







***The heavens declare  
the glory of God; and  
the firmament shows  
His handiwork.***

Psalm 19:1



***The heavens declare  
His righteousness,  
And all the peoples  
see His glory.***

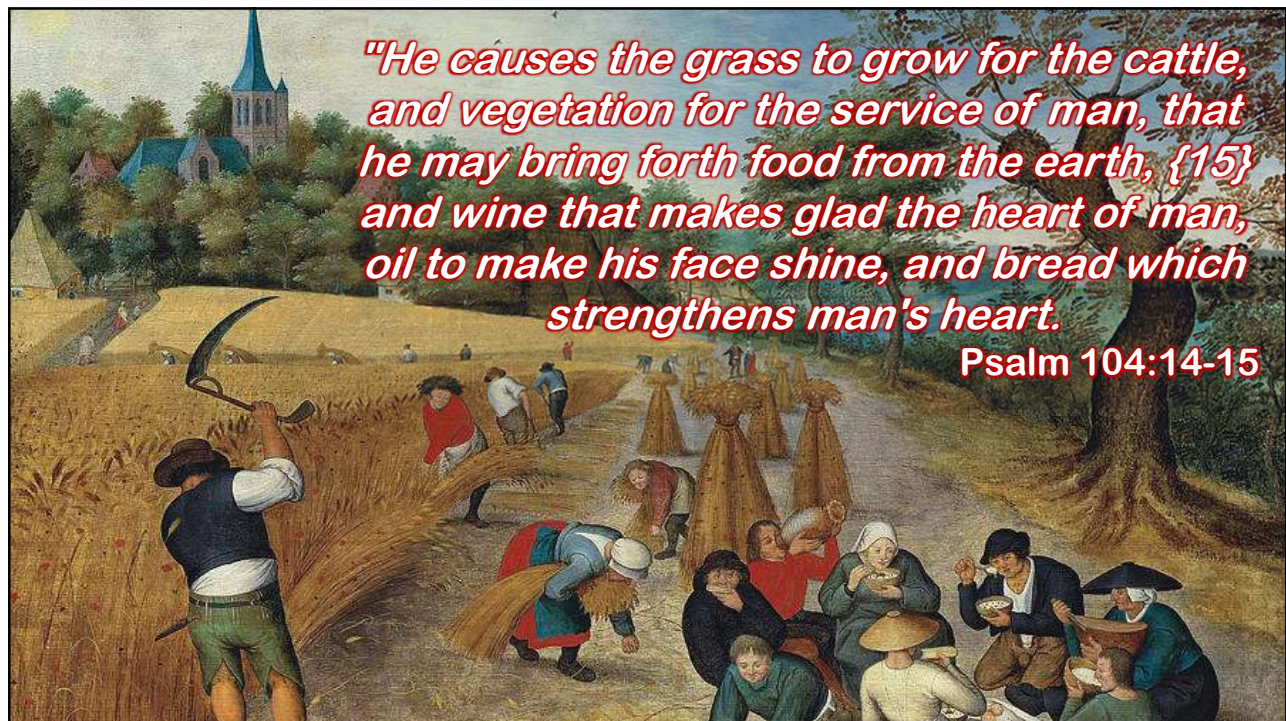
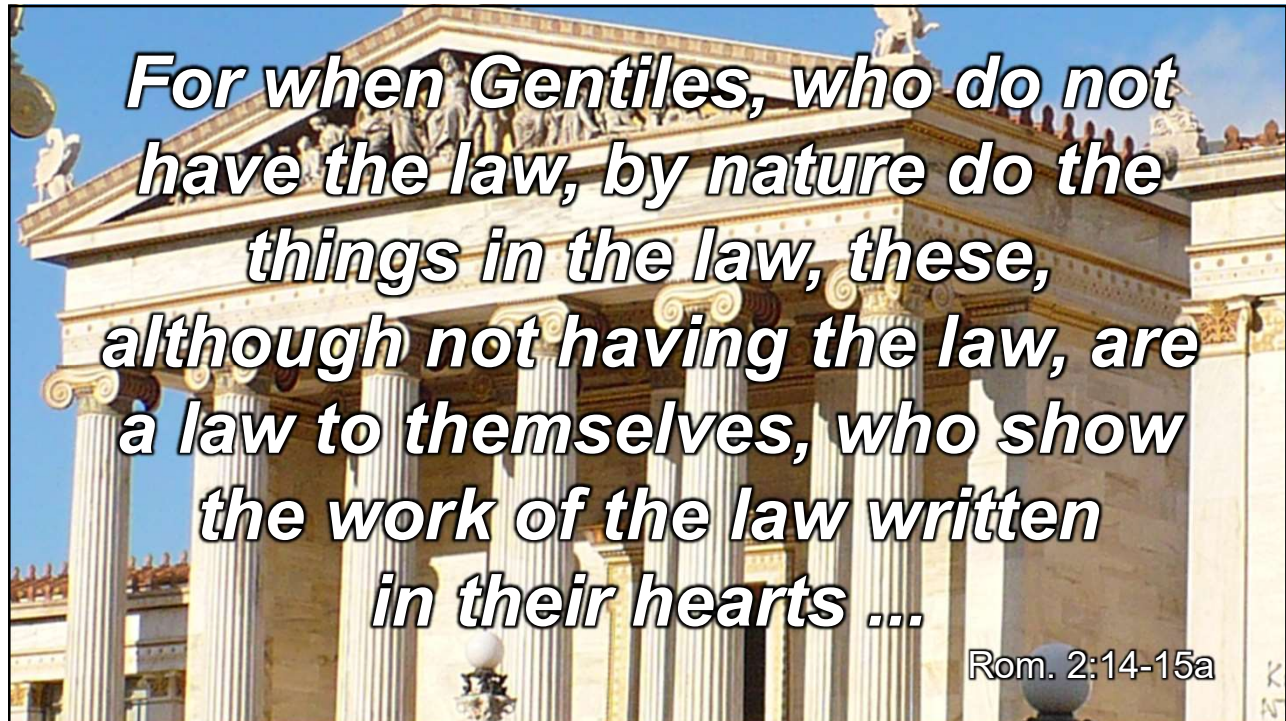
Psalm 97:6

*For since the creation of the world His  
invisible attributes are clearly seen, being*

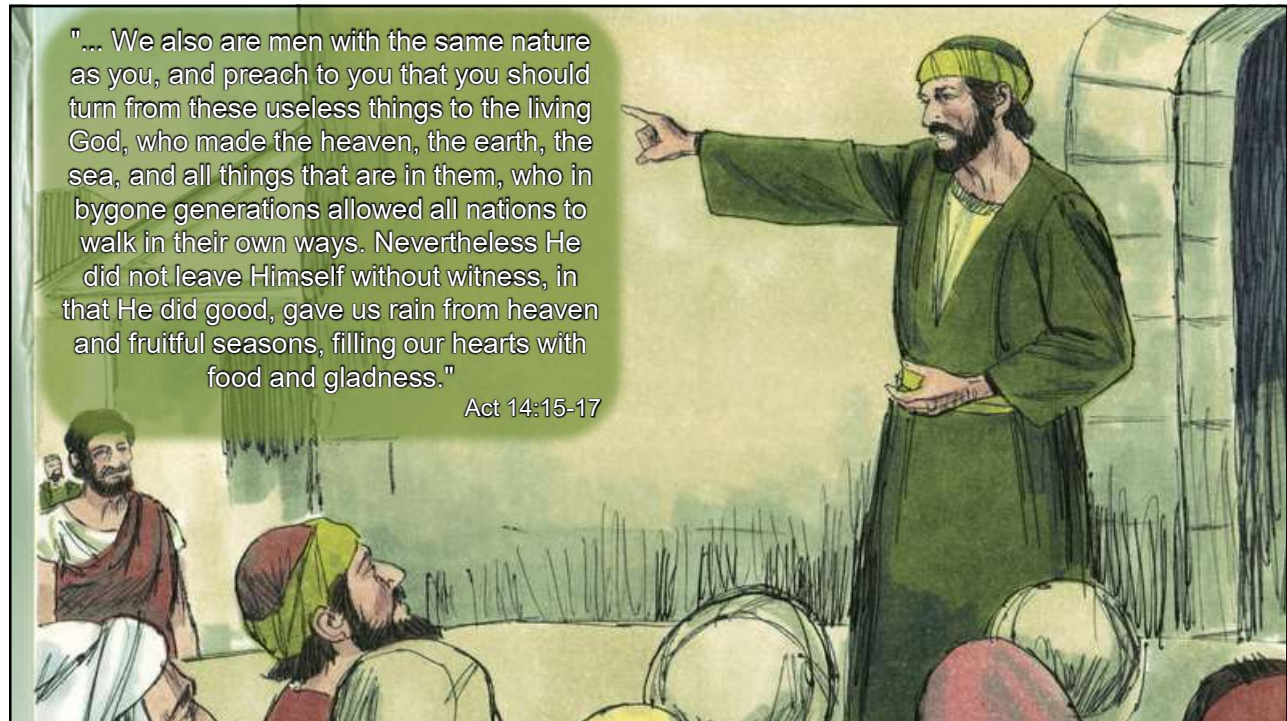
*understood by the things that are made, even  
His eternal power and Godhead ...*

Rom. 1:20a











# Theism

- ✓ from the Greek word θεός (*theos*) meaning 'God'
- ✓ the world view that affirms the existence of God



# Theism

the view that  
says:

"God exists."



# Theism

∞ monotheism ∞

only one God

∞ polytheism ∞

many gods

∞ pantheism ∞

all is god

∞ panentheism ∞

all is in god

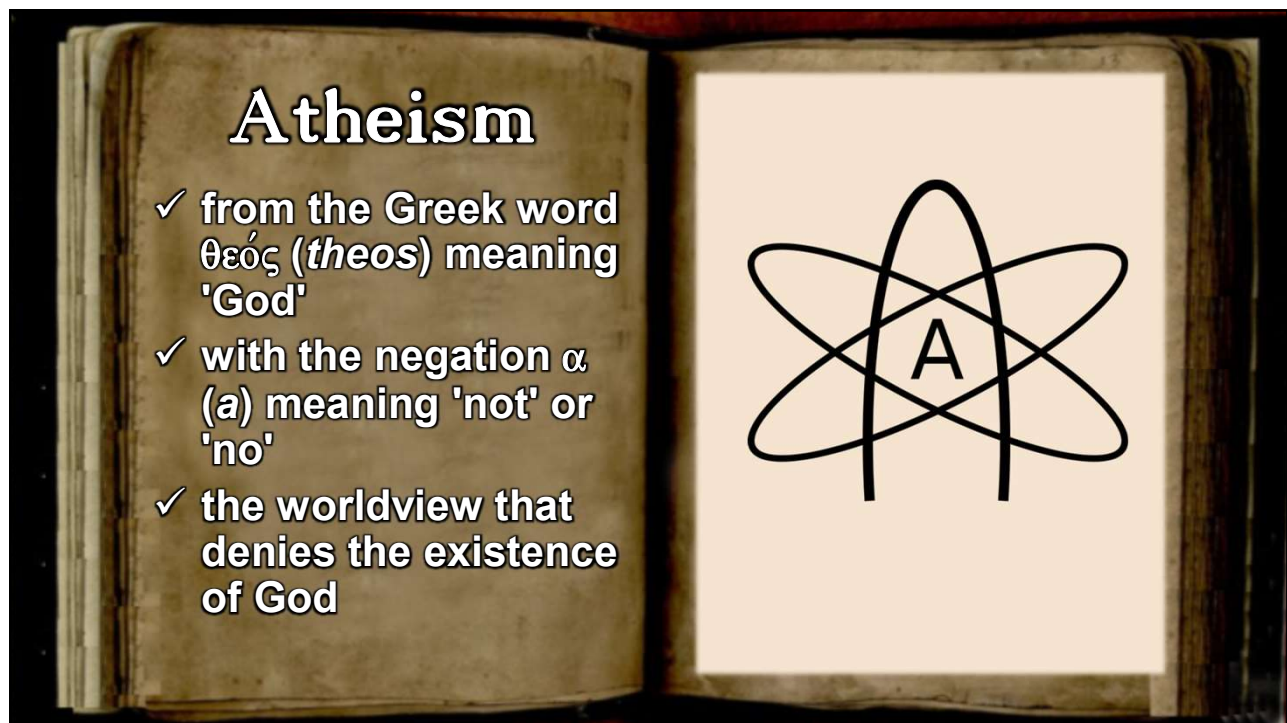
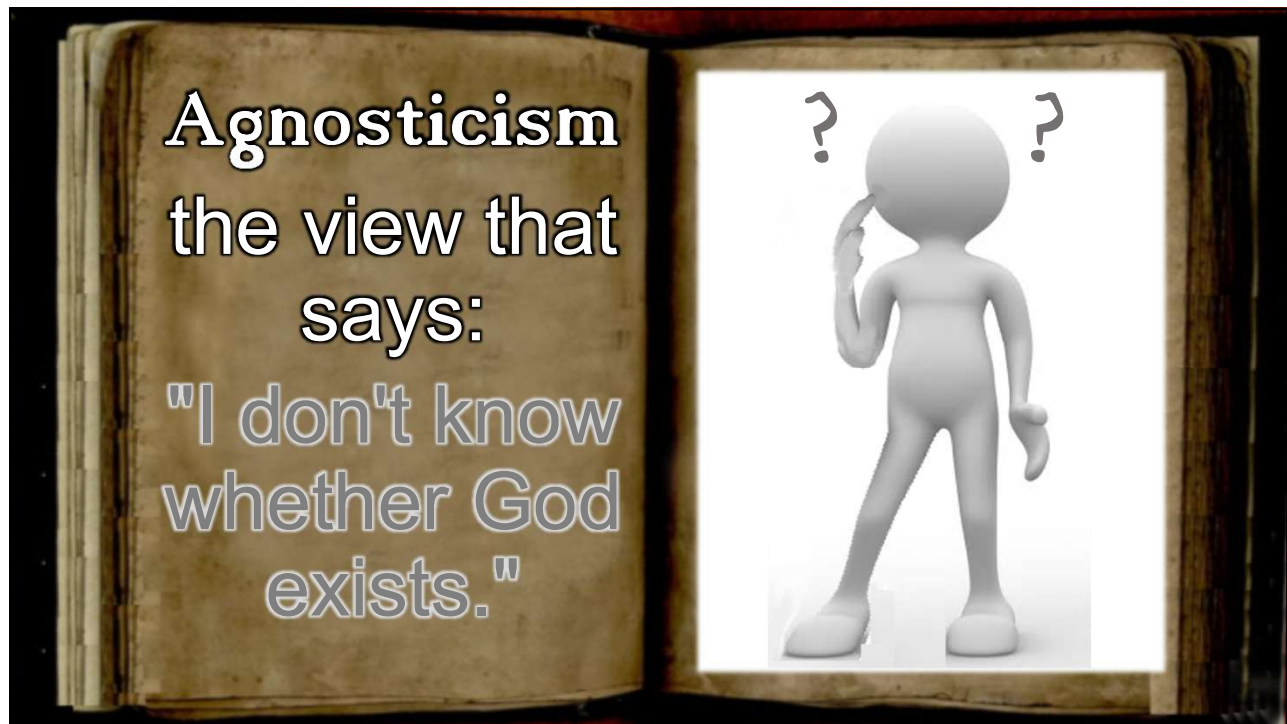


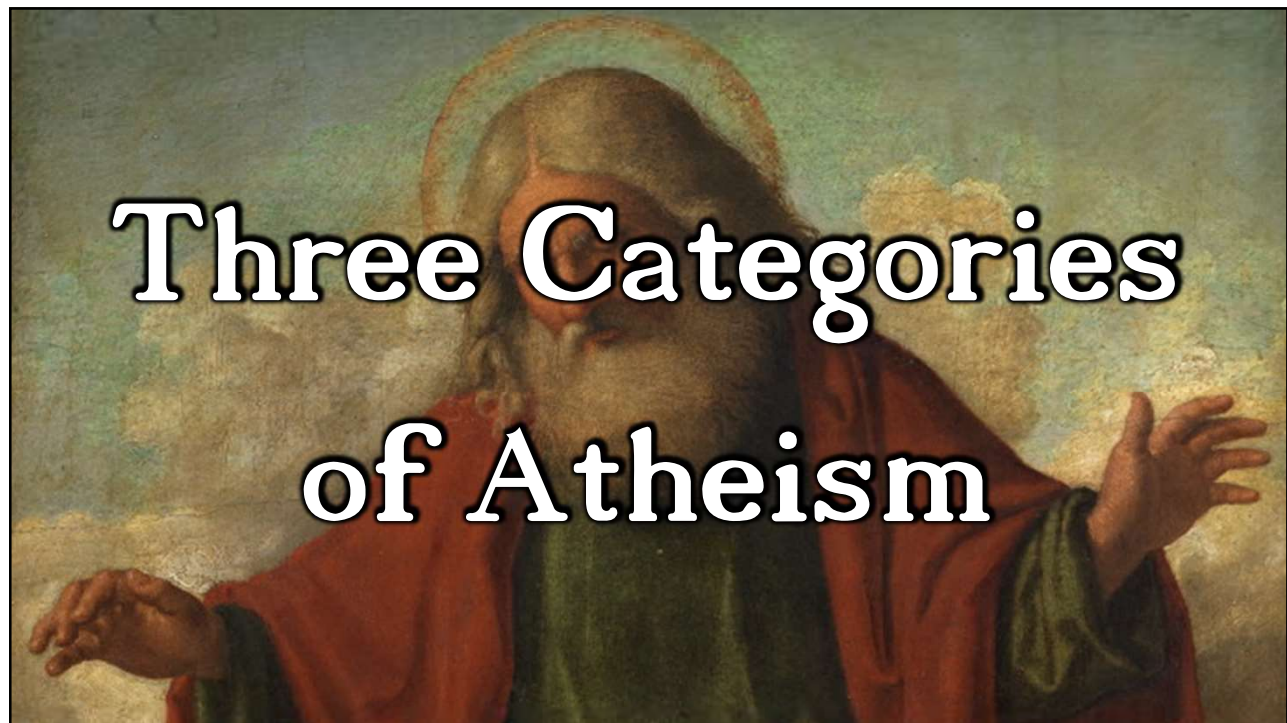
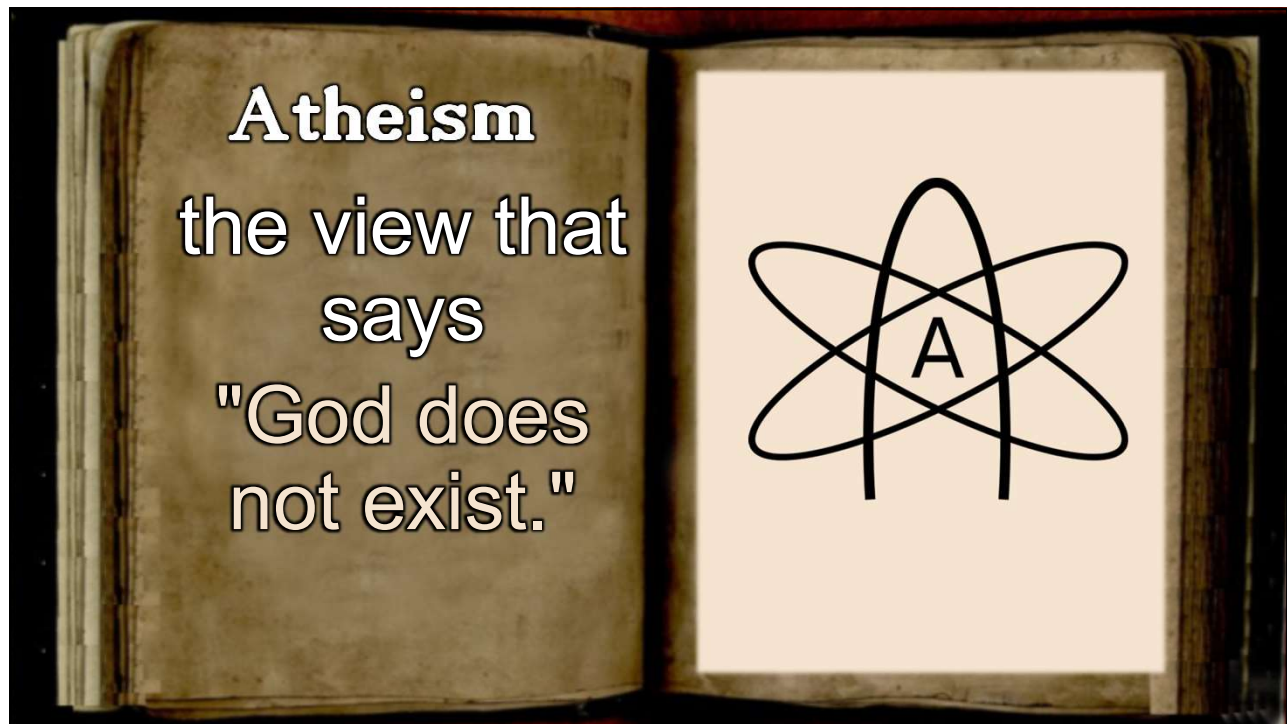
# Agnosticism

- ✓ from the Greek word γνῶσις (*gnosis*) meaning 'knowledge'
- ✓ with the negation α (*a*) meaning 'not' or 'no'
- ✓ the suspension of judgment on the question of God's existence



