

# OpenTheo

## Atheism



### Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg challenges the idea that atheism can answer all fundamental questions and argues that it is not a rational position because it is often driven by emotional reactions to the concept of God. He asserts that atheists have faith in unproven beliefs similar to religious people. Gregg believes that there is credible evidence to support the Christian claim of Jesus' resurrection and that the possibility of the empty tomb can only be explained by His resurrection. He also cites leading atheist philosopher Anthony Flew, who changed his mind due to scientific evidence of design in nature, and challenges the theory of evolution by stating that it cannot explain how non-living things can organize themselves into living organisms.

### Transcript

Since 2006, there were four major books that all were simultaneously on the bestseller list, the New York Times bestseller list. All of them advocating atheism. One was Richard Dawkins' book, which is *The God Delusion*.

And there was another one by Christopher Hitchens called *God Is Not Great, Why Religion Poisons Everything*. And then there was a couple of other authors, Sam Harris and Daniel Dennett, who also wrote books that were popular at the time. Sam Harris' book was called *The End of Faith*.

He also wrote another one called *Letter to a Christian Nation*. Both of them were promoting atheism and attacking religion in general, not just Christianity, but all religion. And Daniel Dennett's book, the title escapes me at the moment, it was the least influential of the bunch, I think, but it was still widely read.

And so there was this onslaught of literature from articulate, clever, intelligent atheists bombarding Western civilization. Richard Dawkins is the most famous of them. He was probably, at one time, Britain's greatest biologist.

And, of course, you'd be a great biologist and know everything about biology without knowing a single thing about God. You know, God and biology are not in the same category, because God doesn't have a biological system, he's a spirit. So you can be the

greatest expert in almost any subject other than God and still not know a thing about God.

And I think Richard Dawkins proved himself to be very much of that description. He knows a great deal about biology, he didn't know very much about God. And yet he sold millions of copies of his book, and everyone knows his name.

Well, maybe not everyone here, I don't know. How many of you know any of these books I just mentioned? Okay, so some of you read some or know of them. That was a tremendous onslaught just 12 years ago on our society of atheism, which became a new fad.

And lots of people who don't think very clearly jumped on that bandwagon. And I say don't think very clearly, I don't mean that they're not intelligent. Richard Dawkins is certainly intelligent.

Christopher Hitchens, brilliant man. He died of cancer since then, but he was a journalist, and as witty as can be, he's a very brilliant man. Sam Harris is a very brilliant man, too, and I'm sure Daniel Dennett is.

Smart, but not thinking clearly. You can have a good brain and not use it well. And especially if it's clouded with bitterness and resentment.

And I find that there's a lot of people in our society who have good brains, but they're not using them well when they think about God, because when they think about God, suddenly it kind of clicks into anti-God mode because of something that has happened to them. It may be that they were raised in a Christian home and their parents were bad examples, maybe their parents were abusers. It could be that some pastor they know, or a priest has abused them in some way or has let them down, that some Christian people they knew betrayed them or disappointed them.

All kinds of things happen to people that are bad things that haven't related to religious people. And it often instills in people a bitterness, an anger, a resentment toward God, amazingly, because God and religion are not the same thing. Almost everybody has had some experience with religion that was disappointing, to say the least.

Maybe traumatic. I've had tremendous experiences with disappointment with religious people. I've had many people who are pastors, many people who are devoted to a religious life, who've just stabbed me right in the back.

I mean, I could have that same bitterness too, but I realize that that has very little to do with God. When somebody does something like that, they're not doing something God approves of. I don't care how religious they say they are.

Religion is one thing, God is something else. God is a person. God is the creator.

God is a reality. And religions are just different ways that people have sought to define him, analyze him, placate him, escape him. That is, escape his wrath.

I mean, religions of all kinds are out there. All of them pretty much have something to do with God, with the exception of Buddhism, which doesn't really claim to be a theistic religion. But most of them have to do with God or gods.

And yet, they can't all be right, clearly. And some people say, well, they can't all be right, so none of them might be right. That's entirely a possibility that should be explored.

Richard Dawkins says, you know, we're all atheists about the gods on Mount Olympus, and Odin and the Norse gods and the gods of Egypt, we're all atheists about them. He says, we atheists are just atheistic about one more god. You know, you Christians are atheistic about all the other gods.

We're just taking the next step and being atheists about your god, too. So, I mean, some people take that step. And it's not something that is hard to understand if people have had real disappointments with religion or with God himself.

There are people who read the Bible and they find things that just doesn't sit well with them. And all these atheist books bring out these things. You know, the times when God had the Israelites wipe out the Canaanites or the Amalekites, or some of the ways that women seem to have been treated, or the presence of polygamy and things like that.

There were a lot of slavery. There's things in the Bible that people just say, well, if that's what God's like, I don't want anything to do with him. But, see, it's one thing to say, I don't want anything to do with him.

