

Atheism

"This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk at the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind." (Ephesians 4:17)

"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." (John 1:3)

Introduction:

The word 'atheism' comes from the negative 'a' which means 'no' and 'theos' which means 'god'. Hence, atheism, in the most basic terms, means 'no god'. It is the lack of belief in a god and/or the belief that there is no god.

Basic Beliefs of Atheism:

- There is no God or Satan
- There is no such thing as sin
- The universe is materialistic and measurable
- Evolution is a scientific fact
- Ethics and morals are relative

Brief History

- The idea of atheism is not something new. King David, who lived almost a thousand years before Christ, mentions atheists in one of his psalms: **"The fool has said in his heart, There is no God."** (Psalm 14:1).
- Atheism started to gain more prominence at the beginning of the Renaissance period (14th to 17th century). By the 18th century, atheism became more widespread, and many philosophers in England, France and Germany openly opposed religious figures and asked for laws to be made to protect a person's right to be atheist
- In the 19th century, scientific advancements were being made. Scientists began to use scientific theories to explain that the origin of man and the universe was not based on the Bible. For example, Darwin developed his theory of evolution to explain the origin of creation and spent much effort trying to prove that science and religion are not compatible. He wanted to show that religion prevents scientific discovery.
- By the 20th century, many outspoken atheists gained popularity and fame, including scientists and politicians. There were movements and organizations set up to spread the belief in atheism, which caused many people to doubt God's existence.

