
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# It cannot explain life

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- There have been no new body plans (*phyla*) for animals formed since then.
- This is the opposite of what one would expect from Darwinian evolution.
- The fossil record is characterized by:
  - Sudden appearance of new forms.
  - Virtually no change after the form appears.



# It cannot explain life

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- Transitional forms in the fossil record are too rare.
  - Given a world with no God, transitions have to occur by "random walks."
- Life looks like it was designed, and its development overseen, by a guiding mind.

# It cannot explain Jesus

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- He fulfills numerous striking prophecies in the Old Testament:
  - A light to the Gentiles
  - Cut off in the period AD 28-35
  - Solves several OT paradoxes
- He actually existed, and the sources about him look quite good if one does not assume miracles cannot occur.

# A Light to the Gentiles

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"And now, says the LORD, who formed you from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, in order that Israel might be gathered to Him.... He says, 'It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make you a light of the nations, so that My salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'" – Isaiah 49:5-6

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# A Light to the Gentiles

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- This fits Jesus beautifully!
- Of all those who have claimed to be the Messiah, only Jesus has started a world religion of Gentiles.
- Before Jesus came, few non-Jews believed in one God, much less the God of the Bible.
- Now, nearly 1/2 the world believes in the God of Abraham.

# Cut off in the period AD 28-35

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"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One [Messiah] comes, there will be seven 'sevens' and 62 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt, with streets and trench, but in times of trouble. After the 62 'sevens.' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing." – Daniel 9:25-26

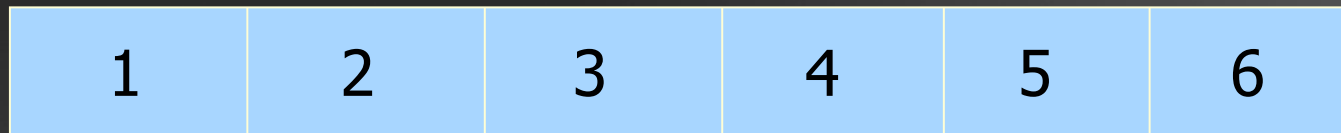
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# Cut off in the period AD 28-35

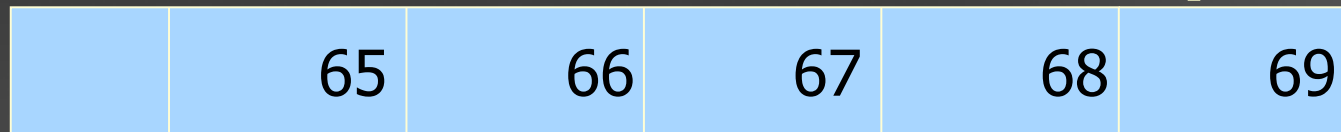
- The unit of time measurement appears to be the 7-year sabbath cycle.
- The starting point seems to be the command of King Artaxerxes 1 in his 20<sup>th</sup> year (445 BC), falling in the cycle 449-442 BC.
- Using the usual inclusive method of counting, the 69<sup>th</sup> cycle is 28-35 AD.

# Cut off in the period AD 28-35

449      ↓      442      435      428      421      414      407 BC



... AD 7      14      21      28 †      35



↓ Artaxerxes' decree, 445 BC

† Jesus' crucifixion, 30 AD

# Jesus solves several OT paradoxes

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- Born yet pre-existent
- King yet priest
- Humble yet exalted
- Suffering yet reigning



# Born yet pre-existent

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"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever." —  
Isaiah 9:6-7

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# Born yet pre-existent

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- Child born to us (Israel)
- He is Messiah
  - Rules from David's throne
  - Rule is eternal, ever-expanding
- He is given divine titles
  - Mighty God
  - Everlasting Father

# Born yet pre-existent

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- This fits the New Testament picture of Jesus.
- Born in Bethlehem at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.
- Almighty God taking upon himself human nature.