It's another thing to say, he doesn't exist. What I find is many people, and this is why I talk about people who aren't thinking very clearly, many people think that by raising all the objections they have to what they think God is like, that they've therefore proven him wrong. That's ridiculous.

There's a lot of people I don't like, but I'll never suggest that if I listed all their flaws, I've proven they don't exist. That's not thinking clearly. One thing you will find if you read the atheist books is one thing alone.

They don't like God. There's not one way they can disprove the existence of God. They don't care.

They just don't like him. And they know there's a lot of readers out there who also don't like him. There's people who say, I tried God, but he didn't show up for me.

I prayed, but my mother died anyway. You know, God has let me down. These are the reasons people don't believe in God.

But you see, none of these things in any sense to a thinking, rational person would say, that proves there's no God. Well, if it does prove there's no God, then there's no one to be mad at. What are you so upset about? Obviously, people who are mad at God really suspect there is a God.

They just don't like him. And this is what I find about Richard Dawkins' arguments, and Hitchens' and all the other atheists. They talk about how evil God is, how evil the Bible depicts God, how wrong Christians are, and Muslims are, and all the different religions are.

And yet, they don't realize that when their book is finished, they have made one move, rationally, to prove that God doesn't exist. So how do we know if there's a God? Well, let me just say this. How do we know if there's no God? Atheism is the view that there's no God.

Now, I just want to say, atheists have been redefining that term a lot lately. A lot of the atheists I've talked to have said, oh, we're not saying there's no God. We're just saying we don't believe in a God.

If there is one, we don't believe in God. But there might be one that we don't know about. Well, that's really called agnosticism.

Agnosticism is from the Greek word that means not knowing. And agnostic, that word was coined by actually Huxley, Thomas Huxley, one of Darwin's friends. And Huxley was asked by a reporter, I guess it was, do you believe in God? He said, I'm agnostic.

And that was a word he made up for his views. It just means I don't know if there's a God. A lot of people who say they're atheists, really, when you print them, they say, well, I don't really know that there's not a God.

I just don't know that there is one. I don't believe there is. But then you don't have any room for the word agnostic.

And there's no word left for the people who really say there is no God. There are people who say there's no God, and atheist is the word for that. A lot of people who think they're atheists are really agnostic.

And among agnostics, there's two different kinds. There's ordinary agnostics, and there's ornery agnostics. An ordinary agnostic is one who says, I don't know if there's a God.

I just haven't figured it out. I haven't made up my mind yet. I don't know.

An ornery agnostic says, I don't know if there's a God, and no one can know if there's a God. And don't tell me you think you know if there's a God. Nobody can know, because I don't know.

Well, there's an awful lot of things I don't know, but other people do. I happen to be aware of that. When I see someone who says, well, there's no God anywhere in the universe, I'm really interested in knowing what percentage of all the things in the universe there are have you really encountered? One percent? No, not even a millionth of one percent.

Okay, so you don't even know a millionth of one percent of what's out there, and yet you're willing to tell me that there's no God? How do you know? Most of reality is beyond what you know. How do you know that somewhere in that great multitude of things that you don't know, that God is one of those things that's out there that you don't know? If there was a God, how would you know? You know, I heard that when the Russians first sent their Sputnik up into space, well, not Sputnik, but I think it was their first cosmonaut, which is a Russian astronaut, many years ago in the 50s, I guess it was, one of the school teachers in our communist Russian school, Soviet school, was telling her third graders, our brave cosmonauts have gone up and they went into outer space and they didn't see God anywhere. The little girl allegedly raised her hand and said, were they pure in heart? Now why is that an important question? Because Jesus said, blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God.

But these cosmonauts were thinking, if God's out there, we'll see him some other way, but what way? If God is in fact invisible, as all religions claim, then how would you see him if he was there? How would you know? How would you detect him? Now we do detect invisible things sometimes. I mean, we can see them through microscopes, we can see them, we can detect them through Geiger counters and sensors and so forth, invisible things. But if there's a God, what instrument would you use to discover that he's there? A Geiger counter? Litmus paper? What do you use to discover the presence of God? Obviously, if God is not part of nature, but he's the creator of nature, then he can't be discovered in the same way that things in the natural world can, because he doesn't belong to the same system.

Now, I'm not saying that my saying this is proving God exists. I'm not here to prove God exists. In fact, I don't think you can prove God exists to somebody who's determined not to believe.

I think there are evidences that God exists that reasonable people who are willing to look past their bitterness can say, well, yeah, I think the chances are good, you know. But no one can prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that an unseen, untestable God exists. But neither can anyone prove that such an unseen, untestable God does not exist.

I want to read you a couple of quotes from leading atheists. One's from Richard Dawkins in his book, *The God Delusion*, and one's from Christopher Hitchens. Richard Dawkins said this, A delusion is something that people believe despite the total lack of evidence.

Okay. If you believe something, when there's no evidence for it, you're deluded. A

delusion is something people believe despite the total lack of evidence.