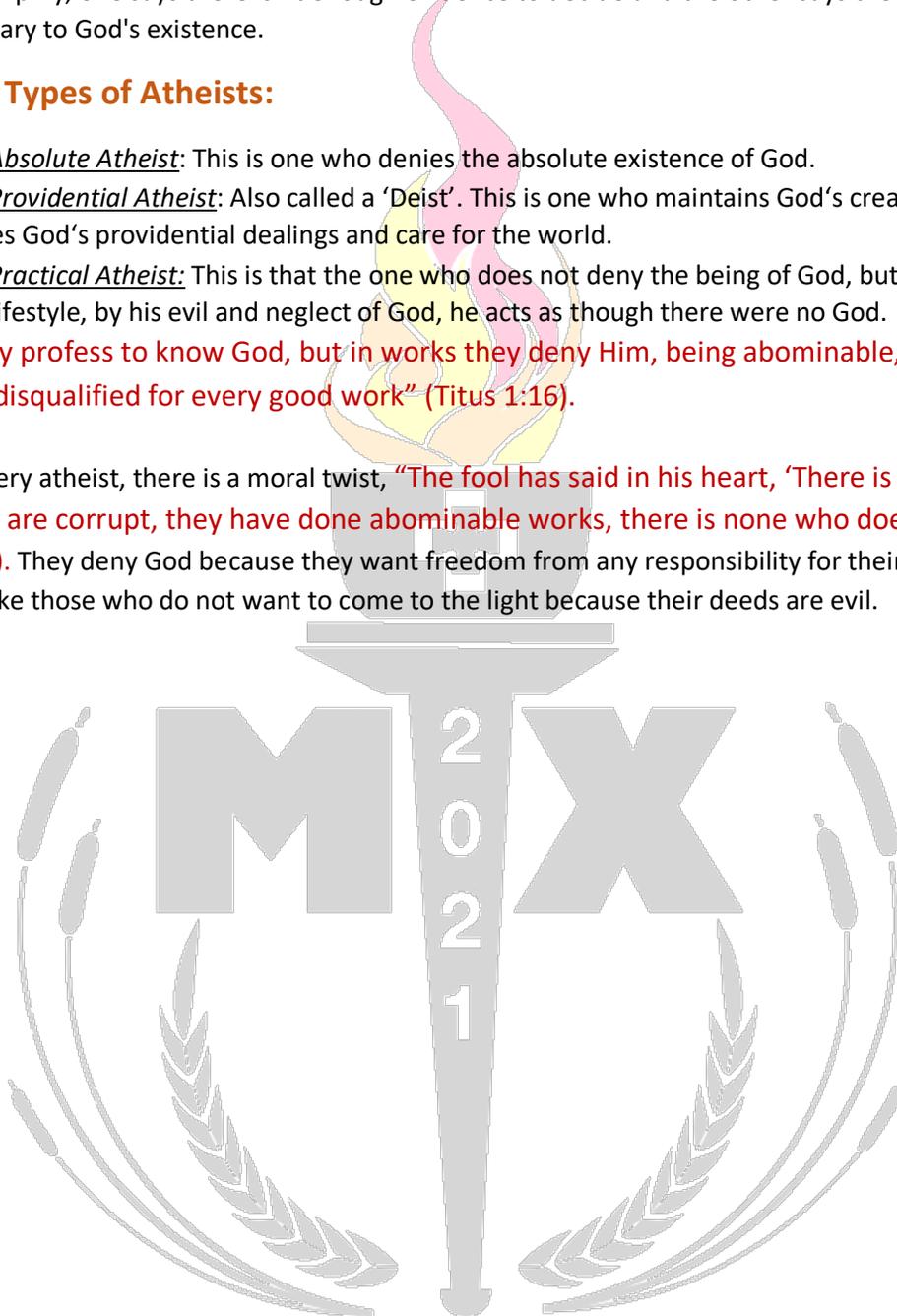
Types of Atheism

- One type is the belief that there is a lack of evidence to affirm God's existence.
- The other type is the belief that God's existence is contrary to the evidence at hand.
- To simplify, one says there isn't enough evidence to decide and the other says there is evidence contrary to God's existence.

The Three Types of Atheists:

- *The Absolute Atheist*: This is one who denies the absolute existence of God.
- *The Providential Atheist*: Also called a 'Deist'. This is one who maintains God's creatorship, but denies God's providential dealings and care for the world.
- *The Practical Atheist*: This is that the one who does not deny the being of God, but by his actions and lifestyle, by his evil and neglect of God, he acts as though there were no God.
"They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work" (Titus 1:16).

In every atheist, there is a moral twist, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good" (Ps 14:1). They deny God because they want freedom from any responsibility for their sins. They are like those who do not want to come to the light because their deeds are evil.



Typical arguments

Argument	Claims	Response
Intellectual Arguments	<p>God does not exist since he's not seen</p> <p>The concept of pain and suffering - "How can a loving God allow pain and suffering?"</p>	<p>They forget that there are multiple phenomena that are present but are not visible. i.e., Air</p> <p>When St. Athanasius of Alexandria speaks of what happened in the fall of mankind, he explains that part of this corruption and death that we introduced through our disobedience also brings about the suffering and pain we experience today.</p>
Scientific Argument	<p>Many scientists make theories to explain the creation of the universe without God and argue that Christianity conflicts with science</p> <p>Science is based on discovering facts about our physical world. Scientists use the argument that what can't be scientifically proven must be just stories or myths derived from our creativity and imagination to disprove the existence of God.</p>	<p>Christianity does not contradict science; the Holy Bible is not a science textbook but it is the word of God and a message of salvation</p> <p><i>Science and Christianity answer different questions. Science answers questions asking "how", while Christianity answers questions asking "why".</i></p> <p>The scientific method is established in formulating and proving a hypothesis. This can only be accomplished through experiments. Science cannot be used to investigate all reality; rather, only those that are measurable in terms of matter and energy.</p>
Christians are flawed	<p>Atheists often use the weaknesses of Christians and church leaders to disregard their validity and authority</p>	<p>A true Christian does not claim to be perfect but instead confesses his weakness and constantly aims towards perfection according to God's commandments</p> <p><u>St. John Chrysostom</u> said: "The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints".</p>

— Verses in this color are to be memorized
 — Verses in this color are to be understood only