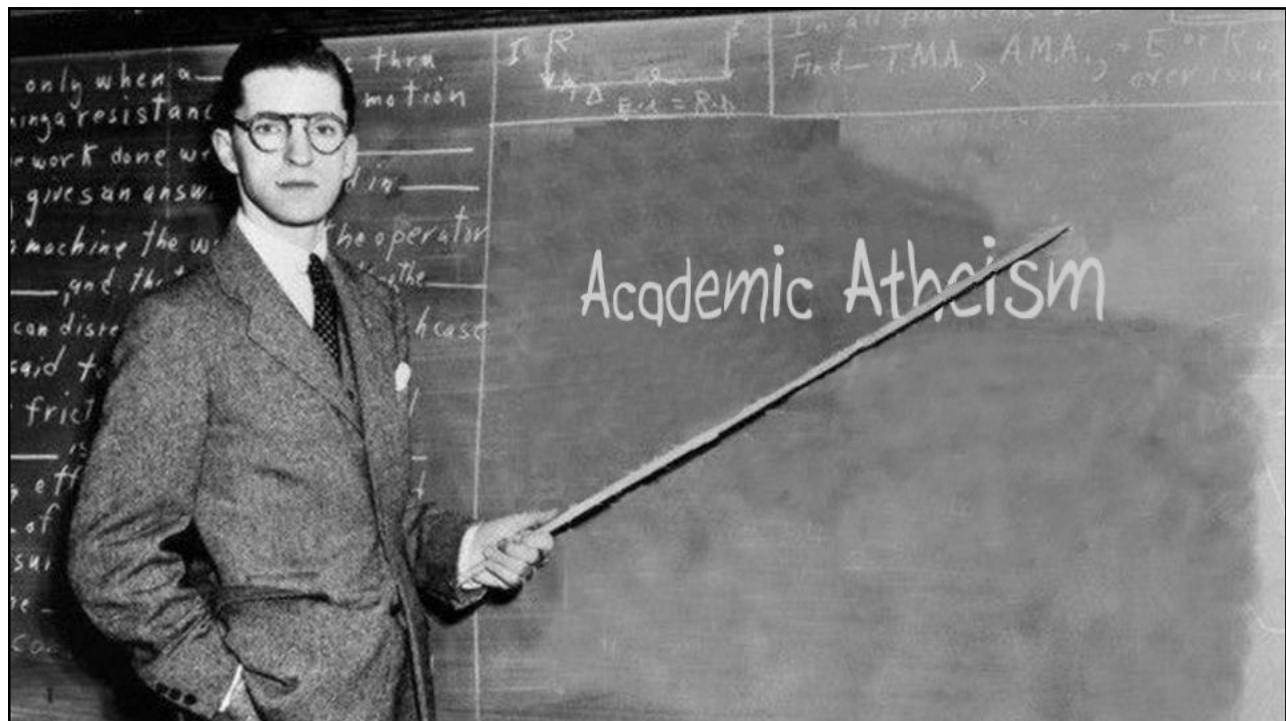








# Three Categories of Atheism







# *What Is Popular Atheism?*



*The term 'popular' here does  
not mean that it is well liked or  
well known.*



*Rather, in this context, 'popular' is in contrast to 'scholarly.'*



*It means that the writing is for a more general audience instead of the experts or technicians in the field.*





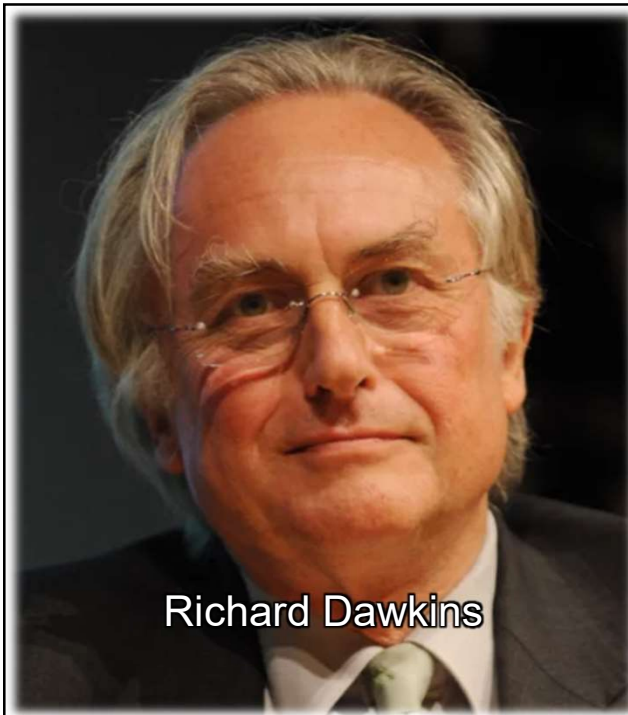
*As such, it requires of the reader less background knowledge and is generally free of technical terminology.*



***Who Are Some Popular Atheists?***

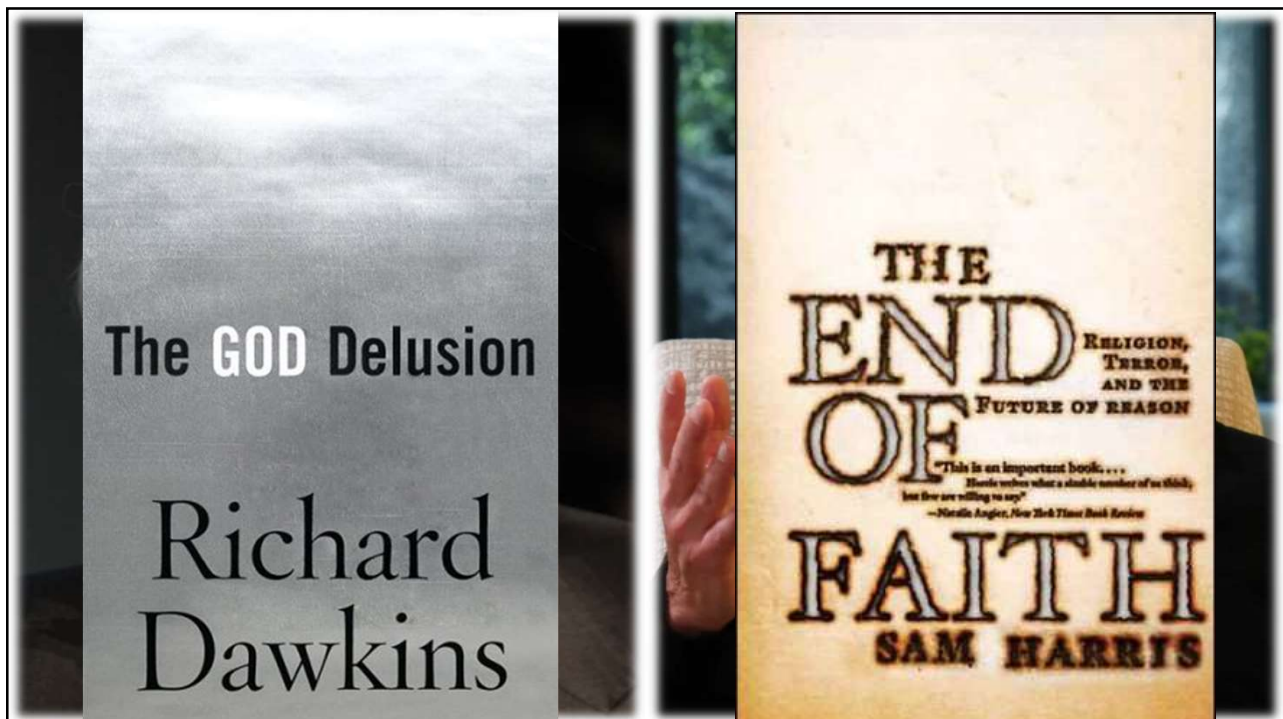


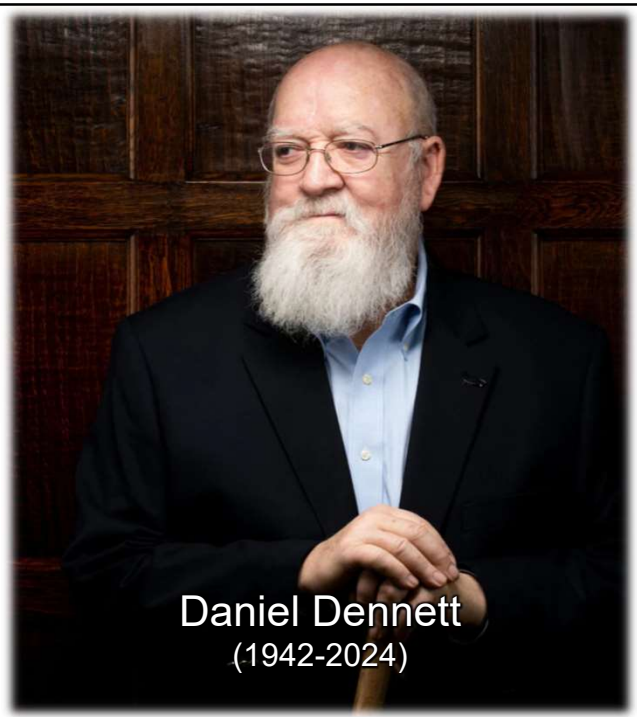
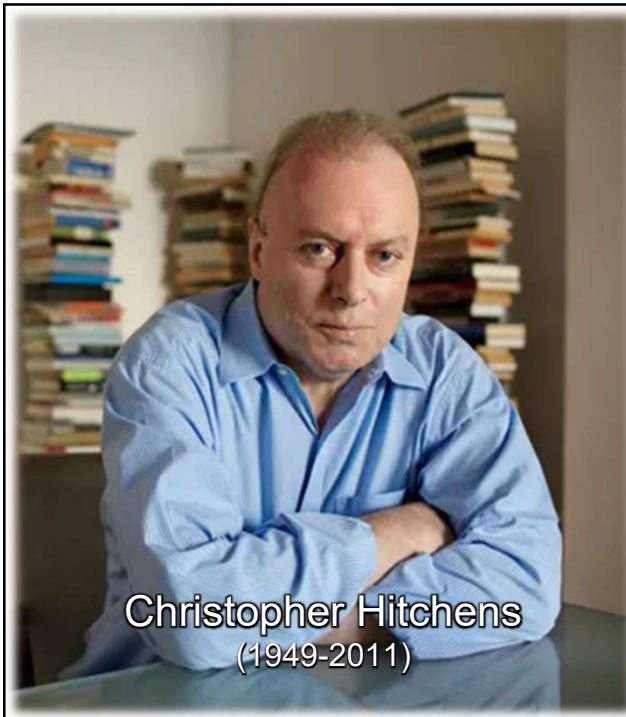
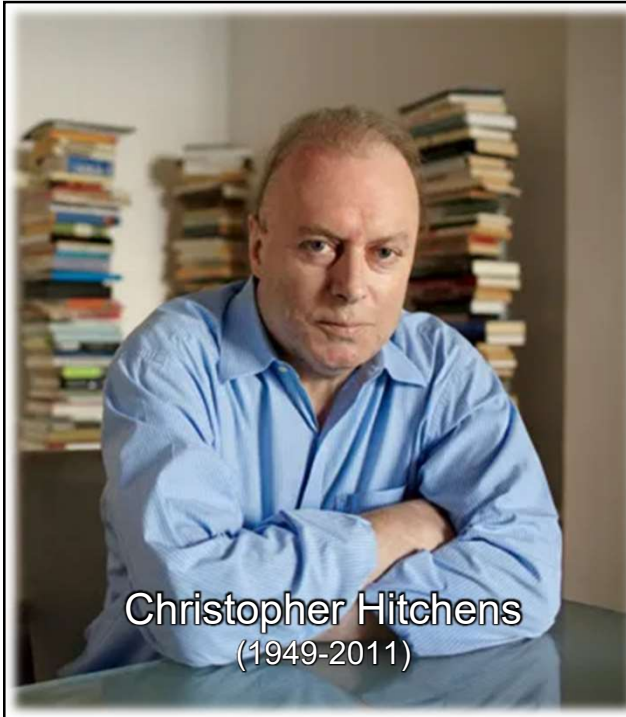
*For reasons that should become obvious, the cast of Popular Atheists will include the New Atheists.*



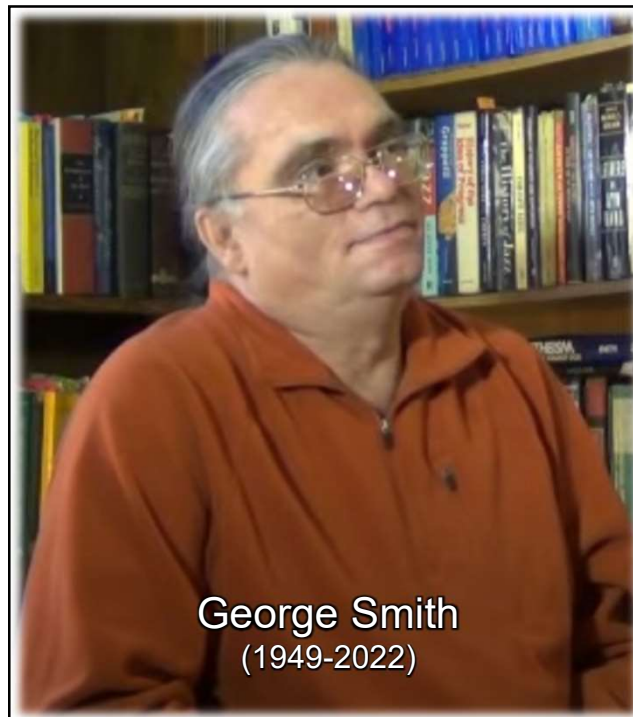
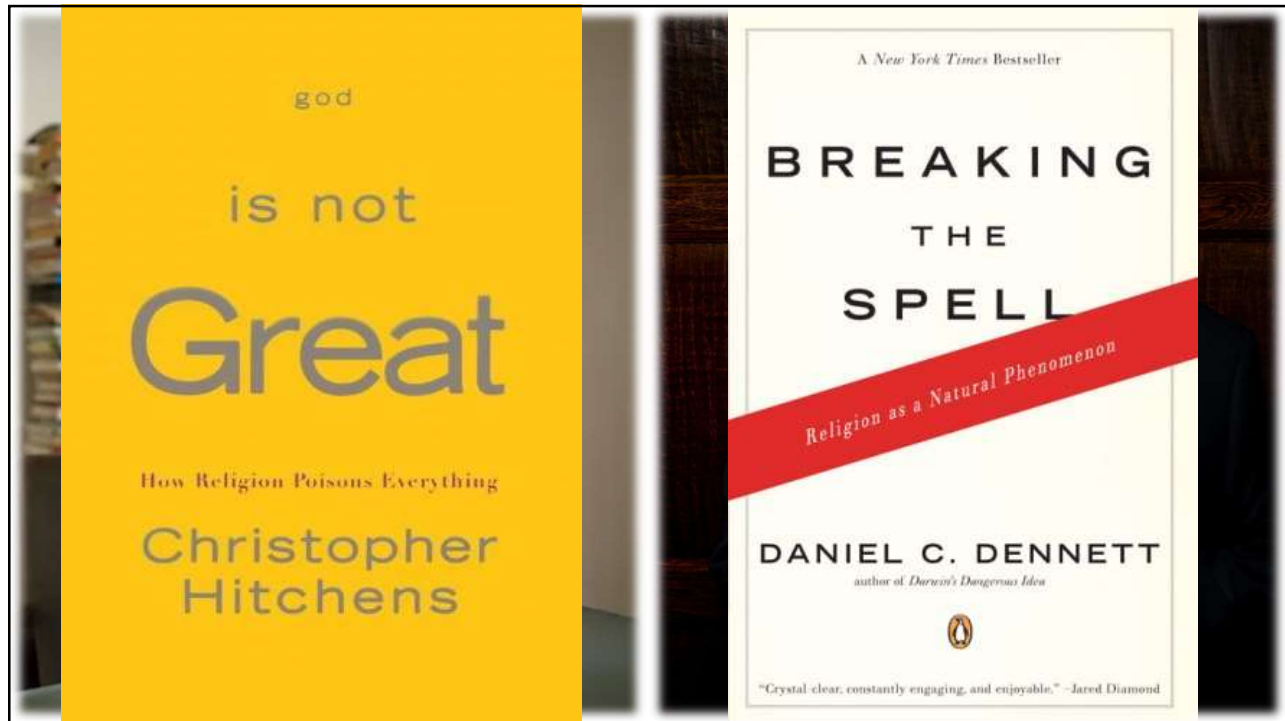
Richard Dawkins

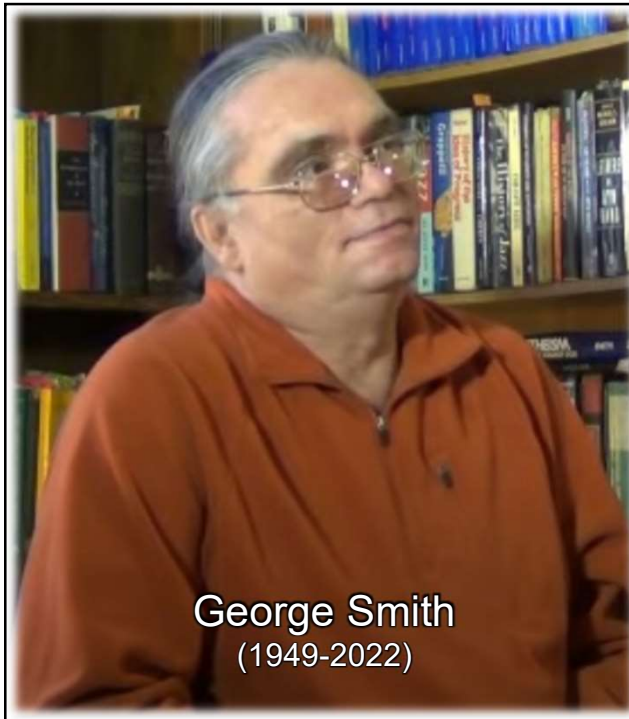




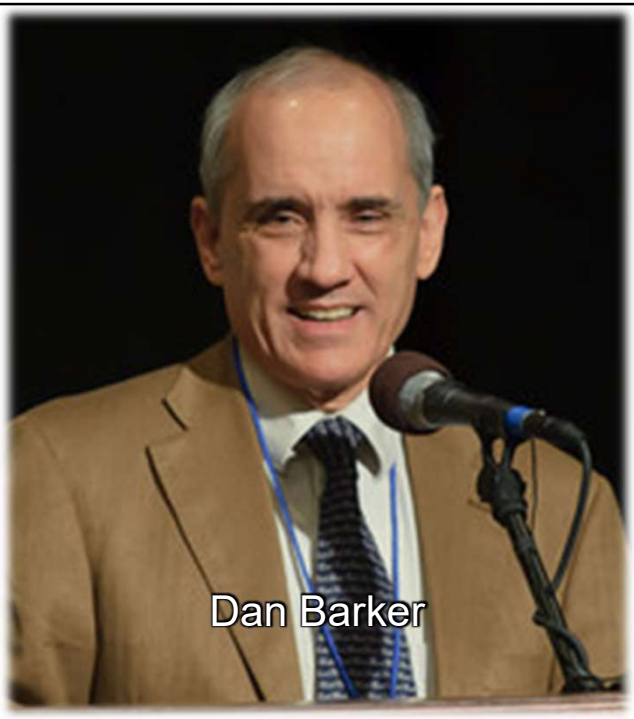




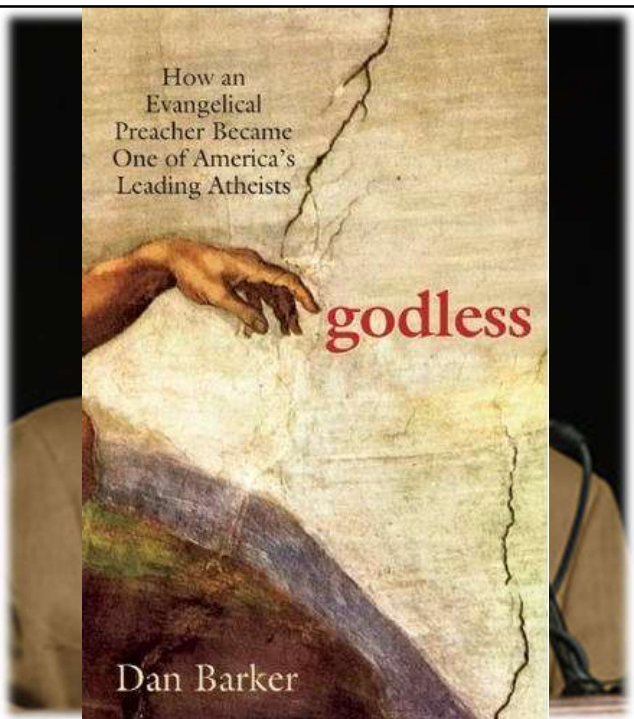
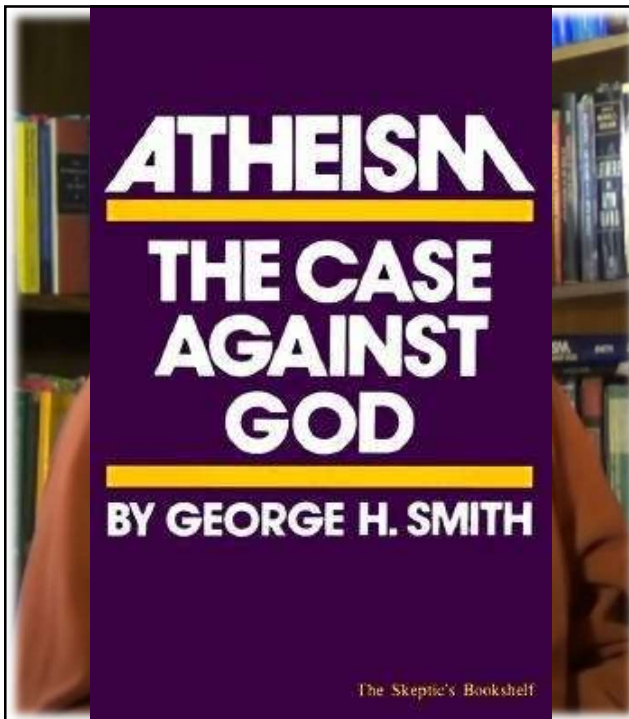