Is that true? Now, I believe that we shouldn't really hold to any view for which there's not good evidence. I'm an evidence-based thinker. I'm hard to convince of most things.

You might say, but you were raised a Christian. Yeah, I was raised a Christian. Of course I was.

A lot of people in my generation were raised Christians. But you know what? A lot of people raised in my generation were raised Christians and are not Christians now. I am still.

Why? Well, when you reach your teens, you begin to question everything your parents taught you. You begin to question the institutions. You begin to question the church.

I left the church for a few years because I was not interested in the church. But I never came to a place where I couldn't rid myself of the belief in God. And I actually decided to research that.

The same way I'd research any other proposition that could be researched by the kind of evidence that I would expect to be there if there is a God. And really what I did research is the life of Jesus. Because if Jesus is the Son of God, then there's clearly a God.

If Jesus rose from the dead, as he said he would, then he's the Son of God as he said he was. That goes a long way to believing that there must be a God. But the point is, I don't believe in God because my parents taught me to believe in God.

My politics have changed from that of my parents over the years. My philosophy, many things have changed. Even my Christian beliefs are different than my parents' Christian beliefs on many points.

You don't stay the same. Sometimes people say, well, if you were raised a Hindu, then you'd be a Hindu. If you were raised a Buddhist, you'd be a Buddhist.

If you were raised a Muslim, you'd be a Muslim. If you were raised a Christian, so you're a Christian. That's nonsense.

How many of you are a raised Christian or not now? Maybe none in this room, but you know some people like that. I know some people like that. Raised Christian, they're not now.

Raised Hindu, now they're Christian. Raised Jewish, now they're Buddhist. Jew-boo.

Jew-boo is actually a category that the Jewish Buddhists actually use that term. They're a Jew-boo because there's so many Jewish people who have left their Jewish heritage and become Buddhists. I have many friends who are Jew-boos.

In other words, just because you were raised in a certain religion has nothing to do with what your religion is now. Unless you're an unthinking person. Some people just follow what their parents say, unthinkingly.

Not very many, hopefully, but some do. I'm not one of them. I'm not a Christian because my parents raised me to be a Christian.

I'm sure that was helpful to me. It was a good start. But I looked at everything skeptically.

I have to believe it would take much more faith for me to be an atheist than to be a Christian. The evidence being considered. Richard Dawkins said, a delusion is something that people believe in despite a total lack of evidence.

I don't believe anything because of a total lack of evidence. But suppose I did, would it be a delusion? Suppose a cat walked across my driveway in the middle of the night and no one saw it. And I happened, for some reason, to believe that that had happened.

I didn't have any evidence. Am I deluded to think it? No, not if it really happened. I might believe something for no evidence at all and it could be still true.

It's not necessarily a delusion. A delusion is not something you believe for lack of evidence. Because lots of things are true that you don't have evidence immediately at hand for.

For example, I had a wife years ago, a different wife, who was unfaithful to me. I suspected that she was, but I didn't have evidence. So I believed that she was unfaithful.

I didn't have evidence. So I guess my belief she was unfaithful is a delusion? Nope, turned out it was true. There are many things true that you don't have evidence for.

That doesn't make them delusional, a delusion. What is a delusion is when you believe something that all the evidence is against. And you insist on believing it anyway.

That's a delusion. That's being delusional. Now I do agree with what something Richard Dawkins said.

He said that if anyone tells you that a certain thing is true, you should ask them what evidence there is for that. And if they don't have a good answer, then don't believe them. I agree with that.

I would never ask anyone to believe in God unless I believe there's some good evidence for it. I certainly would never ask anyone to become a Christian unless I believe there's good evidence for it. I'm not part of a delusion.

I may have reached conclusions that someone else can understand better the answer

than I do. But I'm not deluded. I certainly have looked at the evidence.

Christopher Hitchens said a similar statement. He said, what can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence. Now what he's, of course he's an atheist.

He's saying, you Christians assert there's a God. You do so without evidence. So I can dismiss your assertion without evidence.

Well, wait a minute. You say there's no God. Isn't that an assertion you make without evidence? What evidence do you have that there's no God? There is none.

How do you prove a universal negative? Now, Dawkins would say, well, yeah, I can't prove there's no God. I can't prove there's no fairies. I can't prove there's no flying spaghetti monster either.

But, you know, but that's not the same thing in my opinion. I don't know any educated, intelligent people who claim to have encountered flying spaghetti monsters or who actually believe they exist. It's like Dawkins said, I don't believe in the tooth fairy and I don't believe in Santa Claus either.

Neither do I. But, in fact, I don't know anyone who does except little children. Believing in Santa Claus, that is a delusion. Believing in tooth fairy, that is a delusion.

And it's so much a delusion, I don't know any intelligent people who hold the view that there is a Santa Claus or tooth fairy. But I know a huge number of people who believe there's a God. In fact, it's the majority opinion of the world.

Not all hold the view that Christianity is true or Judaism is true. But of all the religions of the world, only Buddhism is ever basically atheistic. And it doesn't have to be.