# King yet priest

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"The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, you will rule in the midst of your enemies. Your troops will be willing on your day of battle... The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.'" – Psalm 110:2, 4

# King yet priest

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- He is a king:
  - Scepter
  - Rules
  - Troops
- He is a priest
  - A priest forever
  - Like Melchizedek

# King yet priest

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- This fits the New Testament picture of Jesus.
  - He is pictured as a priest in the letter to the Hebrews chapters 4-10, and a king throughout the New Testament.
  - Because the Hebrew Bible keeps kingship and priesthood strictly separate, the author of Psalm 110 must go all the way back to the book of Genesis to a Gentile to find a righteous priest-king.
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# Humble yet exalted

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"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." – Zechariah 9:9

# Humble yet exalted

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- Israel's king comes to them on a very lowly, non-royal form of transportation, a donkey!
- One Gentile ruler kidded a rabbi that he would loan their Messiah a horse, so that he could come in style.
- The rabbi's reply: "You should see this donkey!"



# Humble yet exalted

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"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." – Daniel 7:13-14

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# Humble yet exalted

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- This second passage, unlike the one in Zechariah, has the Messiah coming in great glory, on the clouds of heaven.
  - One rabbi suggested that if Israel was worthy, the Messiah would come on the clouds of heaven, but if Israel was unworthy, then he would come lowly, on a donkey.
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# Humble yet exalted

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- But there is no hint that the comings pictured are possible alternatives.
  - The NT model of the Messiah has both comings as real & successive:
    - The Messiah comes first in lowliness, to suffer for our sins.
    - The Messiah comes a second time in power, to rescue his people & judge his enemies.
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# Suffering yet reigning

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- That the Messiah would reign is basically what the title means, "God's anointed king, who will rule a universal kingdom forever."
- There are several Old Testament passages that show him suffering:
  - Psalm 22
  - Zechariah 12
  - Isaiah 53
- We will just look at the last of these.

# Suffering yet reigning

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"See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness — so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand." —  
Isaiah 52:13-15

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# Suffering yet reigning

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In Isaiah 52:13-15, we see that:

- God's servant will be highly exalted.
- He will be disfigured so that many are appalled at him.
- He will sprinkle (i.e., cleanse) many nations.

# Suffering yet reigning

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"Who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not." – Isaiah 53:1-3

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# Suffering yet reigning

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The next three verses tell us:

- Who would have believed it?
- The servant has no beauty or majesty.
- He is despised and rejected.
- He is sorrowful and suffering.



# Suffering yet reigning

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"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." – Isaiah 53:4-6

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# Suffering yet reigning

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These next 3 verses tell us:

- The servant carried our sorrows, was punished for our sins.
  - But we thought God was punishing him because of what he had done.
  - By his punishment we are healed and have peace.
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# Suffering yet reigning

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"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken." —  
Isaiah 53:7-8

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# Suffering yet reigning

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These two verses tell us:

- The servant is strangely silent when oppressed.
- He is put to death by unjust judgment.
- His death was to pay for the transgressions of my people.

# Suffering yet reigning

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"He was assigned a grave with the wicked, yet he was with a rich man in his death, because he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand." —  
Isaiah 53:9-10

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# Suffering yet reigning

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These two verses tell us:

- Though they planned to bury him with wicked men, he was actually with a rich man in his death.
- God caused his suffering, making his life a guilt-offering.
- Afterward, the servant will prolong his days.

# Suffering yet reigning

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"After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by knowledge of him my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion with the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." – Isaiah 53:11-12

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# Suffering yet reigning

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These last two verses tell us:

- After suffering, he will be satisfied.
  - After death, he will live.
  - Many will be justified by knowing him.
  - He will be counted among the great.
  - Though counted a transgressor, he actually bore their sins and made intercession for them.
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# Suffering yet reigning

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- All this marvelously fits the New Testament picture of Jesus, though it was written centuries in advance.
- It fits no one else in history.
- It gives us the basic theology of Christianity.

# It cannot explain Jesus.

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- Cut off in the period AD 28-35
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- Suffering yet reigning

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# The End

Atheism is not a viable  
worldview.