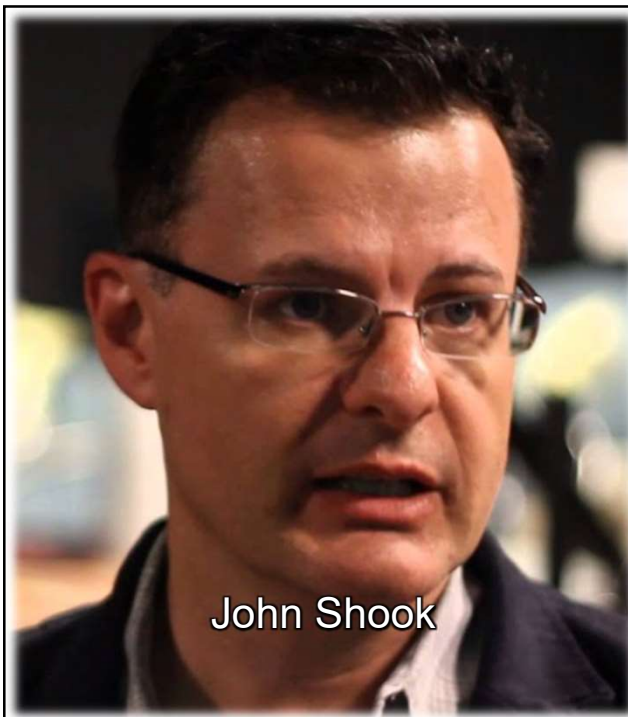
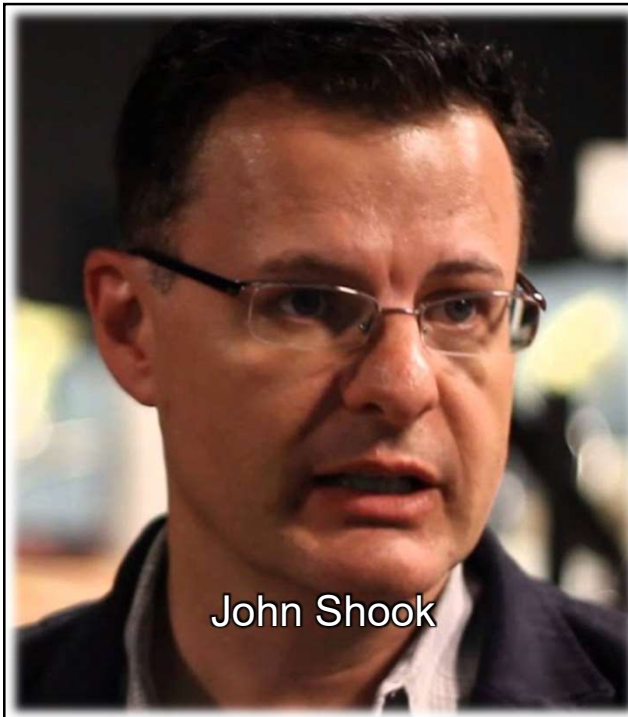
George Smith  
(1949-2022)

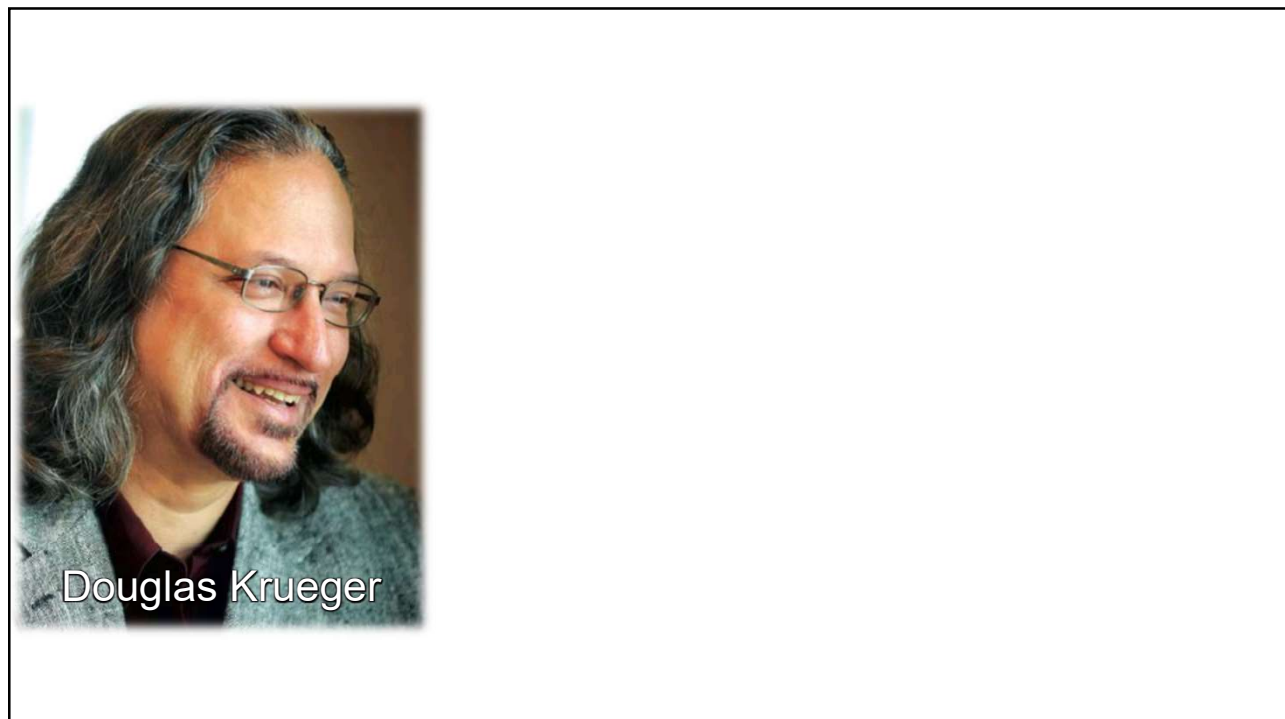
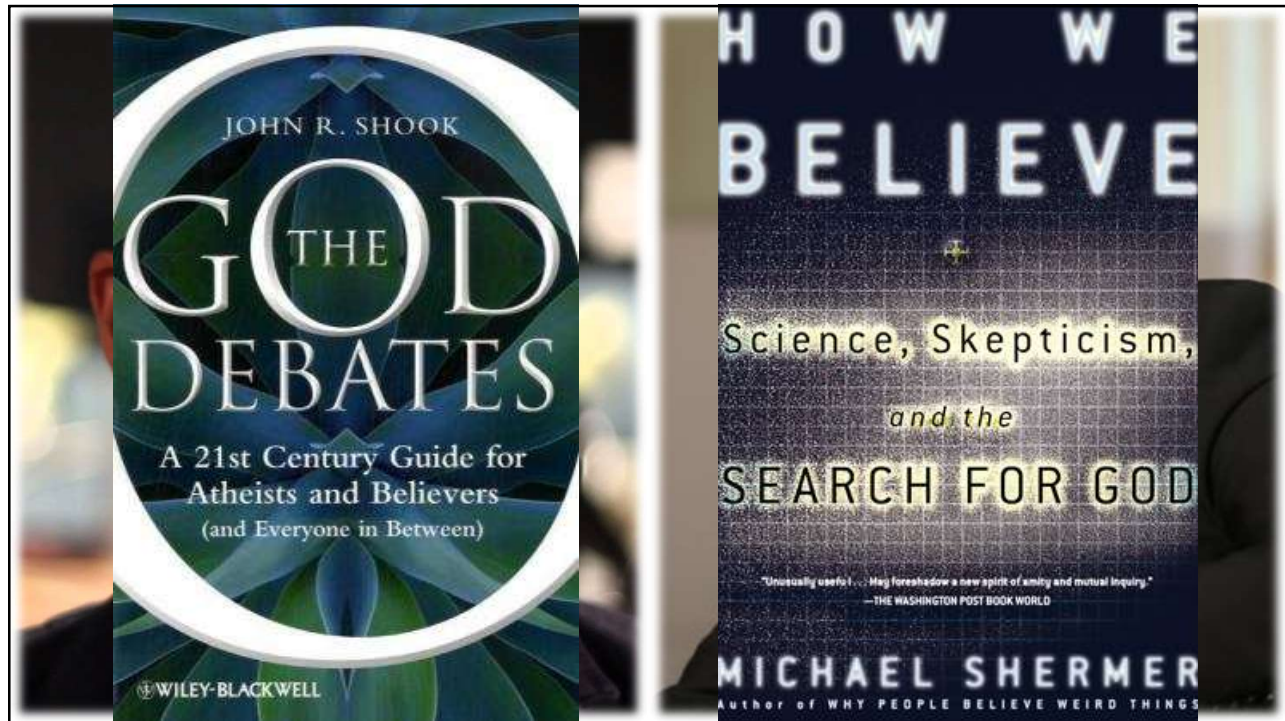


Dan Barker













Douglas Krueger



David Mills



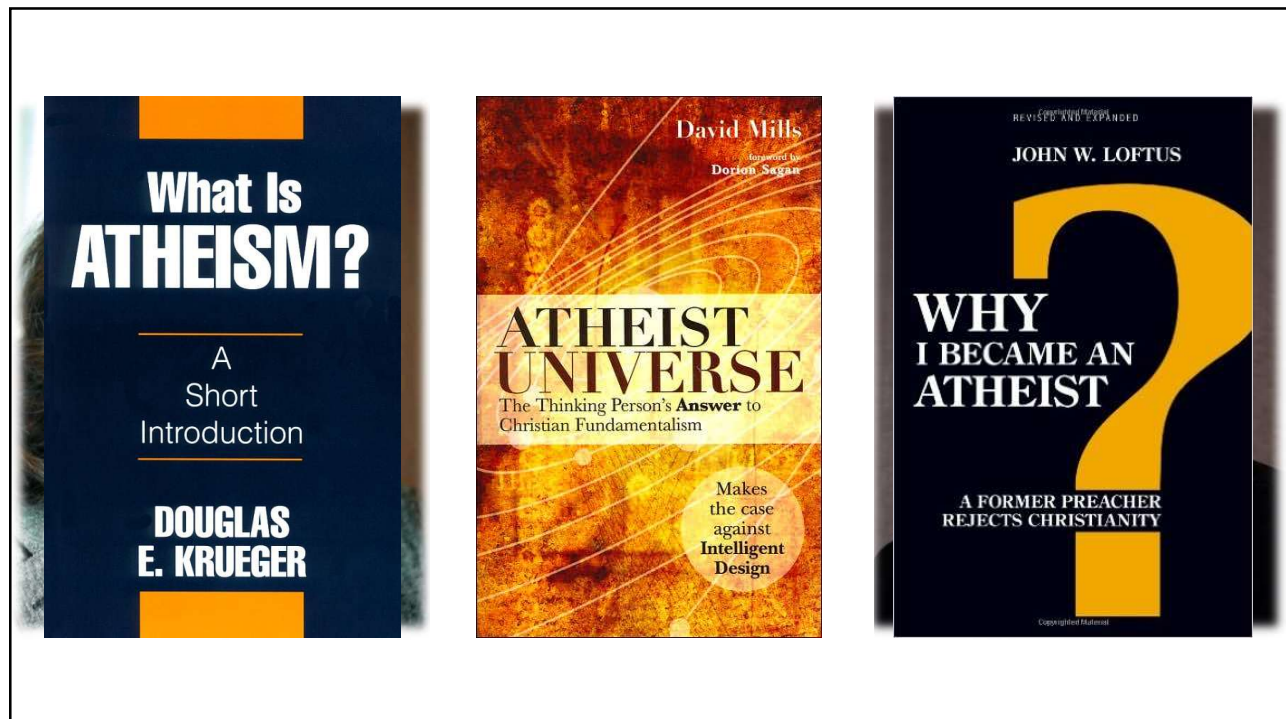
Douglas Krueger



David Mills



John Loftus

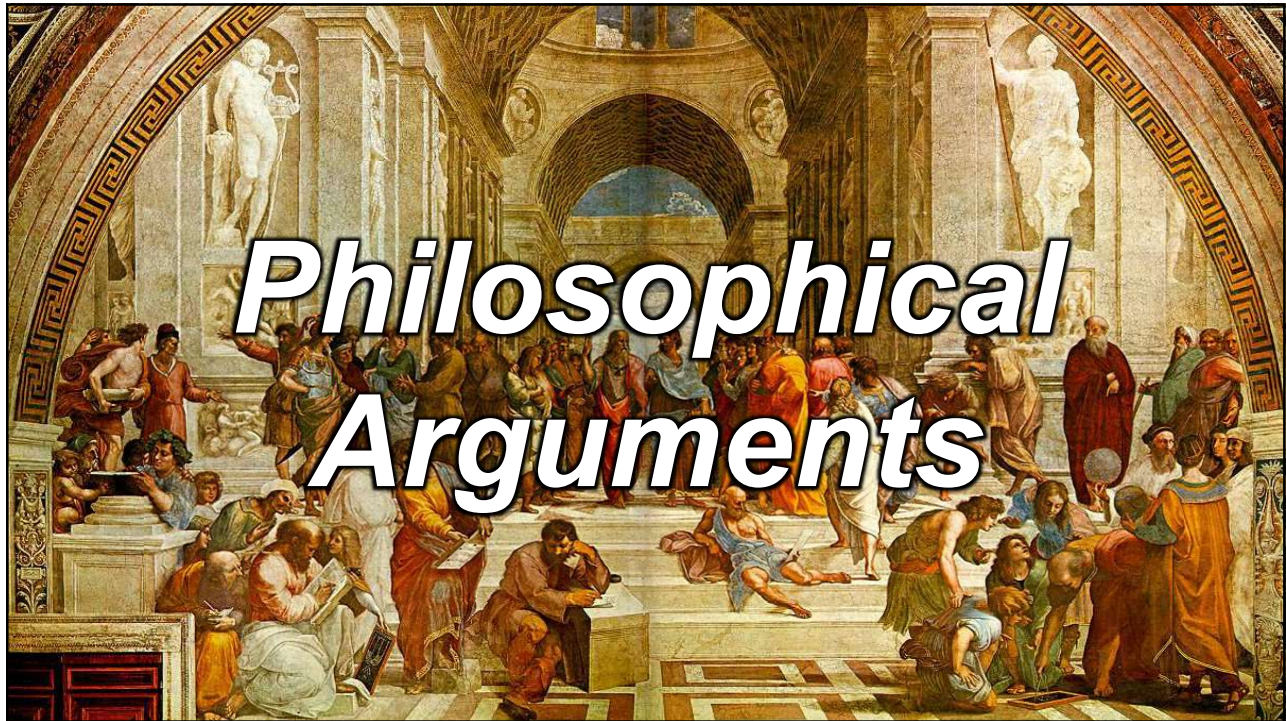




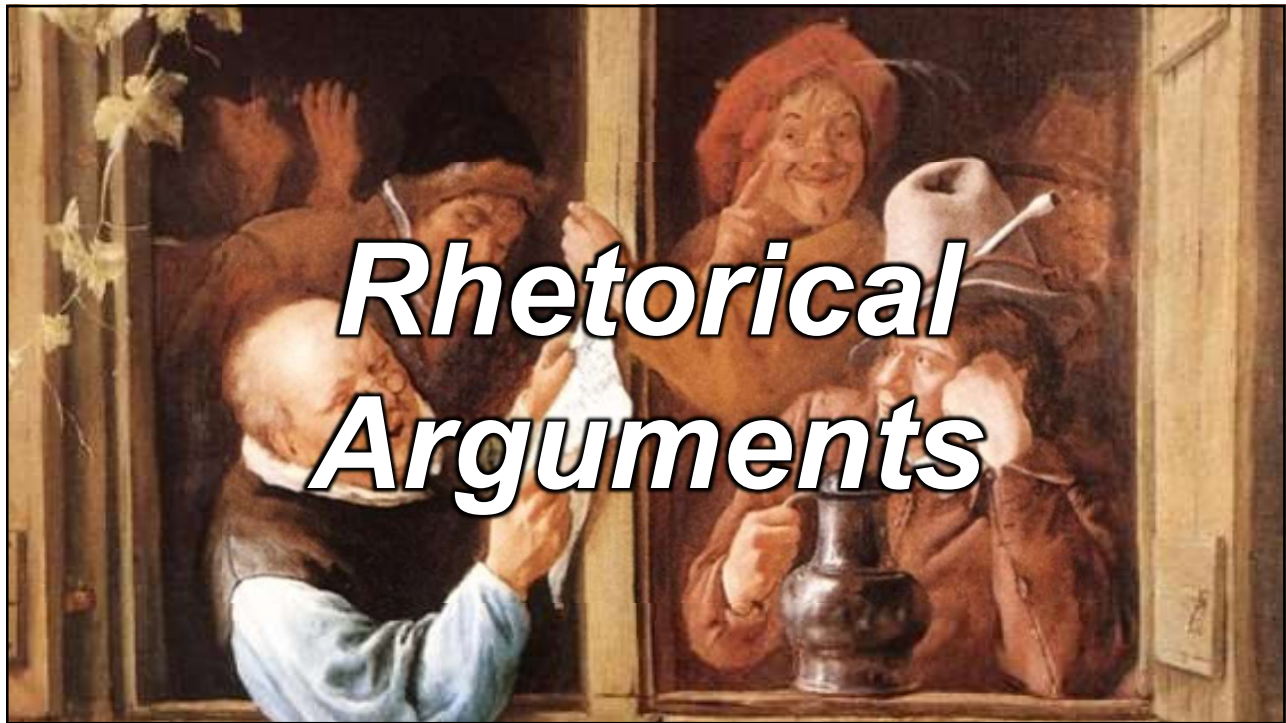
# ***What Are the Arguments of Popular Atheism?***