The Buddha really didn't say anything about the existence of God, yay or nay. Buddhists can believe there's a God, but they don't have to. But, firstly, all the other religions believe there is some kind of deity.

And atheists don't comprise but, what, 6% of the population even of the modern western world? Sounds like maybe they're the ones who've got something to defend, not me. It seems to me like the belief in God is a rather universal intuition, if nothing else, in the human race. And one has to fight off that intuition, hopefully with evidence that they're going to do it.

That is a false intuition. How can you prove there's no God? Well, I'm interested in this because Dawkins and other atheists often say this, because I've debated them publicly, too. Not Dawkins, certainly, he's too high, he wouldn't have time for me.

But I've debated a philosophy professor in Las Vegas from the University of Nevada on



atheism, and I've debated others. And they always say the same thing, you know, there's just no evidence for God. And my answer is, well, I think there is, but even if I'm wrong, what is the evidence for there being no God? Let me tell you what you have to believe if you're not a believer in God.

And virtually every atheist believes all these things. You tell me what evidence there is for any of them. Okay? First they believe the cosmos is all that exists.

Remember that famous line by Carl Sagan? The cosmos is all that ever was or ever will be. The cosmos, that's the natural universe, that's the material universe. The planets, the stars, all that.

That's all there is. Now, what that means is there's nothing else besides it. Really? How do you know that? How did you discover what doesn't exist in the universe? In other words, when someone says the cosmos is all that exists, and that's what atheists believe, what evidence is there for that? There's no evidence.

You can't say, well, because we've observed this and this and this, therefore there's nothing else. Well, no, but you can only talk about things you have seen. You can't tell anything about things you've never seen.

Maybe they exist and you don't know it. You can't say it. It's a faith statement.

It's a worldview statement. Let me tell you what a worldview is. A worldview is a set of assumptions about the ultimate nature of reality which you hold and see everything else through.

It's not something you look at very much. Many people never define what their worldview is. They don't even know what their worldview is, but they look at everything through it, like my glasses.

I don't see my glasses, but I see everything through them. And a worldview is your fundamental set of assumptions that you see and interpret everything through. Now, the belief that there's a God is certainly a worldview that some people have, and the idea that there's no God.

The idea that the cosmos is all there is. That's a worldview. It's something you can't prove, true or false.

Maybe there's something more, maybe there's not. The point is there's no evidence for the proposition. And atheists say, if someone tells you something is true and they can't give you evidence, don't believe them.

Okay, I'll take your advice on that. You tell me the cosmos is all there is? What's the evidence for that? None is presented. There's none to present.

There's none to find. There's not even, in the nature of the statement, there could never be evidence for that. Okay, what about this one? There is a multiverse.

Anyone ever heard about the multiverse? This idea of the multiverse was popularized by modern scientist Stephen Hawking, believed in it. Richard Dawkins believes in it. What is the multiverse? Well, this multiverse idea came up because scientists were discovering more and more that the Earth is a very privileged planet.

They called it the Goldilocks Effect. Not too hot, not too cold, but just right. That of all the planets in the universe, scientists now believe there's probably not another one that has the conditions necessary to sustain life besides the Earth.

There may be millions of planets, but the likelihood of all the factors being present, just close enough to the nearest star to be warm, but far enough not to burn up. Close enough to be held within the orbit of the sun, but not far enough to be thrown out into space without orbit. There's the power of gravity, the physical factors that scientists know about that I don't understand.

This is atheistic science. Richard Dawkins himself will say this. He says, there was not one chance in a billion, billion, billion that any given planet would have all the things that we have that are suitable for life.

Now, of course, somebody who is not an atheist would say, maybe that looks like maybe God designed it that way. Maybe God wanted there to be life. Maybe he made a planet that's suitable for life, and it's very unlikely that it would ever happen without that being his design.

But the atheists have come up with another answer. They say, no. We can only observe this one universe.

There may be an infinite number of universes, thousands of universes, each of them having billions of stars, and if you multiply the possibilities, then no matter how unlikely it is for one planet to have these conditions, there's bound to be another one out there or more out there. We just happen to be fortunate to be on this one and we know about it because this one sustains life and we're it. So they call it the anthropic principle because we live here, we think there's a purpose for it when in fact it's just the accident we happen to be on the planet that was able to.

But there's millions and millions of universes out there, they say, and we can only observe this one, but the one we observe is the one we evolved on. Now, the problem with this is even the atheists say, of course you can never prove there's a multiverse because we can't observe any universe other than our own. It's a worldview.

Stephen Hawking asserted it very confidently. Atheists do. They say, well, if you say, this seems like a planet that's just perfectly made for life, like it's almost planned that way.

They say, no, there's billions of universes out there, with so many universes that it was bound to happen some way. But how do you know there's these billions of universes? They themselves say we can never observe them. They're not even sure that they would have the same natural laws that our universe has.

So you couldn't even test them. There's no hope of ever anyone in this universe discovering another universe. We can't even get to the edge of this one.