<p>Misconceptions about God</p>	<p>Atheists often present a false image of God as one who restricts the freedom of man, and is against human creativity and independent reasoning</p>	<p>God is the one who gave man free will and a mind which can reason and plan and create. Man has the free will to either obey His commandments, or to reject them and thus bear the consequences of rejecting them.</p>
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The False Gods of Atheism

- Man is a spiritual creature. Man seeks something on which to focus in order to have meaning, purpose and identity. Samuel Butler (1912) once said, "the fight between the theist and the atheist is as to whether God shall be called God or shall have some other name."
- If man denies God, he inevitably constructs physical or mental "gods".
 - **Jer 2:28 - "gods which you made for yourself"**
 - **Gal 4:8 - "those which by nature are not gods"**
- The following is a list of false gods that man has constructed for himself:
 - *Humanism* - Man is god.
 - *Secularism* - The world is god.
 - *Naturalism* - Nature is god.
 - *Materialism* - Money or things are god.
 - *Intellectualism* – Reason, logic and rational are god.
 - *Existentialism* - Emotions are god.
 - *Relativism* - Everything is relative to your perspective. Personal viewpoint is god.
 - *Socialism* - The good of the whole is the highest good. Society is god.
 - *Pluralism* - Tolerate everything. Diversity is god.
 - *Hedonism* - Pleasure is god.

The existence of God is revealed to us in many ways

- **God is revealed through His creation**
 - ❖ "God is manifest even by the operations of the world which He has made, using the evidence of His creation" (Clement of Rome)
 - ❖ The complexity and order in the universe show us that there must be a designer and creator who made it. It is impossible that the universe came to be through chance.

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20)

"The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge." (Psalm 19:1-2)

"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." (Hebrews 11:3)

- **God is revealed through His word - the Holy Bible**
 - ❖ God has revealed Himself to us both directly and indirectly since the beginning of time.
 - ❖ God directly spoke to Adam and Eve, Cain and Godly men such as Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.
 - ❖ God also speaks to us through His word, the Holy Bible, which is inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Bible was written by 40 writers over a period of 1500 years, there is a remarkable

unity between the Old and the New Testament, despite having no collaboration between writers.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." {2 Timothy 3:16-17}

"The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed." - St. Augustine

- **God is revealed through the incarnation of Christ**

- ❖ God revealed Himself, through His Prophets but His ultimate revelation was through the incarnation of the Logos.
- ❖ During Jesus's life, He revealed to us the person and character of God in Christ Himself.
- ❖ People saw the Lord Jesus Christ walking, talking, teaching, healing the sick, and raising the dead.
- ❖ People experienced Christ in the flesh, and their lives changed by following Jesus.
- ❖ Our Lord Jesus Christ is our living example to how we should live our life on Earth.

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2)

- **God is revealed through our conscience**

- ❖ In the book of Acts, Chapter 17; St. Paul went to Athens and preached the One true God to the Athenians, in the midst of Areopagus. He said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you"
(Acts 17:22-23)

- ❖ God created man in His own image so it is in man's nature to long for His Creator. St. Paul explained this truth extensively in his epistle to the Romans:
"because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them"
(Romans 1:19)

- ❖ We see an example of man's longing for God in the story of St. Moses the Strong. He was a pagan who worshipped the sun, and lived a sinful life. Deep down he felt dissatisfied and empty, and yearned to know His creator. One day he lifted up his eyes toward the sun, and said:

"O sun! If you are God, let me know you" and "you, O God, whom I do not know, let me know you." And he heard a voice saying to him, "The monks of Wadi El Natroun know the true God. Go to them and they will tell you about Him. "

Famous Quotes

“The worst moment for the atheist is when he is really thankful, and has nobody to thank” --**Dante Gabriel Rossetti**

“A creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers including even his power to revolt...It is like the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower” --**C.S. Lewis**

“I believe in God as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” --**C. S. Lewis**