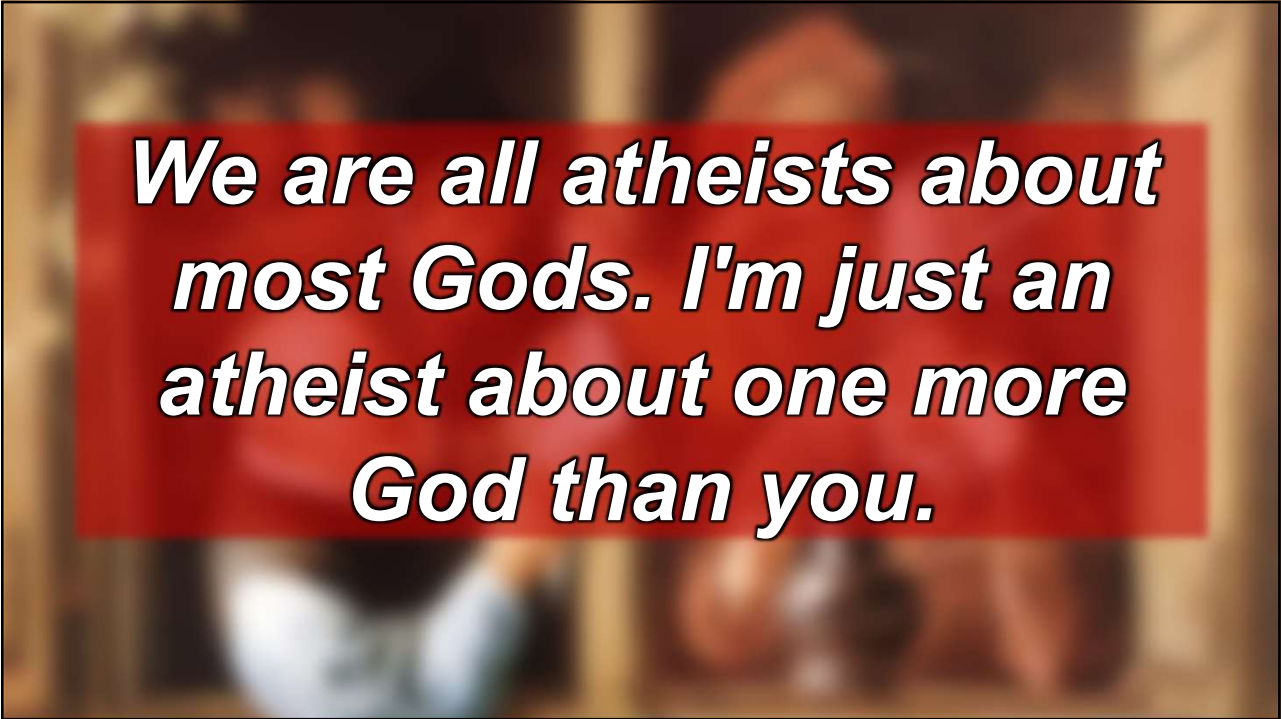




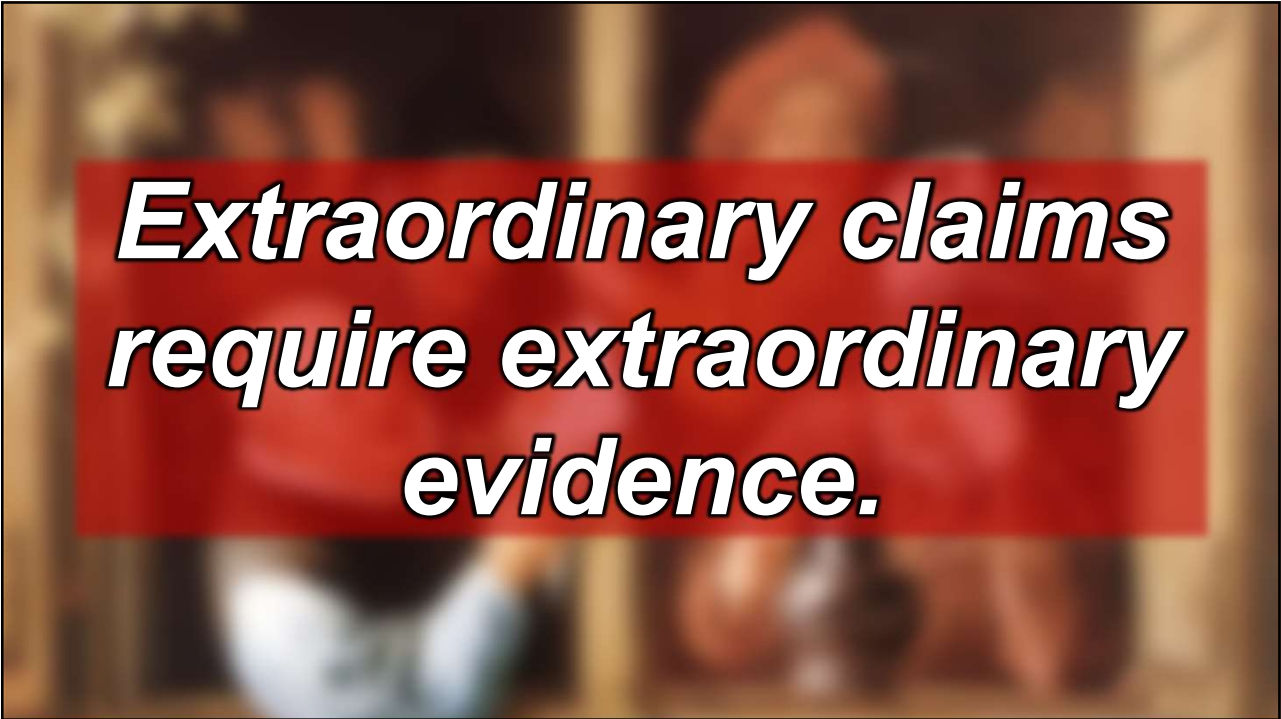




***Atheism is not a belief. Rather, it is the lack of a belief in God.***



***We are all atheists about most Gods. I'm just an atheist about one more God than you.***



***Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.***

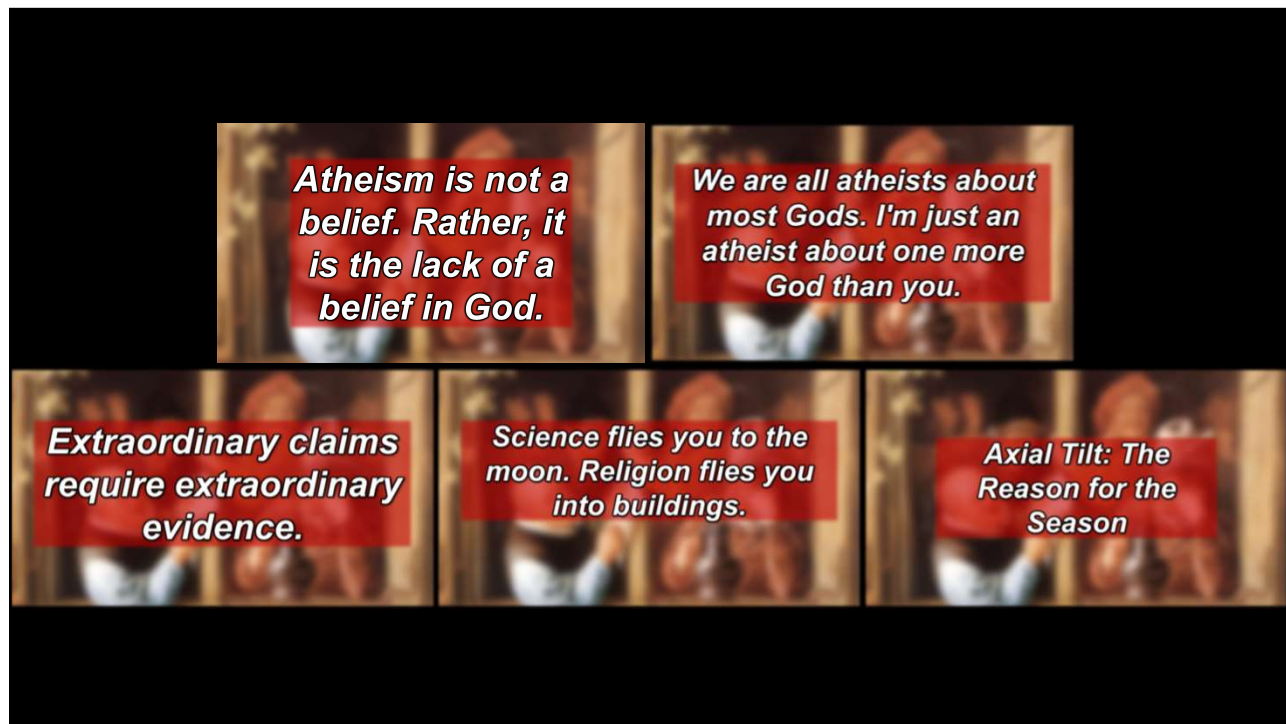




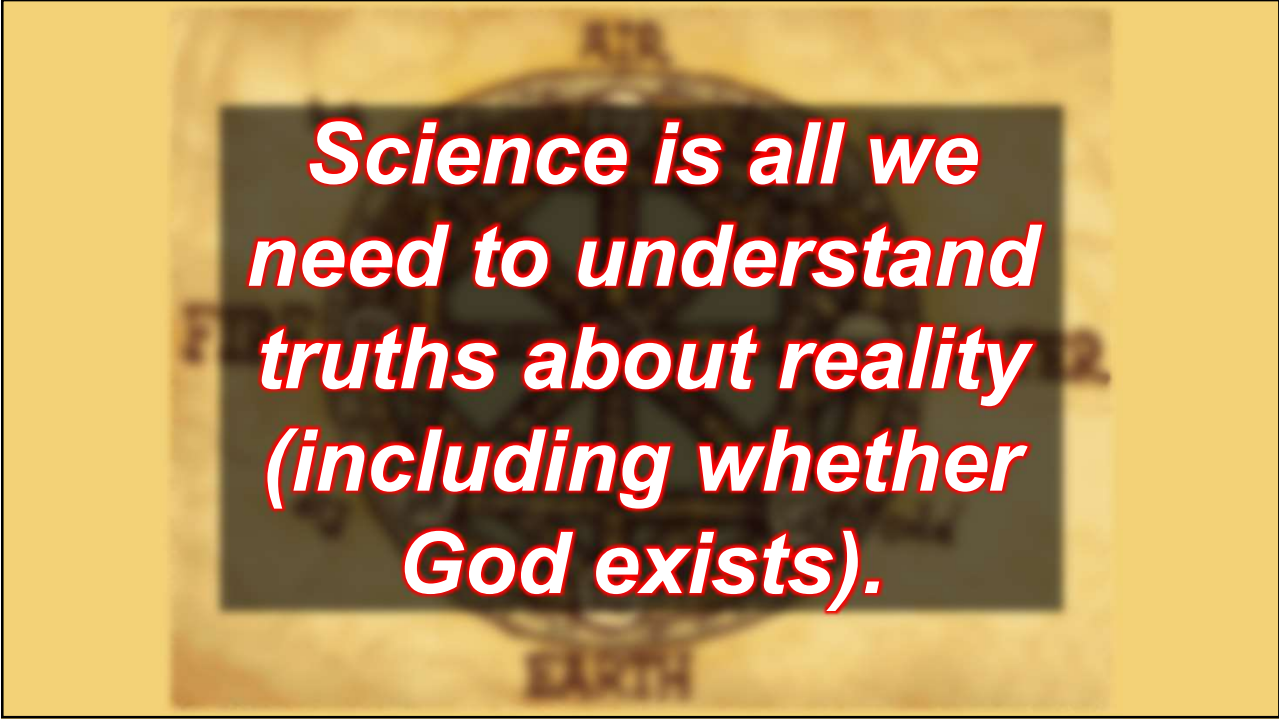
***Science flies you to the  
moon. Religion flies you  
into buildings.***



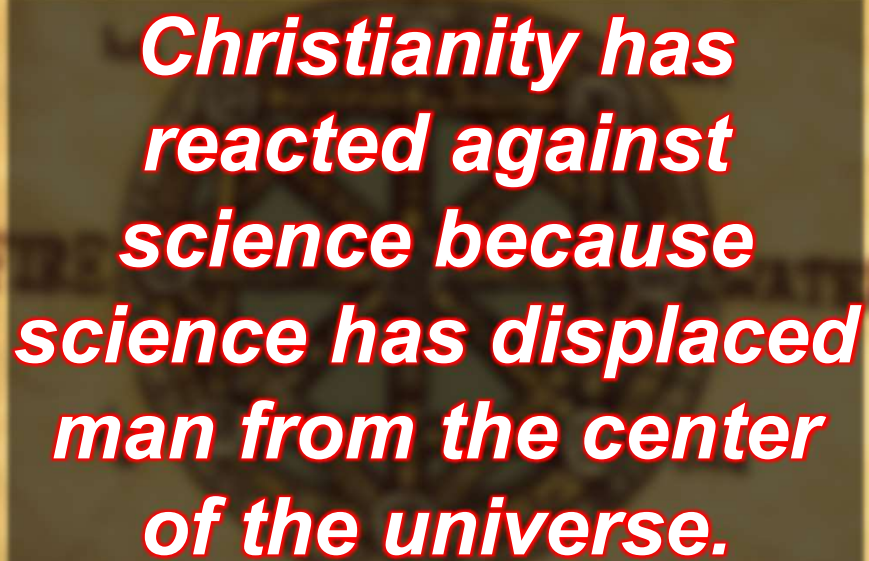
***Axial Tilt: The  
Reason for the  
Season***



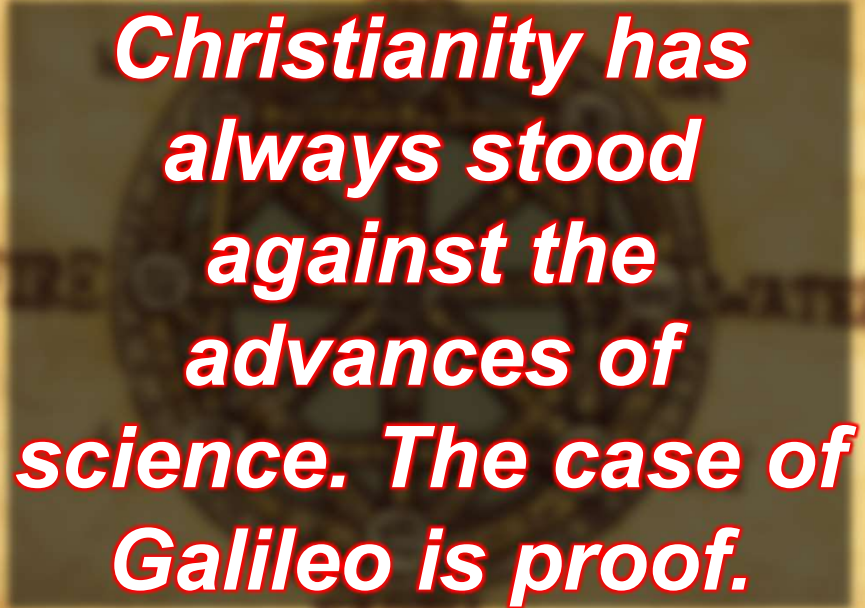




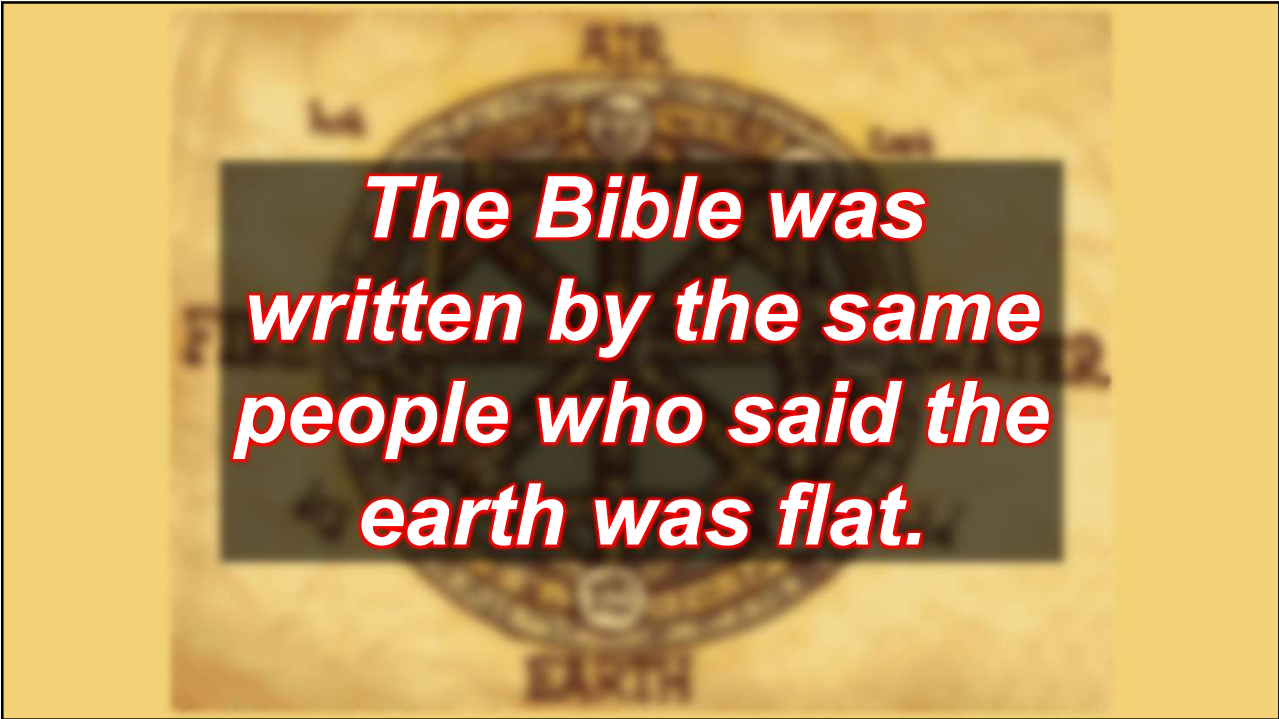
***Science is all we  
need to understand  
truths about reality  
(including whether  
God exists).***



***Christianity has  
reacted against  
science because  
science has displaced  
man from the center  
of the universe.***