It's simply, there's no evidence for a multiverse. It's a philosophical concept that they think this will help us. But does it? Does it help atheism? Suppose I grant that there are billions of universes, which I have no reason at all to believe since there's no evidence for it.

Suppose I grant it. Does that mean there's no God? Couldn't God have made a billion universes as well as one? You haven't said anything about whether God exists by saying there's a multiverse. All you've done is try to get yourself out of a very difficult situation that the only universe we know seems to indicate there's design and intention.

So you have to say universes that no one will ever discover. Say, that'll help. Well, it doesn't help.

And there's no evidence for it. And there never will be evidence for it. It's the kind of thing that's untestable.

So isn't it a faith statement? Dawkins always says, we atheists, we don't have faith. We just go by science. Well, if you believe there's nothing but the cosmos but there's millions of universes, that's faith.

You just don't have rational faith. You have faith, but it's not rational. Also, what evidence is there that miracles don't occur? This is, of course, a given to the atheists.

There are no real miracles. That's just superstitious people. I don't know if you do any research on this kind of thing.

There's a guy who wrote, a guy named, darn it, his name escapes me because I'm a senior and I have a senior moment, but I've got his books. There's two volumes this thick called Miracles. And it's Craig Keener, is his name.

It's just full of documentation of alleged miracles in modern times all over the world. And it's not Christian miracles necessarily. It's miracles claimed by Hindus and claimed by animists and people like that.

But the point is, it points out that miracles are really fairly well-known phenomena in the world. If you ask an atheist, how do you know there's no miracles? Of course, they'll just say, I've never seen anyone rise from the dead. I've never seen anyone walk on water.

I've never seen anyone open the eyes of the blind with a touch. No one I know has ever seen that happen, so it obviously doesn't happen. So everything that has ever happened, you and your friends have seen.

I don't think so. The truth is, I haven't seen those things happen either. I've never seen a man walk on water or touch a person and make their eyes open.

I've heard credible reports of it from other countries, largely. But I will say this, even if no one I knew had even heard of such a thing happening, does that mean that it didn't happen when Jesus was here? The Bible doesn't suggest that when Jesus was here, it was a typical time. It was a unique invasion from God to the earth, if the story is true.

And it was characterized by extraordinary unique things that I wouldn't expect to see. The Bible doesn't tell us that miracles happen all the time. It tells us that they are special occurrences.

And I, you know, I may have seen a miracle or two in my life. I haven't tested them to know for sure. But the point is, I've heard lots of credible reports from people who have nothing to gain by lying of things that were seemingly miraculous.

So I don't... Why would I be so bigoted as to say they don't happen? Just because I don't see them happening in my town. That's not surprising. The Bible doesn't argue that miracles happen every day or every year or every century.

It just argues that they did happen and sometimes do happen on special occasions. What evidence is there that they never did happen? There's no evidence. Think about it.

If you were a skeptic saying, my goal is to prove miracles never happen. What are you going to do? What's the experiment? There's no experiment you can imagine. Harry Houdini spent much of his career trying to prove that the occult isn't real.

And, uh, I don't know how that turned out, but the truth is, I believe there is such a thing as the occult. I myself have dealt with demon-possessed people. Now, atheists don't really have a good answer for demon possession.

They would basically say, well, these people have mental illnesses. Also, that's how they speak three languages out of the throat at the same time. Mental illness.

That's why they levitate. That's why they have supernatural strength and can throw off eight men trying to hold them down. That's mental illness, is it? In the Bible, demons were cast out of people into pigs.

Is that mental illness too? No, there's people who say, well, in the old days, people used to believe in demons and that was a supernaturalist worldview before you had science. We now know that these people weren't demon-possessed. They had mental illness.

I say, you haven't studied this very well, have you? You don't know very much about the subject. Until you know more about it, I'm not going to listen to anything you say about it because I've actually encountered some of this and I've studied it widely. And I'd say, Mr. Atheist, I don't think you know what you're talking about.

How could you prove there are no demons? You could say, I've never met one. Well, good for you. Lucky you! So what? What's that proof? Nothing.

It proves that you've got very little experience in the real world, I suppose. How about this? Atheists believe that non-living chemicals at a time when there's no life anywhere in the universe, organize themselves into a living thing. There's no one else to do it.

It had to do it itself. Now, has this ever been replicated by experiment? No. If it was replicated by a laboratory experience, would that prove that it happened naturally before? No, because the people doing the experiment are intelligent.

They're designing the conditions. They're designing that outcome. Atheists are trying to prove this happens without any mind, without any designer behind it.

You can't prove that that could happen. It's never happened. And Richard Dawkins himself was interviewed on a movie.

I don't know if you ever saw it. It's called Expelled. No Intelligence Allowed.

Anyone seen that? It's a movie about evolution. Dawkins, who wrote The God Delusion, he was interviewed and the interviewer said, so where did life itself come from? He said, we don't have a clue. He eventually speculated maybe life from other planets brought him here, but the life from other planets had to evolve normally.