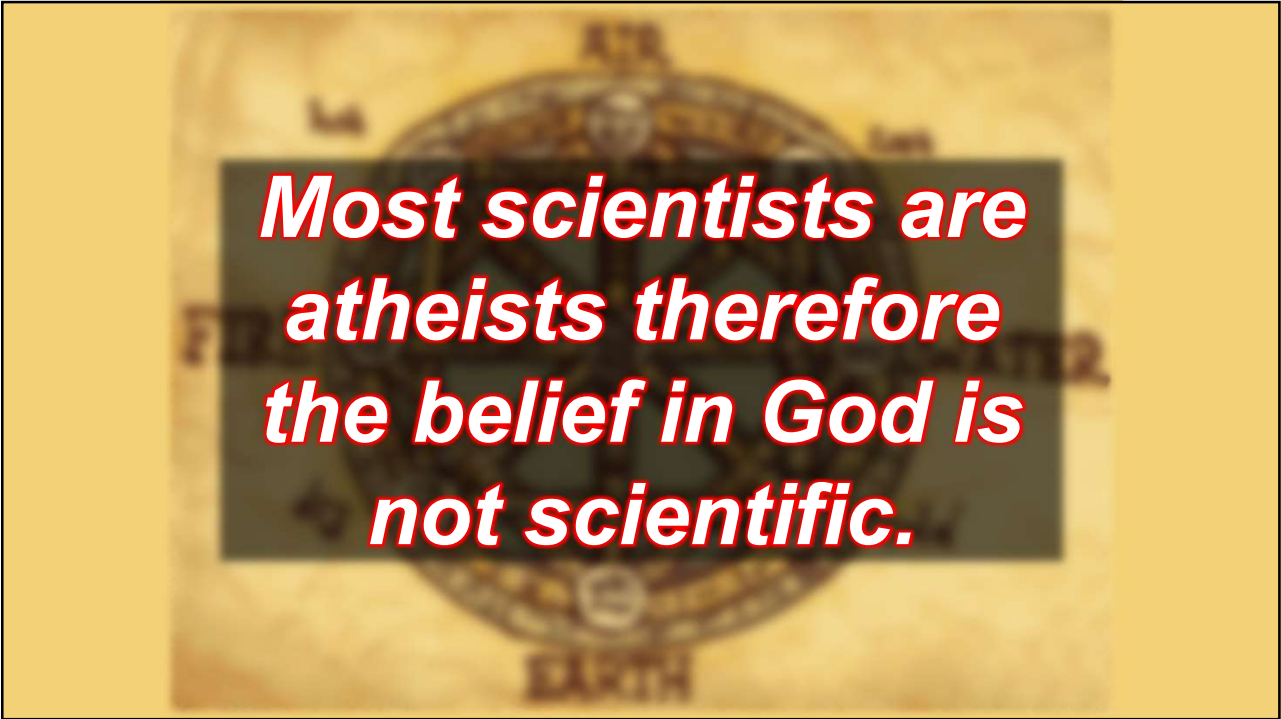


***Christianity has  
always stood  
against the  
advances of  
science. The case of  
Galileo is proof.***

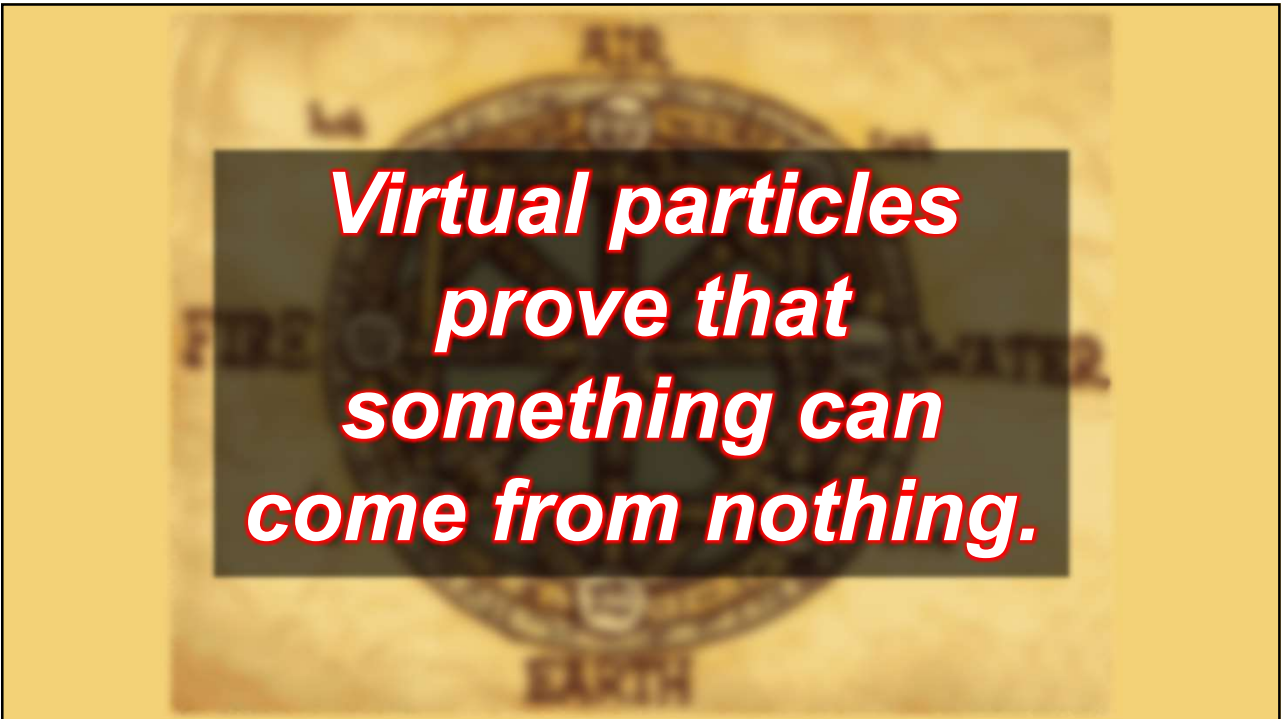


***The Bible was  
written by the same  
people who said the  
earth was flat.***





***Most scientists are  
atheists therefore  
the belief in God is  
not scientific.***



***Virtual particles  
prove that  
something can  
come from nothing.***

***If God created the  
biological  
complexity of the  
world, He must be  
no less complex.***

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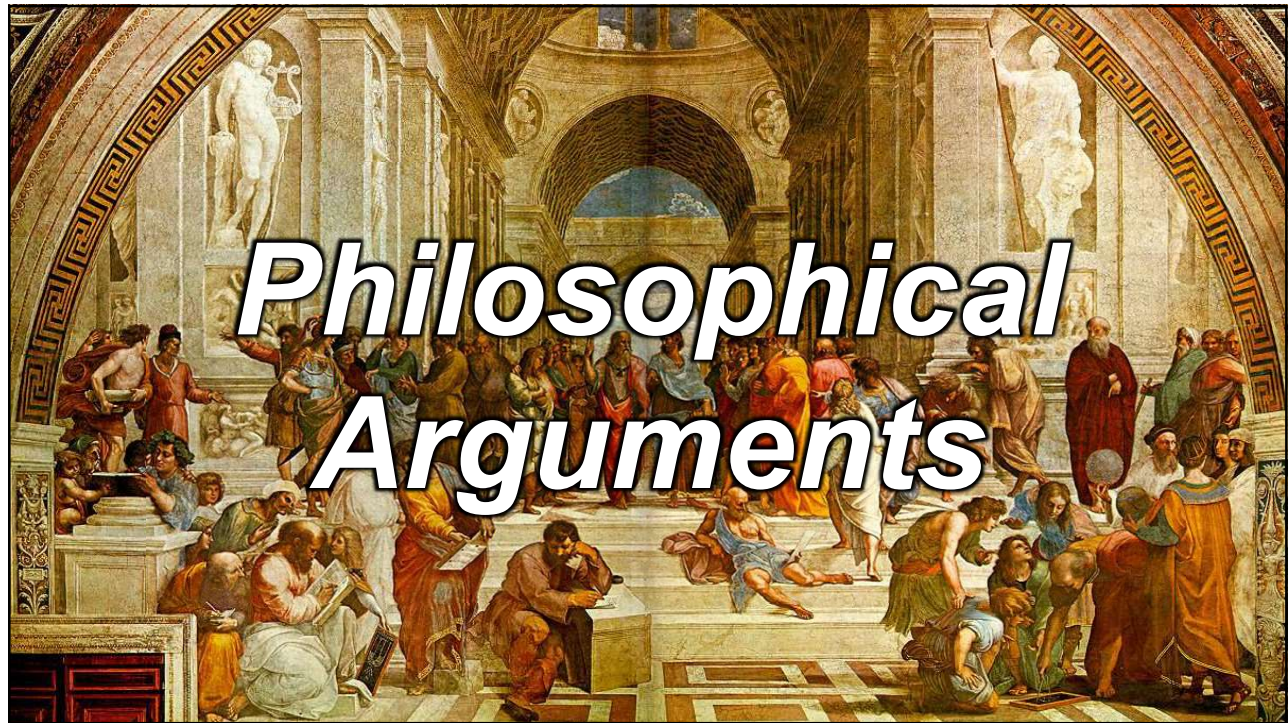
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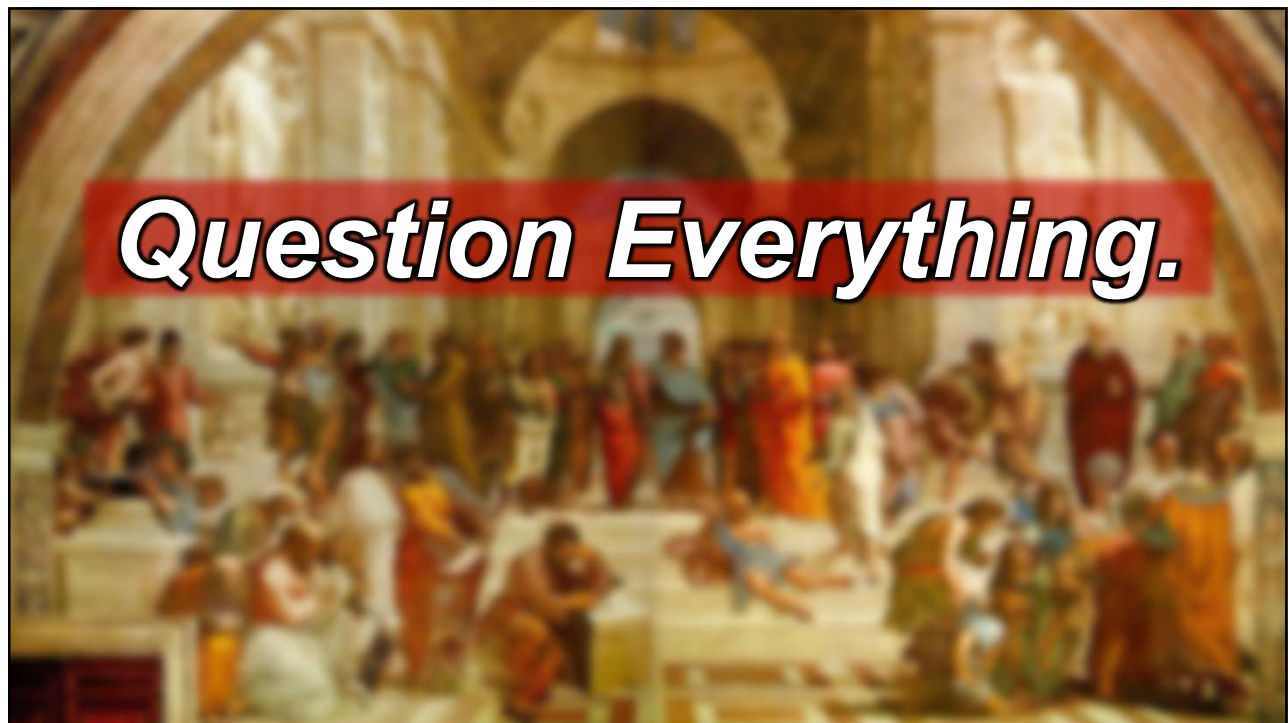
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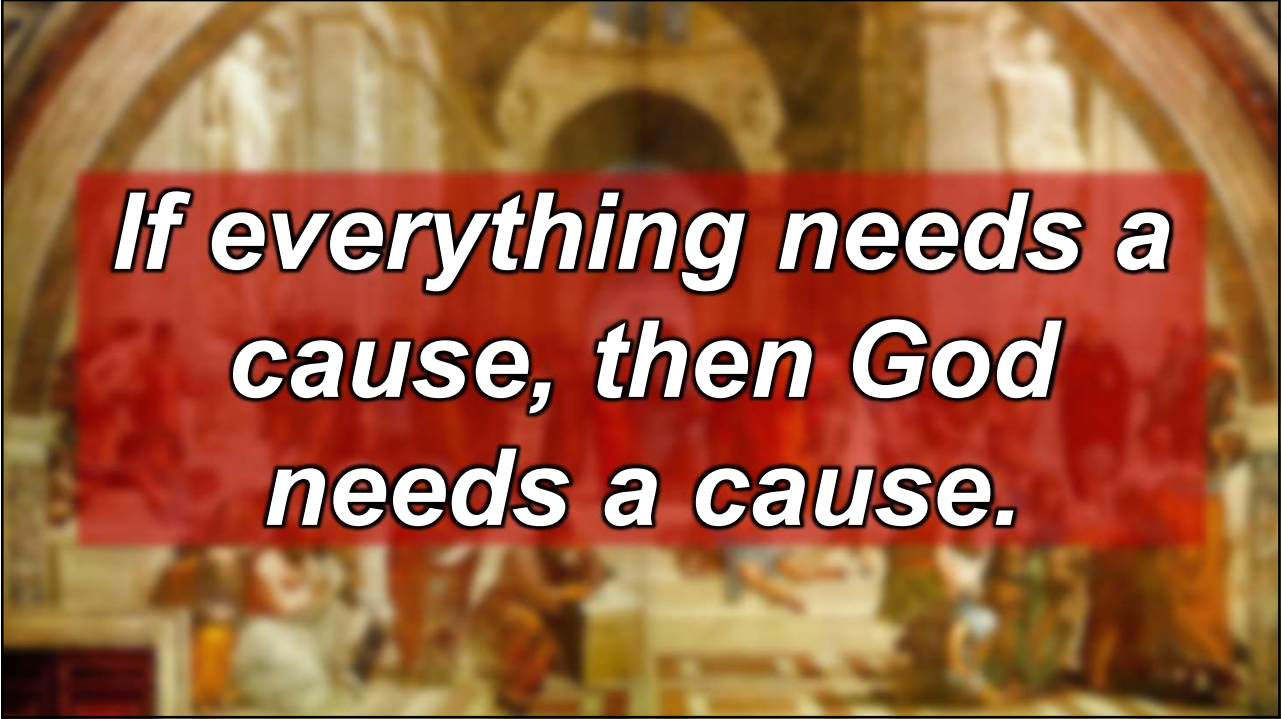


# ***Philosophical Arguments***



***Question Everything.***



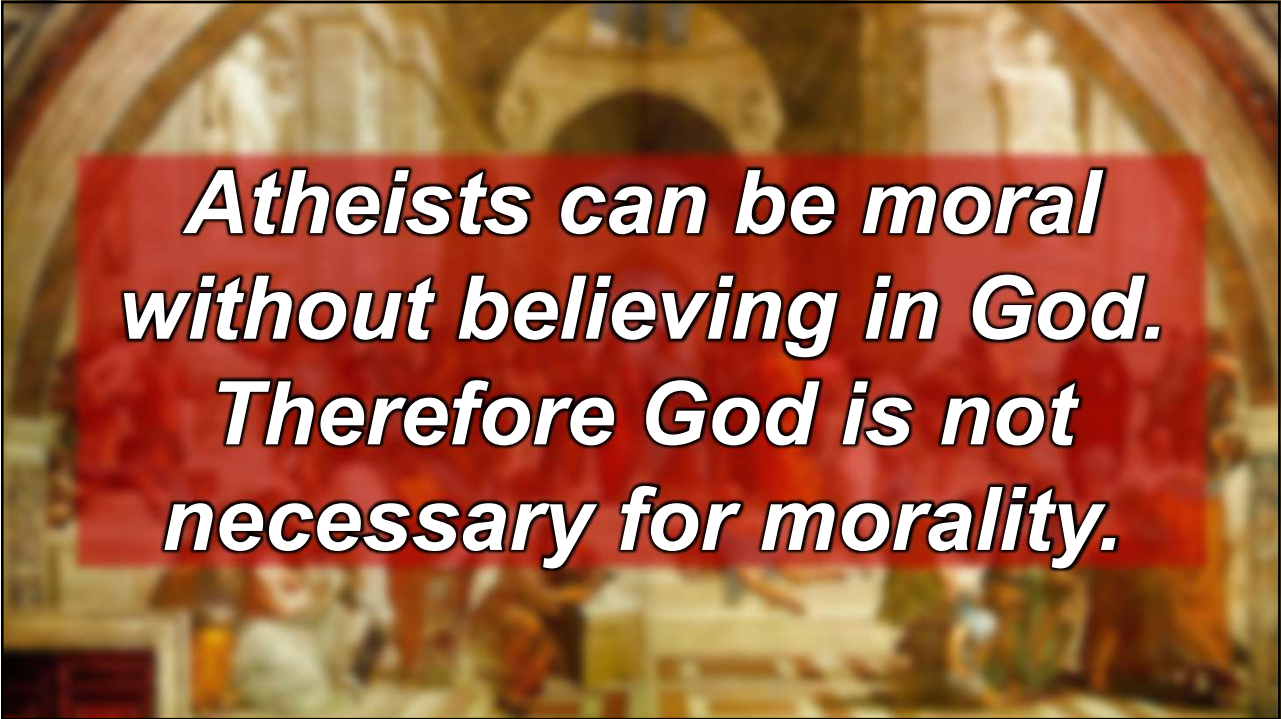


***If everything needs a  
cause, then God  
needs a cause.***

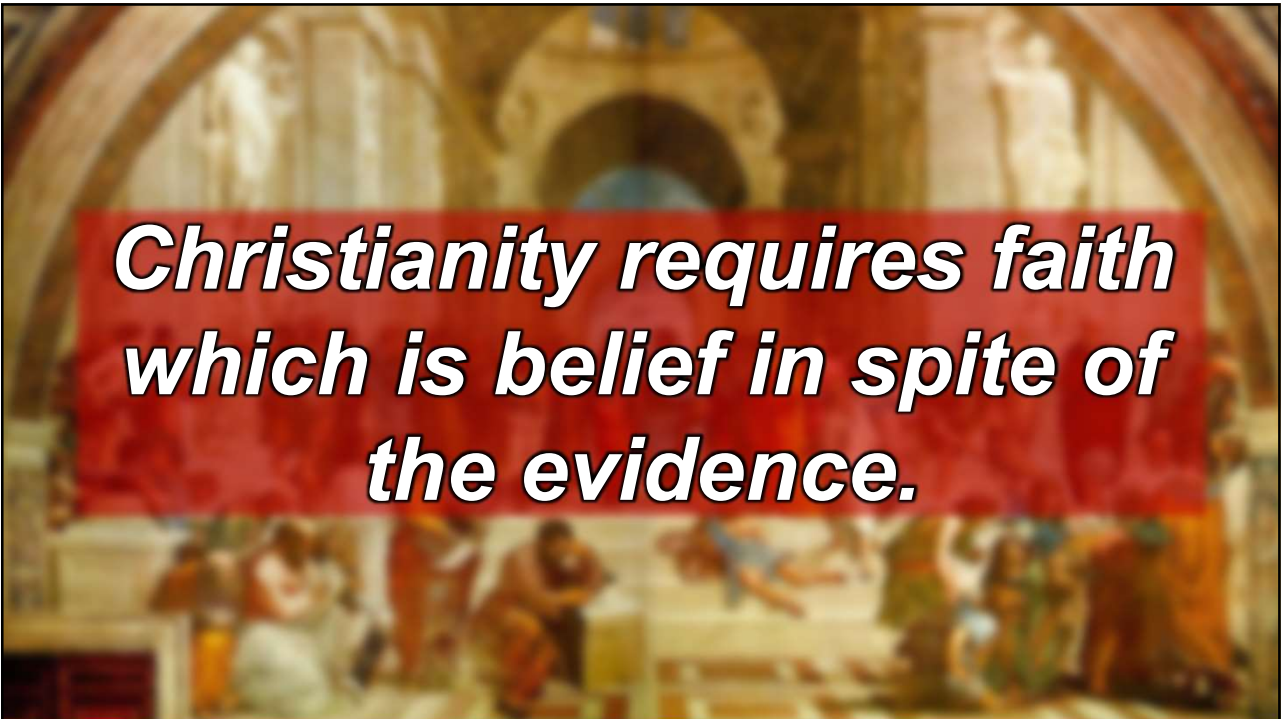


***Who made God?  
Who designed the  
designer?***

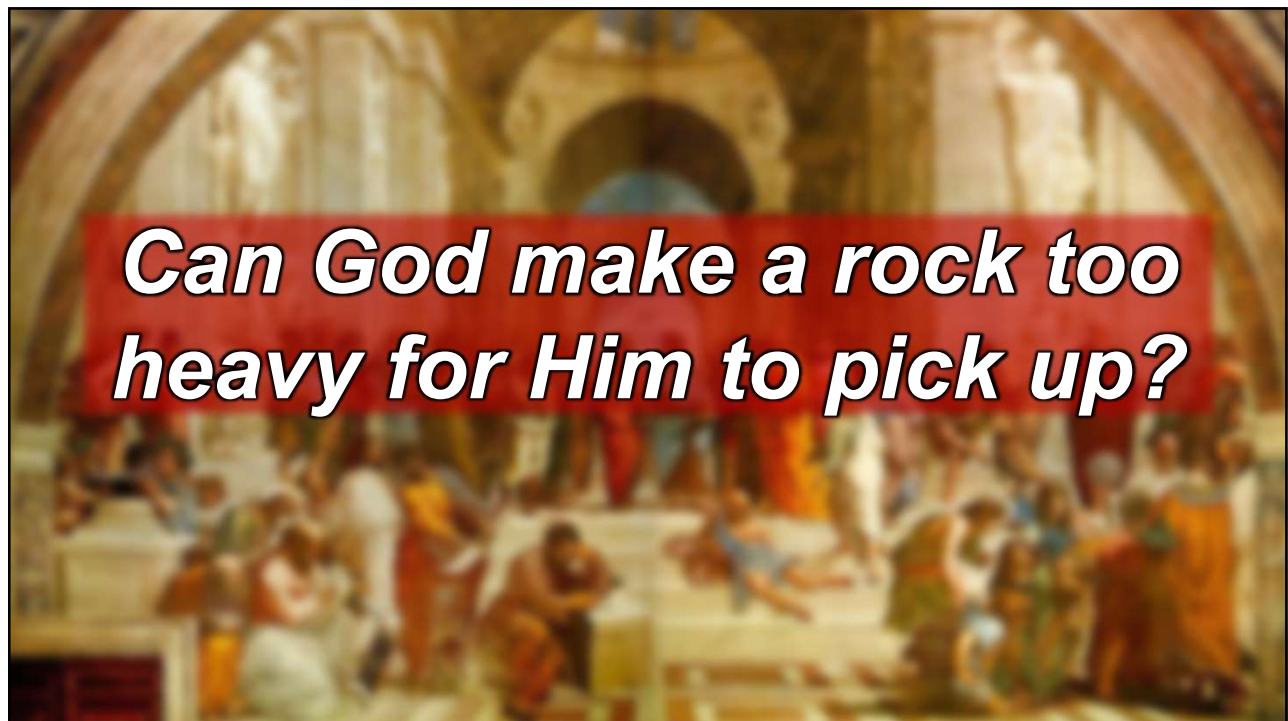
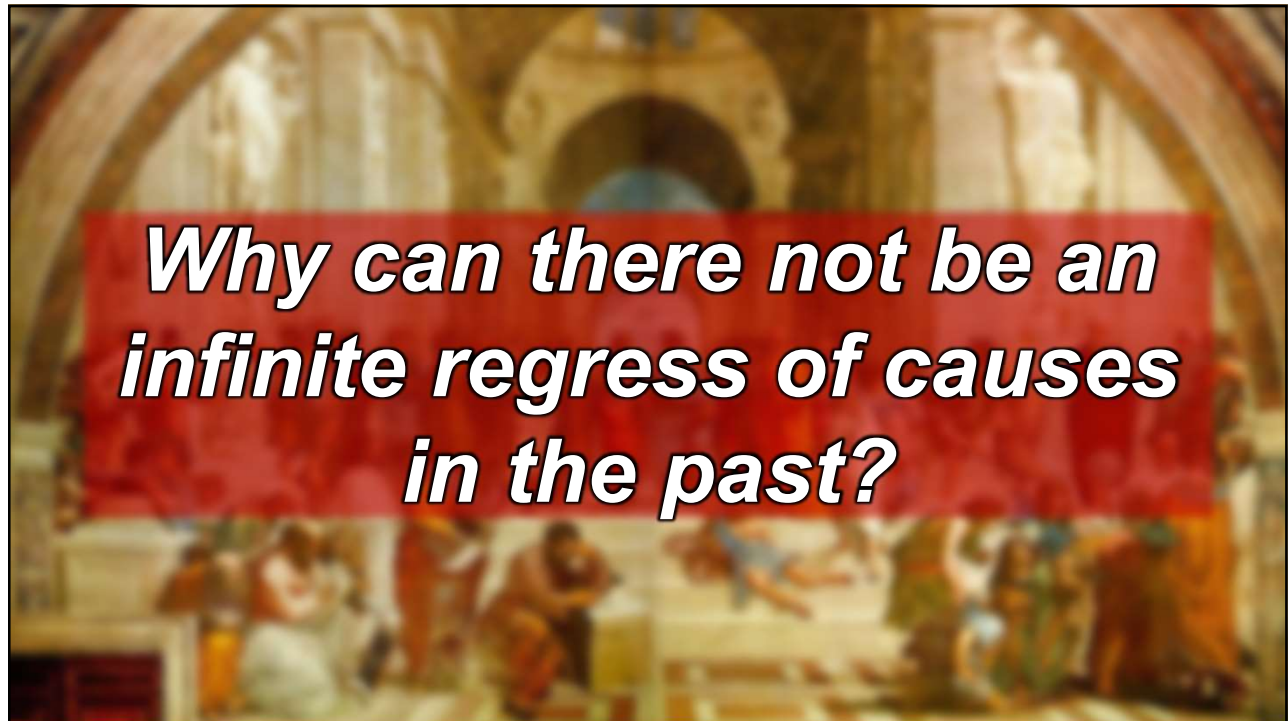




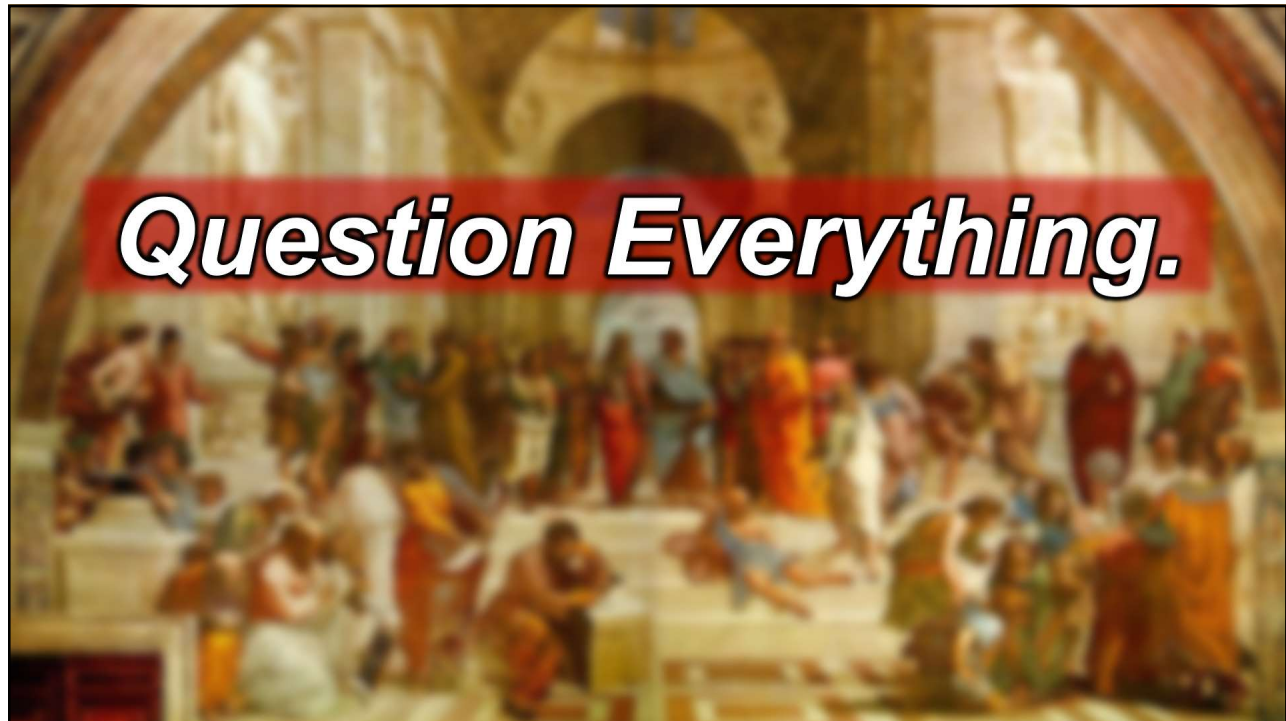
***Atheists can be moral  
without believing in God.  
Therefore God is not  
necessary for morality.***

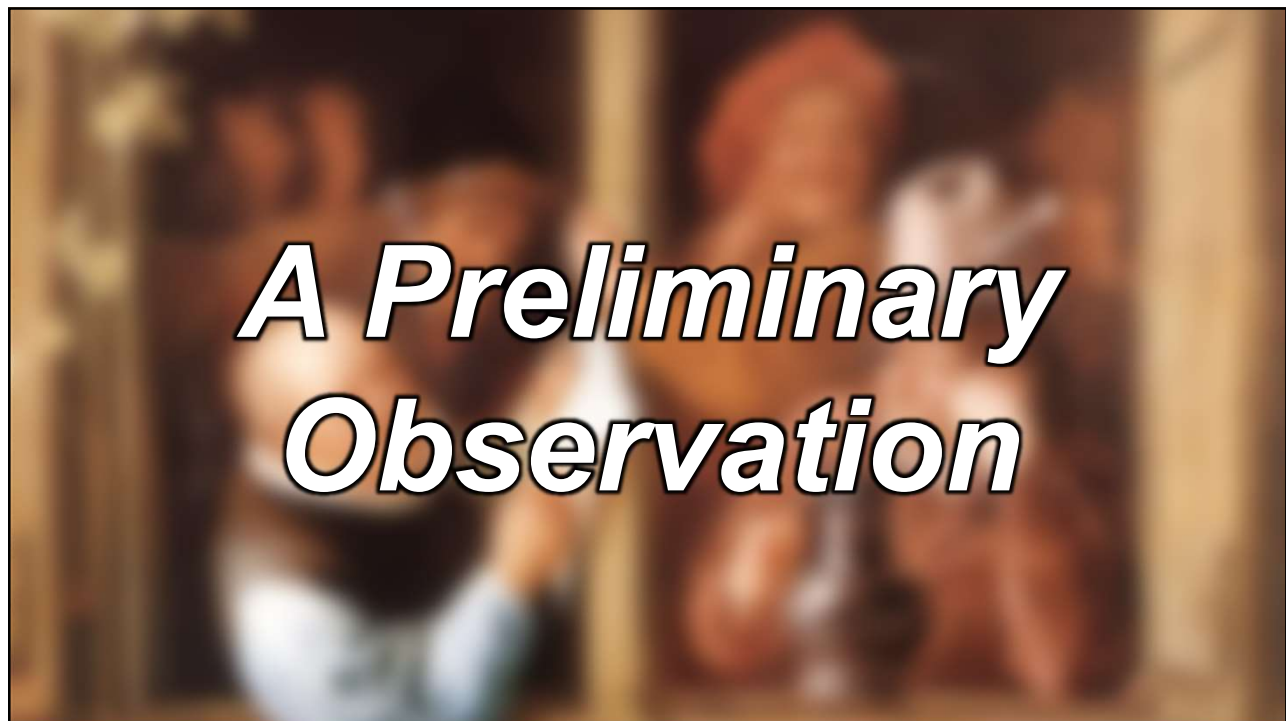


***Christianity requires faith  
which is belief in spite of  
the evidence.***





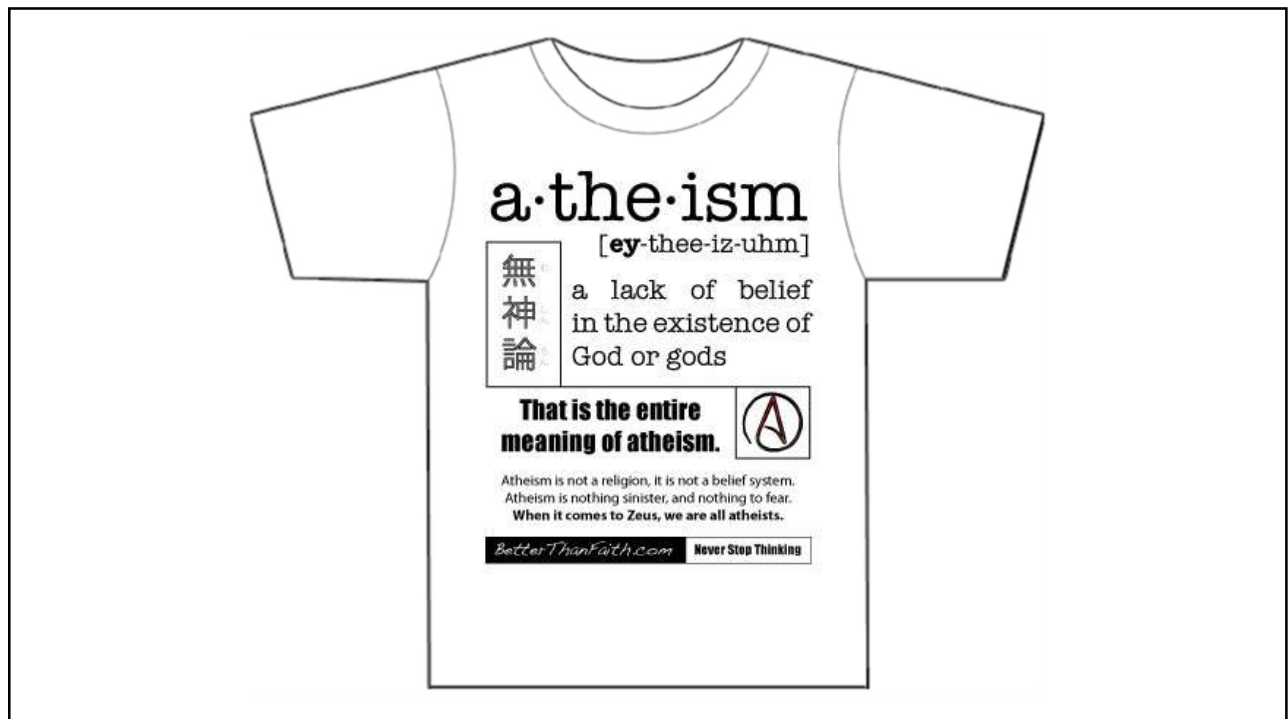
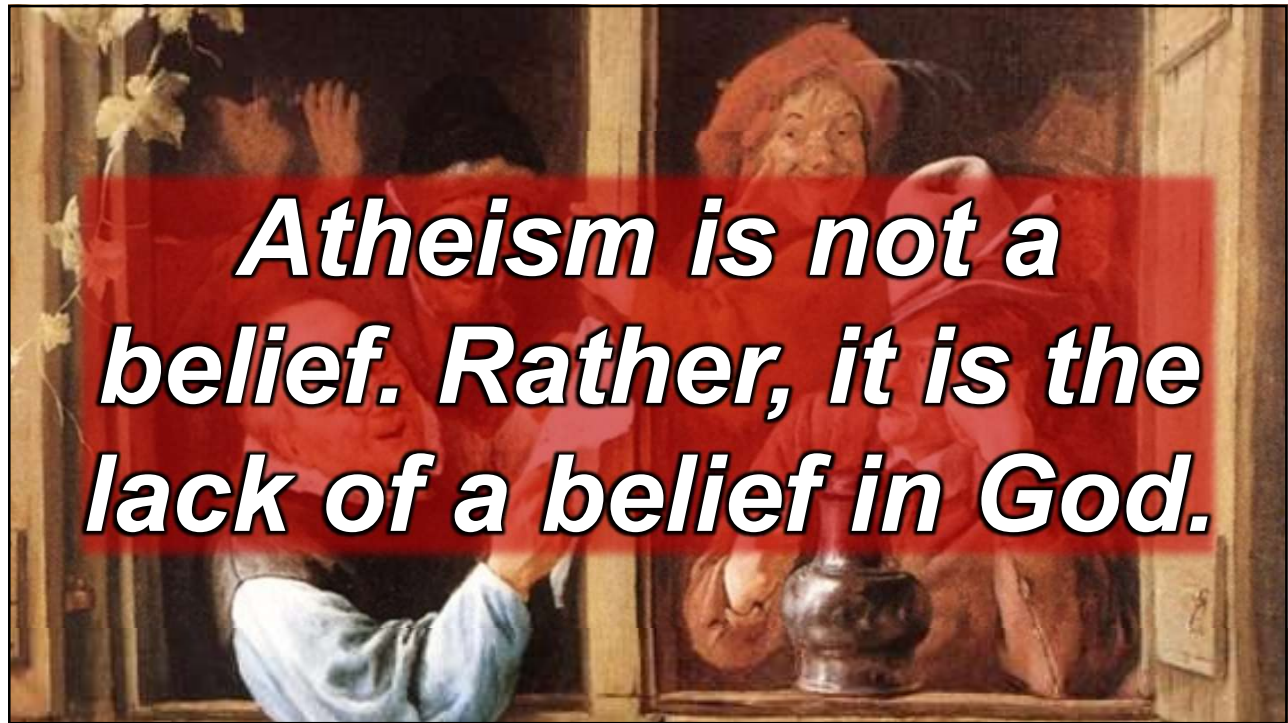






***Notice that in some instances, the criticisms from the popular atheists are aimed at an amorphous concept like "religion" instead of the factual question of the existence of God.***



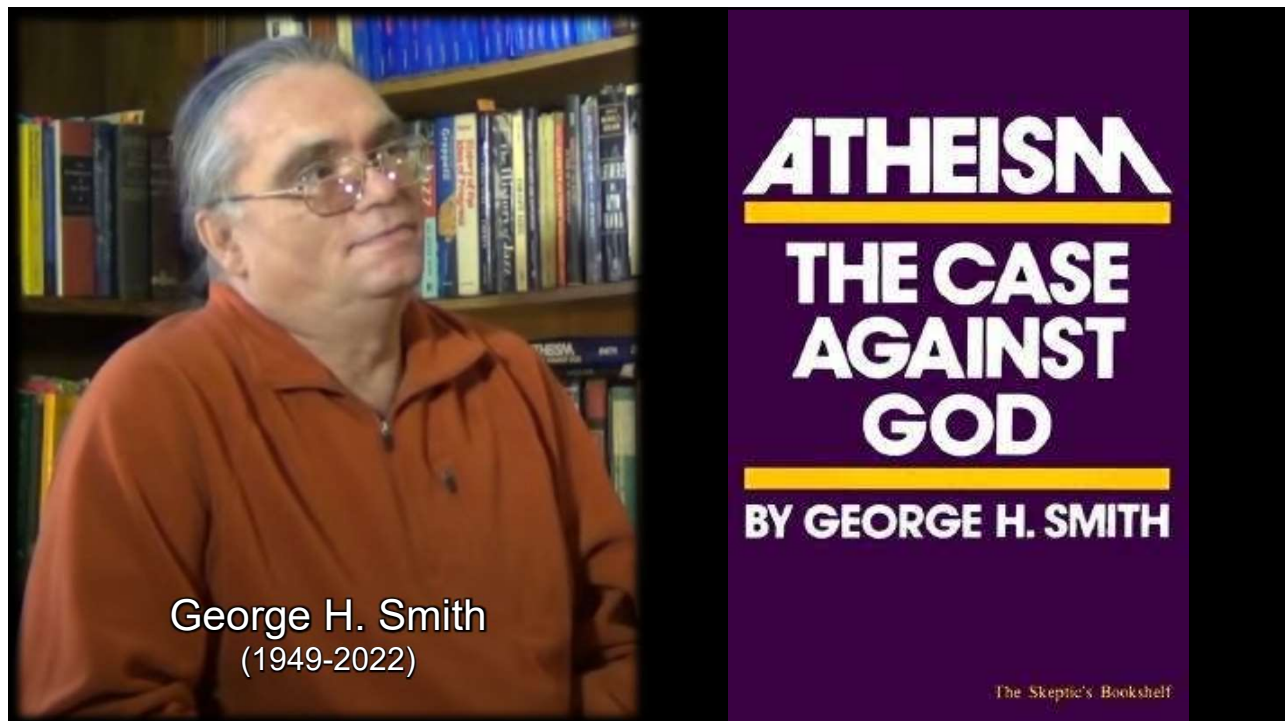
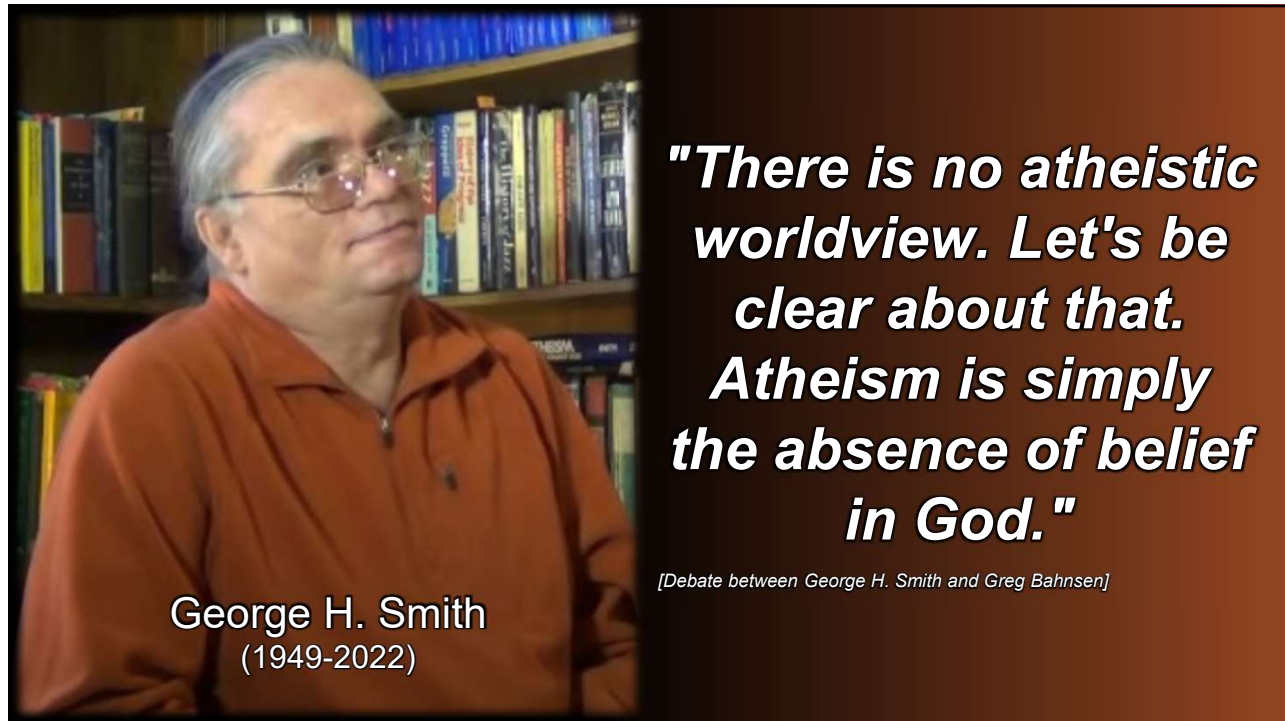




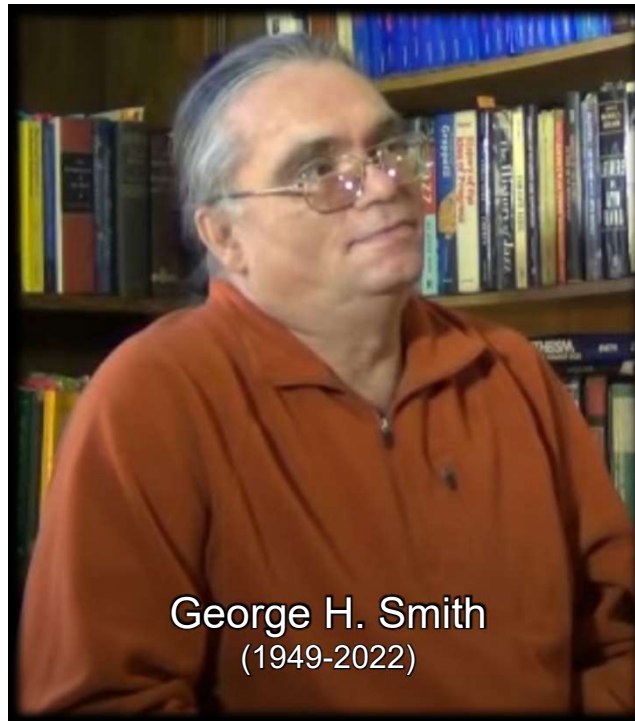


George H. Smith  
(1949-2022)

Greg Bahnsen  
(1948-1995)



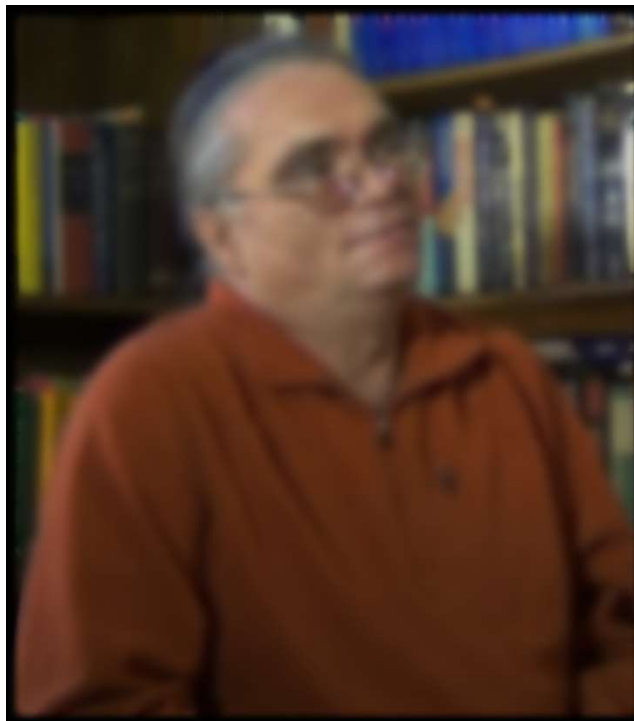




George H. Smith  
(1949-2022)


***"Atheism, in its basic form, is not a belief: it is the absence of belief. An atheist is not primarily a person who believes that a god does not exist; rather, he does not believe in the existence of God."***

[George H. Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1989), 7]



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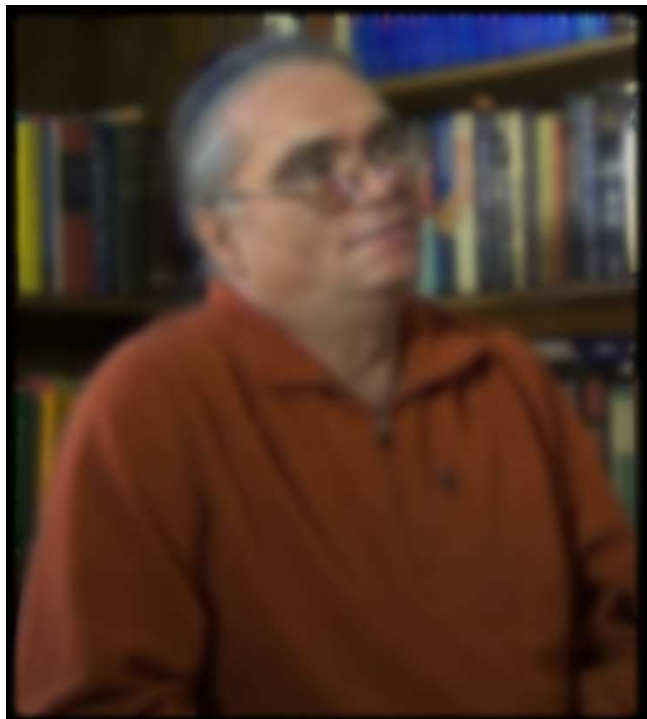
[George H. Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1989), 7]



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*"As used throughout this book, 'theism' signifies the belief in any god or number of gods. The prefix 'a' means 'without,' so the term 'a-theism' literally means 'without theism,' or without belief in a god or gods."*

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Notice that Smith,  
without any argument,  
moves from negating  
'theism'

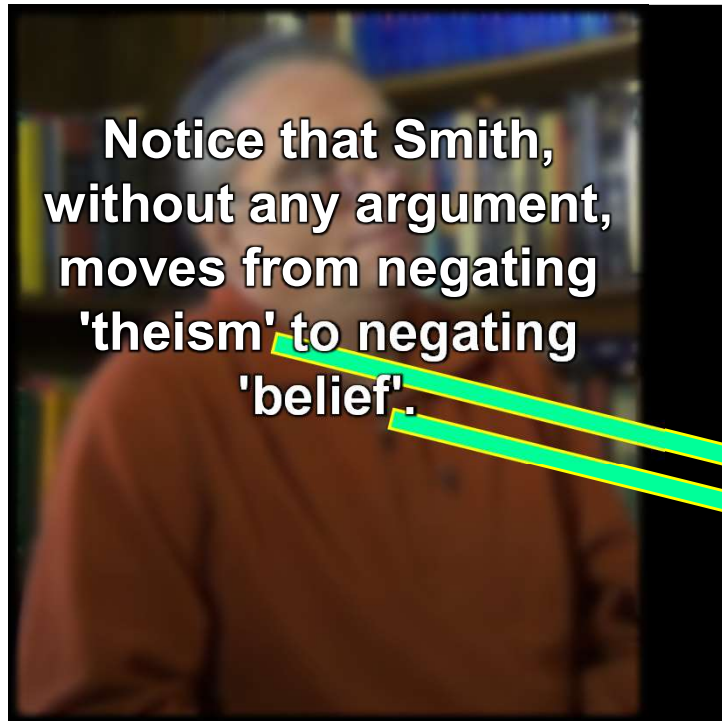
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George H. Smith  
(1949-2022)

*"From the mere fact that a person is an atheist, one cannot infer that this person subscribes to any particular positive belief"*

[George H. Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1989), 21]



***"From the mere fact that a person is an atheist, one cannot infer that this person subscribes to any particular positive belief"***

[Smith, *Atheism*, 21, cf. p. 27]

***"If atheism is correct,***

- *man is alone*
- *there is no god*
- *for knowledge, man must think for himself*
- *for success, man must work*
- *for happiness, man must strive to achieve it*
- *all of these are sole responsibility of man*

# DOES GOD EXIST

The Debate between Theists & Atheists

J.P. MORELAND AND  
KAI NIELSEN

with Contributions by:

\* Peter Kreeft \* Antony Flew \*

\* William Lane Craig \*

\* Keith Parsons \* Dallas Willard \*



Keith Parsons

***"After all, 'atheism' means simply the lack of belief in God (and not, as is commonly supposed, the denial of God's existence)."***

[J. P. Moreland and Kai Nielsen *Does God Exist? The Great Debate* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990): 179 republished as *Does God Exist? The Debate Between Theists and Atheists* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1993): 179]