He didn't say where it started. You see, you can't just say, well, the first living thing was brought here from another planet, but from living things there. You've just transported your problem to another planet.

You haven't really answered the question. The real question is, can there ever be non-living things that organize themselves into living things? According to all that is known scientifically, the answer is no. According to all atheists, the answer is yes.

It happened one time, at the very beginning. It started evolution. And you can't even say evolution produced the first thing because evolution only talks about how things that are living change through mutation and modification.

When you don't have living things, they don't mutate. The first living thing had to come about without the process of natural selection. And so there's no answer.

What is the evidence that this is true? That complex information systems can be generated? People know more now than they ever did about DNA and information

systems themselves. This is not just complex organization. This is information.

You know, a man named Anthony Flew was the leading atheist in the United States. He's a philosopher. He wrote like 50 books on atheism over a career of about 50 years.

He was the hero of the atheist community in the United States for a whole generation. Before he died, he wrote a book called *There is a God*. He didn't become a Christian.

He did not become a Christian, but he did become a believer that there is a God out there. He said, the discovery of the Big Bang, which means the creation had a beginning, and nothing can have a beginning unless something is there to be learned. And he said, the complexity of information in the cell, that was the thing he just could not get over.

And thinking people cannot, because they know it can't happen. It's like saying, I'm going to take a Scrabble set with all the pieces, all the letters, throw it up in the air, let it fall to the ground, and see if it spells out the Declaration of Independence. It's information.

You see, arrangement of letters is not just organized, it's specified to communicate information. If you're walking on the beach and you see some strange scratches in the sand, you might say, well, that's a natural phenomenon. Probably maybe a log was dragged across there and made those scratches.

But if they spell out the words *Bob loves Mary*, you can't say that's a natural phenomenon. Nature doesn't create information. *Bob loves Mary* is a statement that conveys information.

A mind conveys information. Nothing else is known to do so. And yet the information's in the simplest cell.

They say the information, and the atheists say this, Carl Sagan said this, that the information in the simplest known cell is comparable to the entire *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Now we're not just talking about a lot of words, we're talking about words that mean something and are correct. Millions of sentences arranged in the right order.

That's what the simplest cell has. How did that happen? You can get the *Encyclopedia Britannica* from an explosion, a print shop, it's never going to happen. We have no reason to believe that information can come from anything other than a mind.

And the reason Anthony Flew ceased to be the leading atheist in the world was that he said the information in the cell cannot be explained without there being a God. So, what is the evidence for atheism exactly? Now I haven't proved there is a God, but frankly all the things I'm talking about actually kind of lean that direction, obviously. I believe there's a God, and I think the postulate that there's a God is the very best explanation for these things, of the possible explanations.

But one thing we can say is there's absolutely no evidence for any of the major assertions that evolutionists, that atheists claim. Now, is there evidence of evolution? There is evidence that can be pressed in the surface of evolution, yes. The same evidence, by the way, through another worldview can be easily understood in another way.

But I'm not going to say there's no evidence for evolution. But for the things I'm talking about, there's no evidence at all. Nothing.

And yet they're all assertions that atheists make as a statement of their faith. Atheists have a religion. They believe things they have no evidence for, just like anybody else does.

But they will not allow it to be God. You know, when Richard Dawkins said, well, maybe people from outer space brought these first living things. His interviewer said, oh, so you don't mind intelligent design as long as it's not God.

And that's really an interesting observation. As long as it isn't God, I don't mind if intelligence is designed. Well, why are you so upset about God? Isn't that kind of an emotional reaction? This is what atheism is.

Atheism is emotional. It's not rational. It's not that rational people are never atheists.

I'm not saying that an atheist can't be a rational person. He just stops being rational when he thinks about the subject of God. He can be a mathematician.

He can be a philosopher. He can be brilliant. But when he talks about God, his emotions kick in.

His prejudices kick in. And there's no evidence for the things that he actually believes with reference to atheism. Let me just say one more thing about Dawkins.

Richard Dawkins says a lot of things. He's very clever, but actually, a lot of things he says are unfortunately kind of stupid. And I don't... I'm not saying that to be abusive to him.

He's a humorous guy. He's a possibly likable guy. But some of the things just aren't smart that he says.

Like this one. He made this statement. Presumably, what happened to Jesus was what happens to all of us when we die.

We decompose. Accounts of Jesus' resurrection and ascension are about as well documented as Jack and the Beanstalk. Now, you know, you can say that among your friends if you don't... if they're very uncritical of you.

But a smart man would never say that in print. Unless he's not very smart. That the documentation for the resurrection of Jesus is about like the documentation for Jack and the Beanstalk.

What exactly is the documentation for Jack and the Beanstalk? If he's saying belief in Jesus' resurrection is kind of on the same level as belief in Jack and the Beanstalk. Oh, really? There's one big difference I can think of immediately. Jack and the Beanstalk isn't intended to be taken as true.