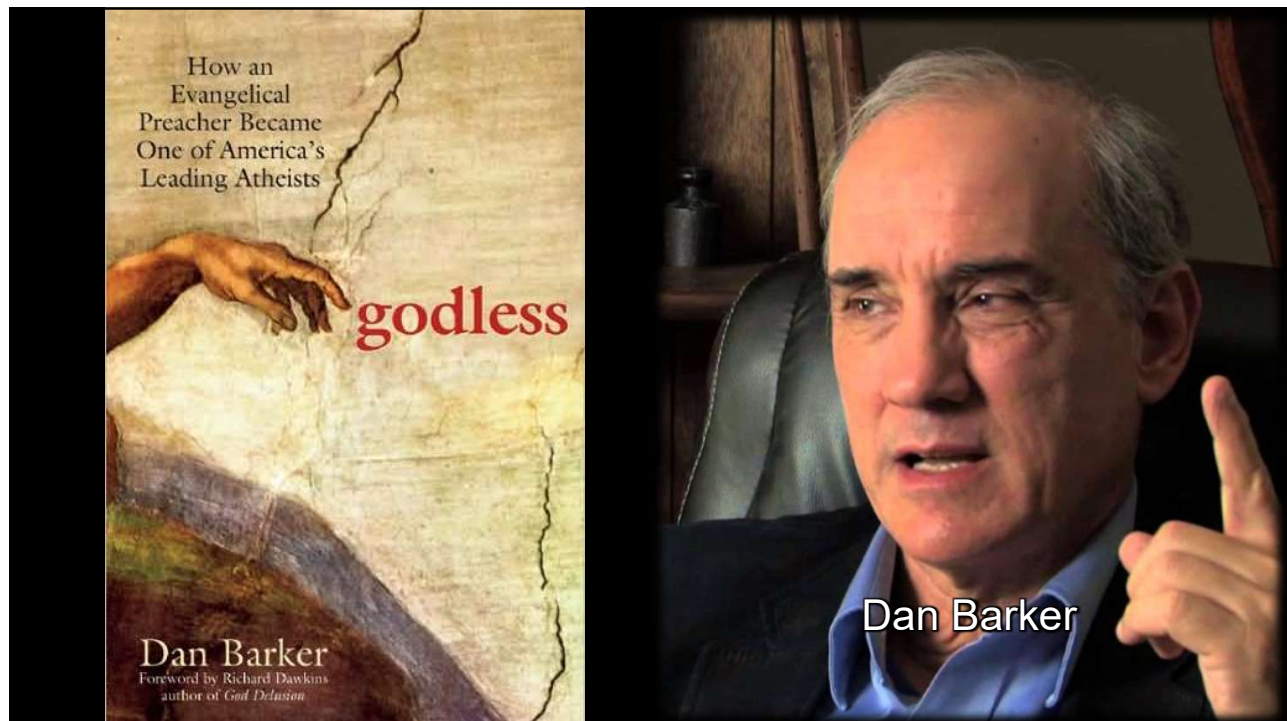


Keith Parsons





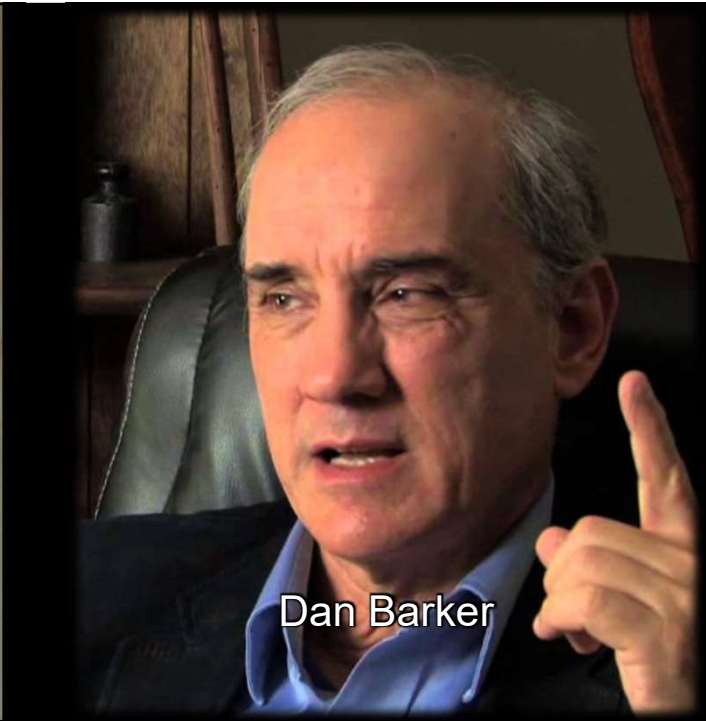
# ***What's at stake in the definition of atheism?***



Dan Barker

***"Theists claim that  
there is a god;  
atheists do not. ...  
In any argument,  
the burden of  
proof is on the one  
making the claim."***

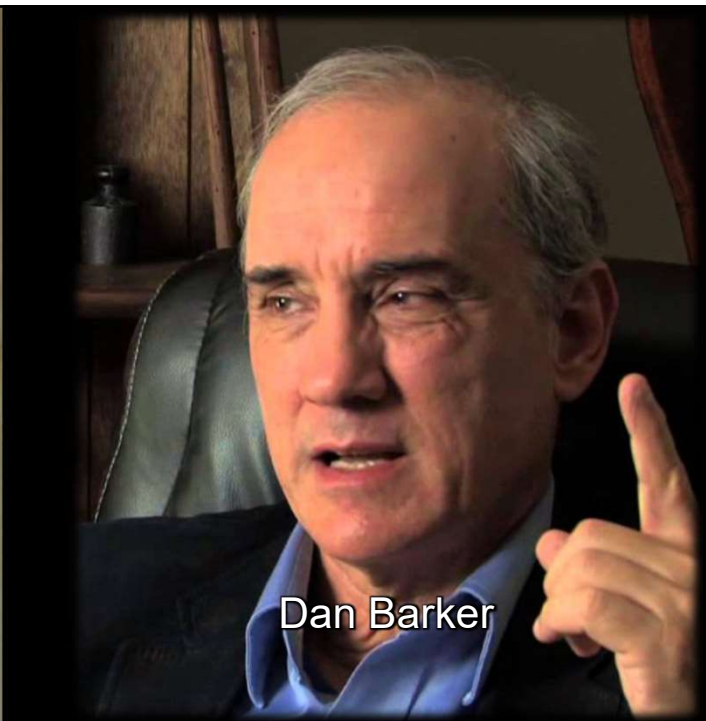
[Dan Barker, *Godless: How an Evangelical Preacher Became One of America's Leading Atheists* (Berkeley: Ulysses Press, 2008), 104]



Dan Barker

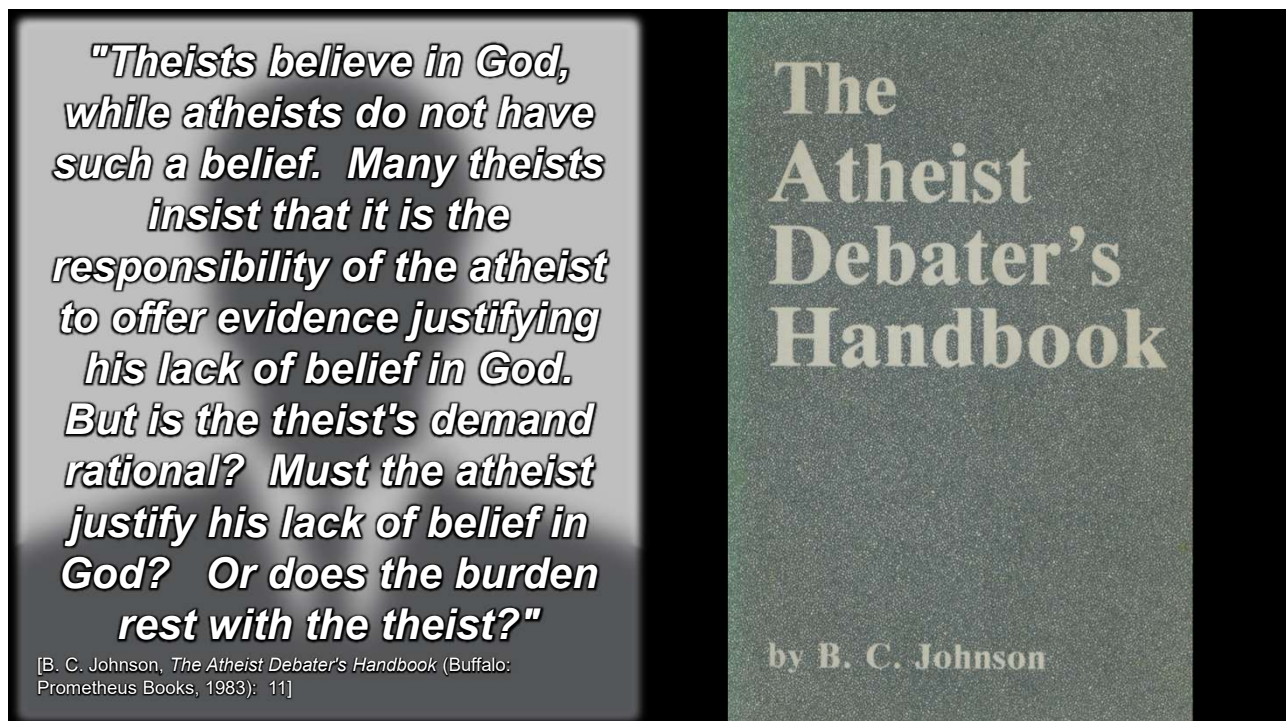
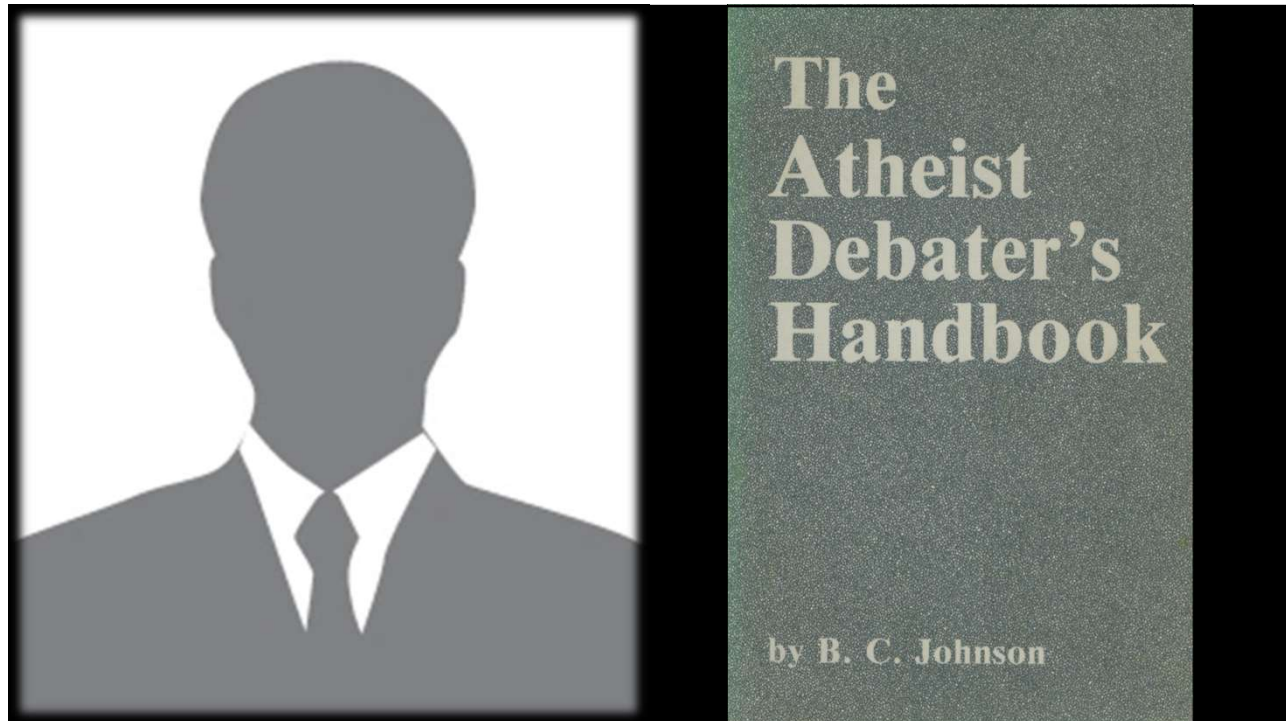
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[Dan Barker, *Godless: How an Evangelical Preacher Became One of America's Leading Atheists* (Berkeley: Ulysses Press, 2008), 104]



Dan Barker





*"Theists believe in God, while atheists do not have such a belief. Many theists insist that it is the responsibility of the atheist to offer evidence justifying his lack of belief in God. But is the theist's demand rational? Must the atheist justify his lack of belief in God? Or does the burden rest with the theist?"*

[B. C. Johnson, *The Atheist Debater's Handbook* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1983): 11]

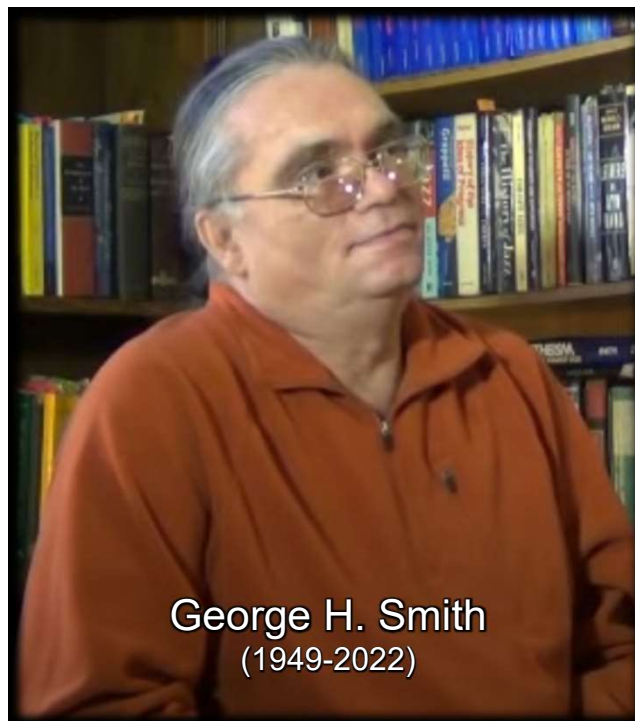
# The Atheist Debater's Handbook

by B. C. Johnson





***First, some atheists  
are using verbal  
sight of hand when  
they define atheism.***



George H. Smith  
(1949-2022)

# ATHEISM

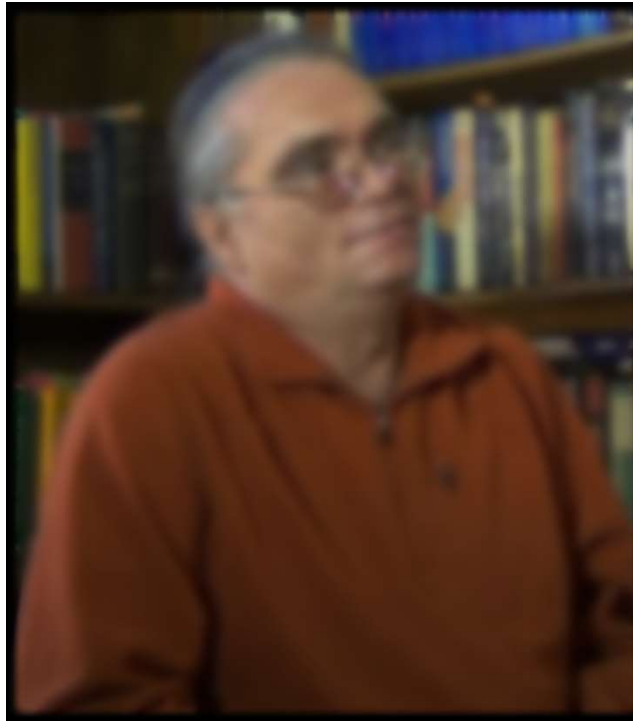
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## THE CASE AGAINST GOD

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BY GEORGE H. SMITH

The Skeptic's Bookshelf



*"As used throughout this book, 'theism' signifies the belief in any god or number of gods. The prefix 'a' means 'without,' so the term 'a-theism' literally means 'without theism,' or without belief in a god or gods."*

[George H. Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1989), 7]

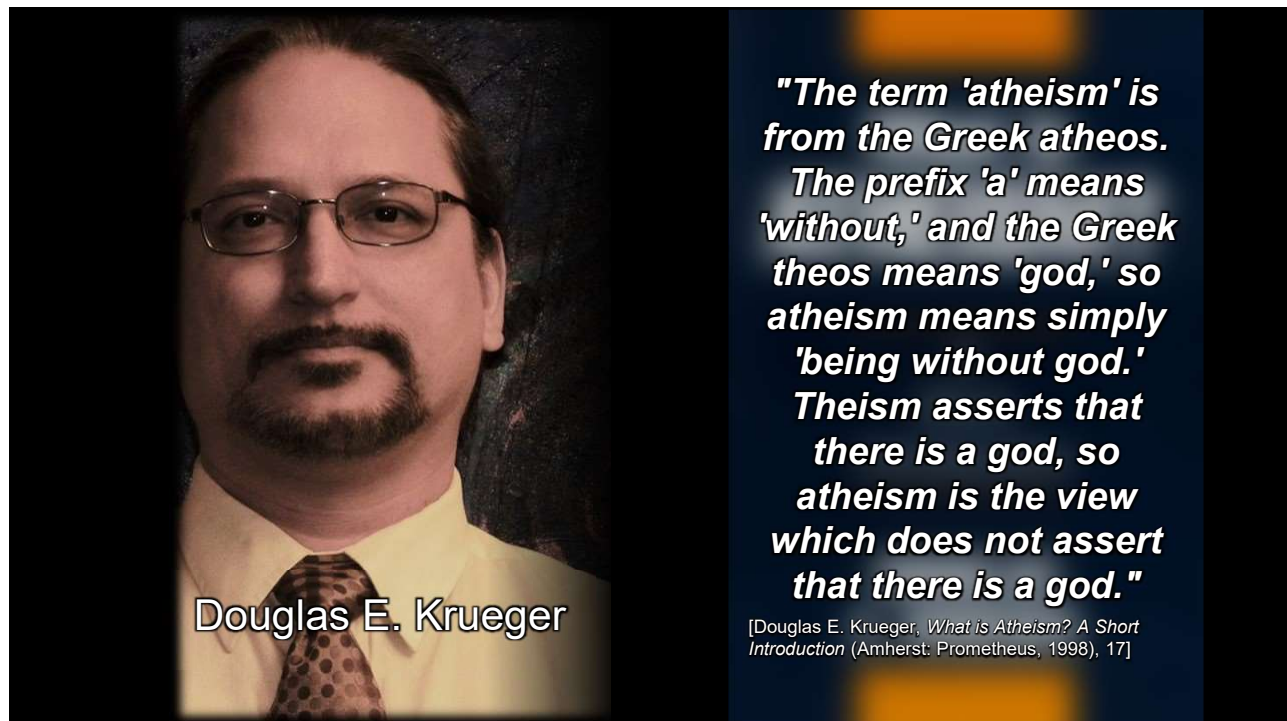
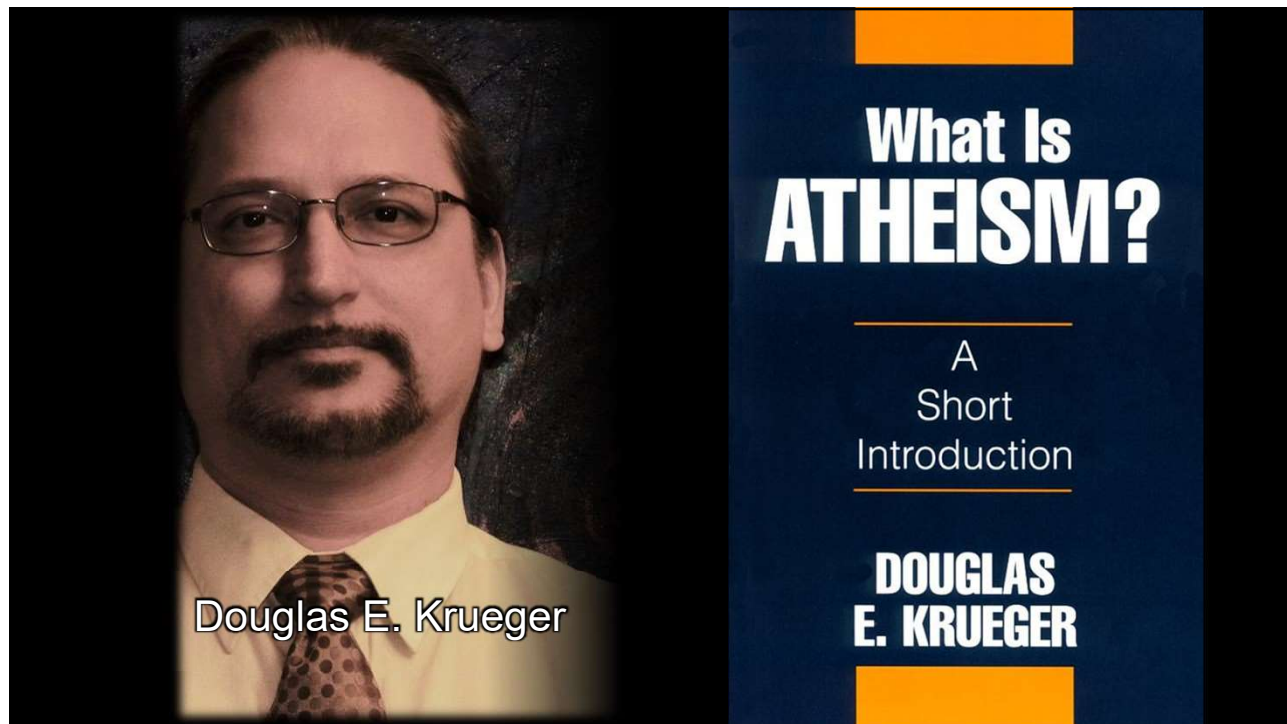
Granted that the suffix "ism" constitutes a belief system, Smith still illicitly has the negation "a" negating "belief" rather than negating "God."