It's a fairy tale. Nobody believes it. No one was ever intended to believe it.

Whoever made up that story didn't intend for people to think it's a true story. Those who recorded the resurrection of Jesus, they were telling a historical account that they affirmed was true and they died as martyrs rather than to deny that it was true. That sounds pretty much better documentation for that event than for Jack and the Beanstalk.

I mean, think about it. If I say there is no Jack and the Beanstalk, I've got nothing to explain. Nobody will dispute me.

If I say Jesus didn't rise from the dead, I've got something to explain. Namely, let me tell you what I have to explain. Why are there Christians? Now you might say, well, lots of people believe stuff that's not true.

Yeah, 2,000 years removed, maybe. But what about the first Christians? Why did Christianity arise in the first place? This man, Jesus, was put to death as a criminal and his disciples were discouraged. They wanted to go back to their old jobs, fishing, and some of them did.

And then they were shocked because, A, they found the tomb of Jesus empty, and B, they met Jesus several times after his resurrection. He showed them the scars. He proved himself to be who he was.

They saw that he'd raised from the dead. They knew he was dead. The Romans had made sure that not only did the Christians have pierced his heart with a spear so that he was deader than dead.

And yet, he was alive again. At least, many witnesses said so. How many? A lot.

Paul said that he knew 500 people who saw Jesus resurrected from the dead. But he was one of them himself. And so were Peter and the other apostles, and some people who weren't apostles.

Like two men that Jesus appeared to on the road to Emmaus. We don't even know who they were, just one of them was named Cleopas, but otherwise he was more or less anonymous. But a number of people saw Jesus dead, and his tomb was empty.



Suppose we, uh, suppose we questioned whether anyone really saw Jesus. Can we also question that the tomb was empty? No, not really. The tomb was clearly empty.

Why? Because when the disciples immediately after they started preaching that Jesus rose from the dead, there were people of power who wanted to prove them wrong. There were people who were very embarrassed by the suggestion that Jesus, whom they had crucified, was now up and around again. And the way to prove that wrong would be very simple if it was not a true story.

Namely, let's go to his grave, let's open it up, let's see if he's there. If that had been a possibility, his enemies would have done it on the first day that the Christian church started preaching. It couldn't have been done.

He was not there. If he was in the tomb, they would have presented him and said, end of your preaching here. He's not alive.

He's dead. Here's his corpse. They couldn't.

It wasn't there. So we can assume one thing as true. The tomb was empty.

Now, there might be many explanations for this that could be suggested. Why was the tomb empty? Well, one is, of course, he might have risen from the dead just like he said he would. But let's say we were skeptical about that.

What are the other options? Well, the only other option is someone moved the body and apparently hid it and kept it hidden. Now, who would do that? Well, some have thought the Jews did or the and actually Mary Magdalene, her first thought was that the Jews moved him. When she found the tomb empty, she thought the Jews had moved the body.

She said, where have you moved him? I won't find him. I'll take care of his body if it's in your way. But either the Jews or the Romans could have been capable of moving the body, but they'd have no motive.

And if they did have a motive, they certainly would have had a motive to reveal that that's what they had done as soon as the disciples started saying, Jesus rose from the dead. These guys could have been silenced by whoever moved the body. They'd say, well, you think he's risen from the dead because the tomb's empty.

Actually, we took his body and we buried it over here. End of Christianity. The fact that the enemies of Christianity did not know where the body was, could not present it, could not stop the witness of the apostles, means that they clearly had not taken the body themselves.

Who does that leave? The disciples. This is the only sensible account that was

suggested, even by his enemies. The disciples stole the body.

Now, why would that be a better answer than the Romans or the Jews? Because the disciples apparently were trying to convince people that Jesus rose from the dead. They could foist a hope on the public by hiding the body somewhere and never revealing where it was and say, oh, he rose from the dead, he's not there anymore. Well, I suppose they could, if they could.

But could they? You might remember the body was buried with a bunch of soldiers around it. I don't know how many. But the disciples weren't exactly military men.

In their whole company they owned two swords, and one of them was with Peter, and he couldn't hit anything more vital as an organ than an ear. I doubt that these untrained, un-military fishermen and tax collectors would be able to overwhelm a group of soldiers that were there guarding the tomb. But if they did, they wouldn't do so without a body count.

These soldiers are not going to let the body go without a fight. If the disciples had taken the body from the soldiers, there'd be some wounded soldiers. Probably some wounded disciples, too.

There'd be some bodies there. Now, what the chief priest told the soldiers to say is that, now you tell people, because the soldiers told him that Jesus rose from the dead, and the chief priest said, listen, we'll pay you off here, you tell people you were asleep, and the disciples came and stole the body while you were asleep. And it says in Matthew, that's what they went on and reported.

That's the common report. And that's even still the common report of skeptics. But think about it.

How can you know what happened when you were asleep? And do Roman guards, do they really fall asleep when they're guarding something? You may not be aware, but in Roman times, just like actually in Civil War times, if a sentinel fell asleep, even if nothing happened, if he fell asleep, he's executed. When Roman guards lost their charges they were supposed to be watching, it was their life. There's another case where Peter was chained to four guards in a prison, and he escaped because an angel got out while the guards slept.

The guards were put to death. And so, guards are not going to say, okay, we're supposed to be watching this body, why don't we take a little nap? We've been told the disciples might show up, I think there's about twelve of them, maybe they'll show up and try to take a nap, who cares, let's just take a nap. No, they're not going to do that.

And even if they fell asleep, would they not wake up when the disciples were there chiseling the mortar off the stone and rolling this, I mean, is this really sensible, does this

make sense? But you see, they they had to suggest that, because nothing else made sense. The problem is that didn't make sense either. What is interesting is the disciples, who weren't interested in starting a religion, they weren't religious men.

They were peasants, they were fishermen. Starting a religion didn't make them rich, it made them martyrs. They had no interest in that, yet they had no choice, they met Jesus alive, they touched his body, he communicated, they talked to each other, face to face, they ate food with him.

And they said, you know, I can't deny what I see. Now, I was debating an atheist on an atheist podcast once, and I said, the disciples of Jesus died for their testimony that Jesus was risen. And my atheist host said, that doesn't make any difference, people die for their beliefs all the time, Muslims die for their beliefs also, that doesn't mean they're right.

I said, you weren't listening carefully, I didn't say they died for their beliefs, I said they died for their testimony. A testimony is something given by someone who saw something. In a court of law, they don't allow hearsay evidence.

I know, I was testifying in court once against a guy, and I'd say, well, I don't know, I didn't see this happen, but I heard him say, and they said, judges, that's hearsay, you can't admit that. You gotta have seen it to give a testimony. That was true in biblical times as well as any times.

These men had a testimony. I saw him. Now, a Muslim who blows himself up isn't claiming that he ever saw Allah, or that he saw Muhammad, or anything else.

He's a true believer in a religion that his race believes in, or that his ancestors believed in. And yes, people can be very deluded about their religion, they can die for something that's not true. But you're not gonna find 12 men dying for something that they saw, and saying, you know, you can kill me if you want to, but I'm not gonna change my story, I know what I saw.

To die for your testimony suggests a very high degree of sincerity of your testimony. It can't be a hallucination, because they saw him all at once. There's no such thing as mass hallucinations.

A hallucination takes place in the mind of one deluded person, not a bunch of people in the room, they all have the same thing happen. Now, you can have all the different arguments you want, but there's no argument for the fact, and this is an undisputed fact, that the tomb was empty three days after Jesus was buried there. The only possibility of it being empty other than Jesus rising from the dead is that the disciples stole the body, but they didn't at all act like men who had a big secret they were keeping, and they were deluding the world.

They died for their beliefs. For their testimony. Now, a person can say, notwithstanding all that, I still don't believe.

Well, that's okay. That's what we call free choice. We live in a free world.

I wouldn't, if I had the power, I wouldn't force you to believe what I believe. I want you to be free. I want you to make your own choices.

But I would like people to make rational choices, rather than irrational choices. When it comes to atheism versus Christianity, the evidence is on the side of Christianity, historically. There are eyewitness accounts.

There are none from Jack and the Beanstalk, by the way. There are enemy accounts. The Roman historians, Suetonius and Tacitus, Romans who hated Christians, they testified that Jesus was crucified by Pontius Pilate.

They testified this. There were problems over this in Rome. Josephus, a Jewish historian who's not a Christian, and the Talmud, written by Jews who hated Christians, and who hated Christ, they all testified that Jesus died, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and that at least they record that people claimed that he rose from the dead afterwards.

Now, these are all contemporary witnesses, some of them hostile, but saying the same things that Christians find in their own histories that are written by the people who were there. So, when Richard Dawkins says, and he often says, Christianity, there's no evidence for Christianity. And Sam Harris, in his book, Letter to a Christian Nation, said, you Christians, you need to deal with the fact when you're going to bed at night and see if you can sleep while knowing that you have no better reason for believing that Jesus is real than that the Muslim has for believing in Muhammad.

Really? What did Muhammad ever do that would make me believe in him? I've got plenty of reasons for believing in Jesus. These atheists have not studied well, or they haven't studied with a clear mind. They're fogged by their hatred and their anger toward God, so that everything that's sensible that points toward God is excluded at the beginning.

And then they have to come up with these undocumented, non-evidenced assertions. Well, there's only the universe. There's a multiverse.

Organized information can come together accidentally. Okay, well, if you say so. But I'd rather believe things that can be proven, or at least for which there's a little bit of evidence.

Well, I can't say that Christianity can be absolutely proven. I would say that all the evidence related to it is favorable, and none is unfavorable. That's a pretty good thing.

That's a pretty good basis. That's not a basis for being deluded. That's not a delusion.

That's rational assessment.