Thus, rather than  
**"no belief in a God"**  
 it should be  
**"a belief in no God."**

*"As used throughout this book, 'theism' signifies the belief in any god or number of gods. The prefix 'a' means 'without,' so the term 'a-theism' literally means 'without theism,' or without belief in a god or gods."*

[George H. Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1989), 7]





**Notice that Krueger  
moves from the alpha**

**"The term 'atheism' is  
from the Greek atheos.  
The prefix 'a' means  
'without,' and the Greek  
theos means 'god,' so  
atheism means simply  
'being without god.'  
Theism asserts that  
there is a god, so  
atheism is the view  
which does not assert  
that there is a god."**

[Douglas E. Krueger, *What is Atheism? A Short Introduction* (Amherst: Prometheus, 1998), 17]

**Notice that Krueger  
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Notice that Krueger moves from the alpha negating 'god' (which would mean 'without god' or 'not-god') to the alpha negating the **assertion** (which means the absence of the assertion of god instead of the absence of god).

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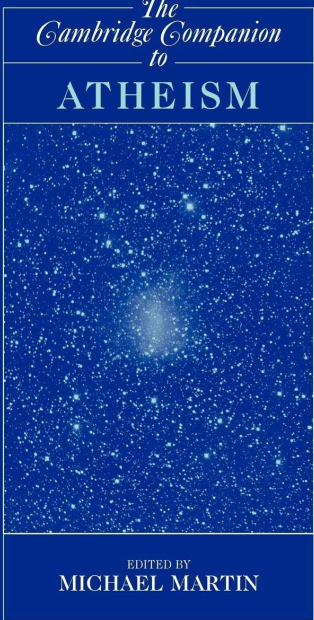
[Douglas E. Krueger, *What is Atheism? A Short Introduction* (Amherst: Prometheus, 1998), 17]

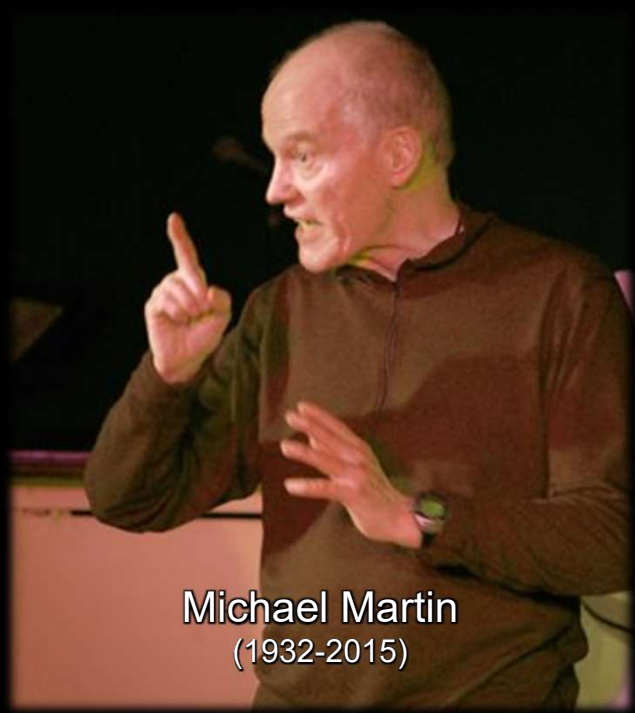


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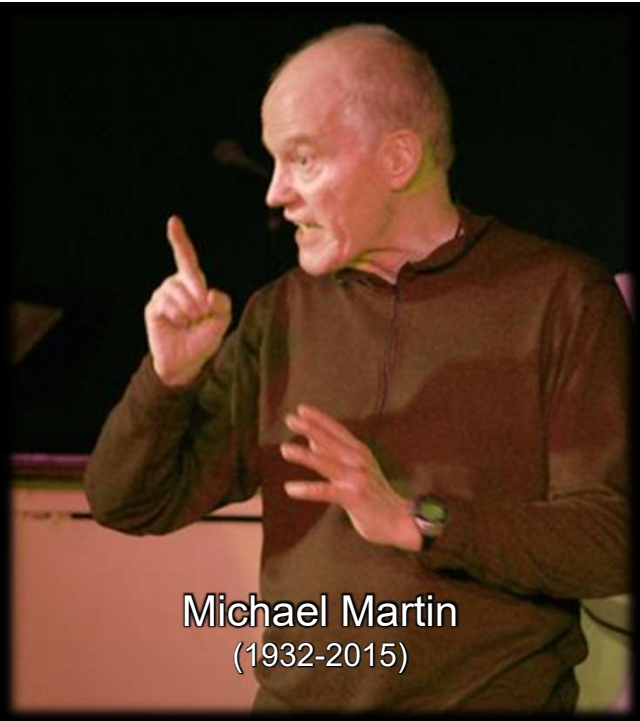




Michael Martin  
(1932-2015)

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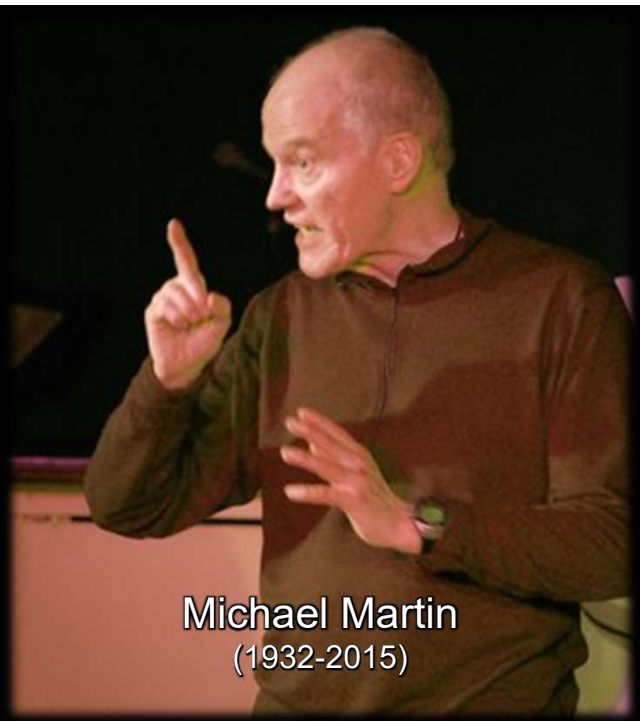
[n.a., "General Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1]



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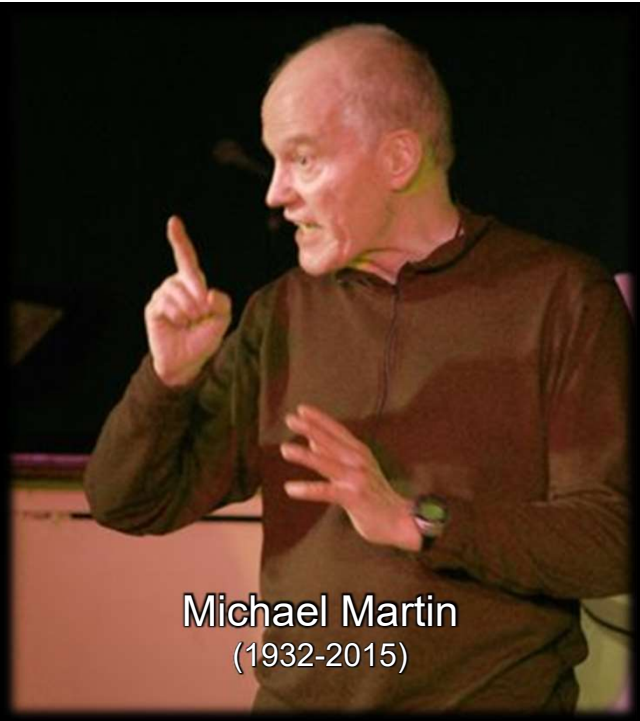


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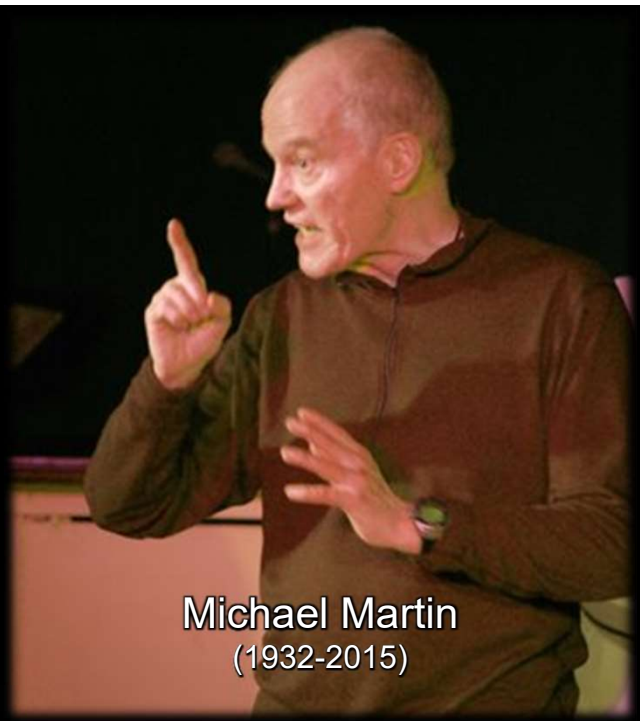
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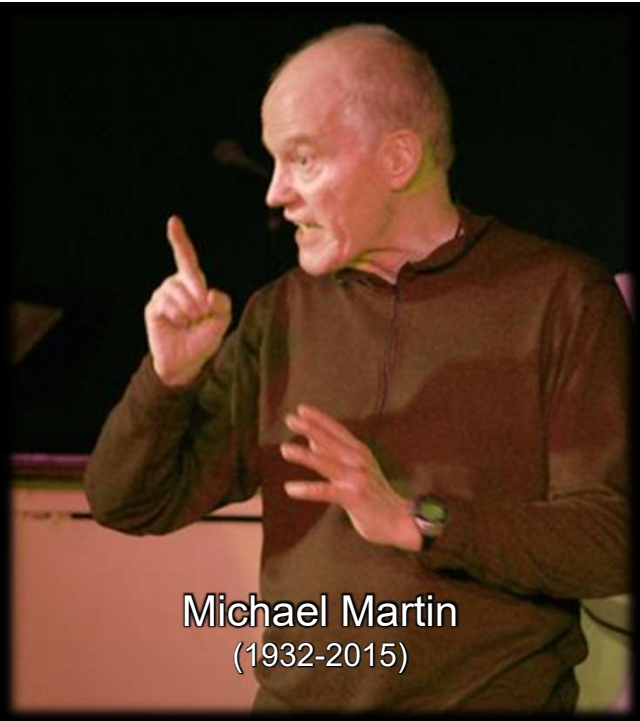
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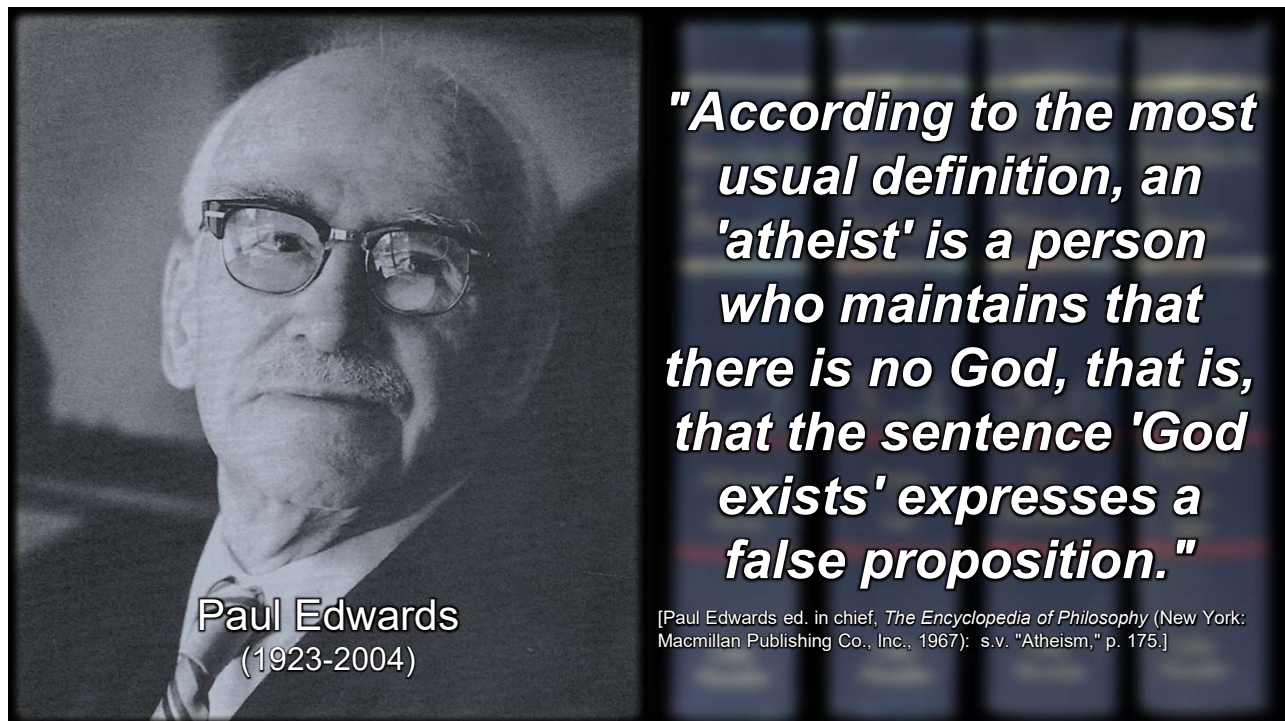
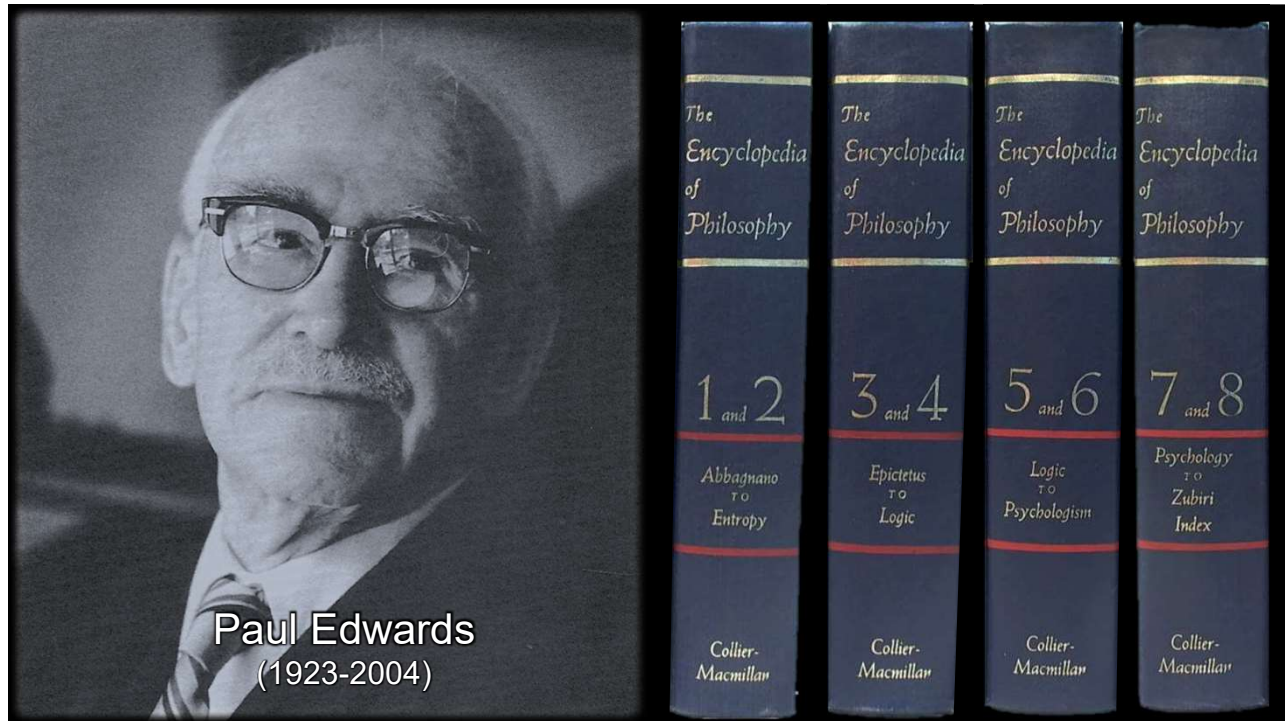


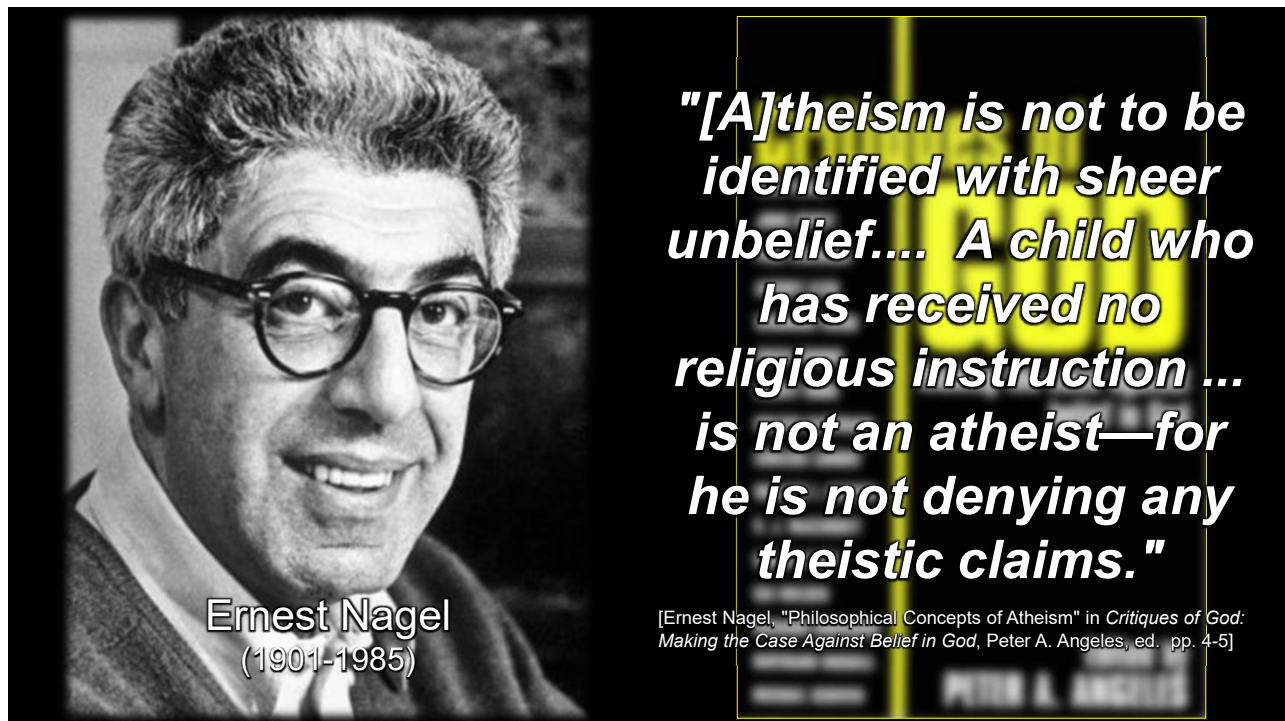
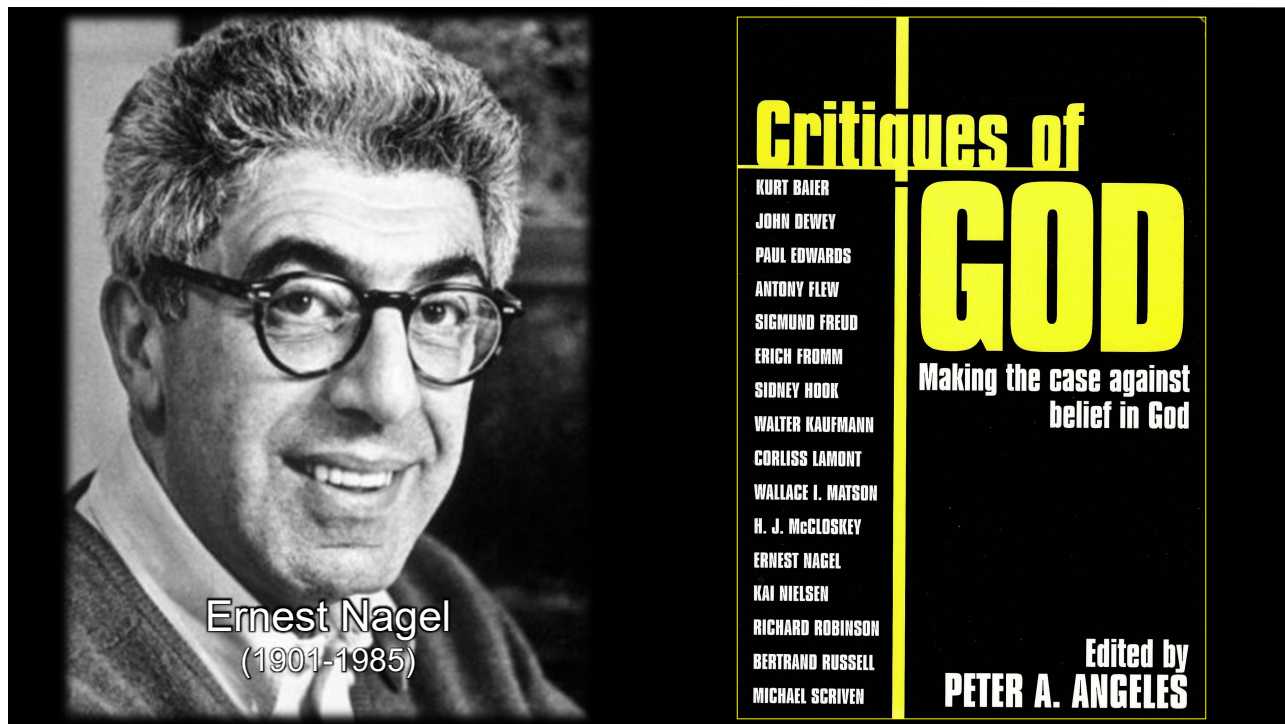
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(1932-2015)



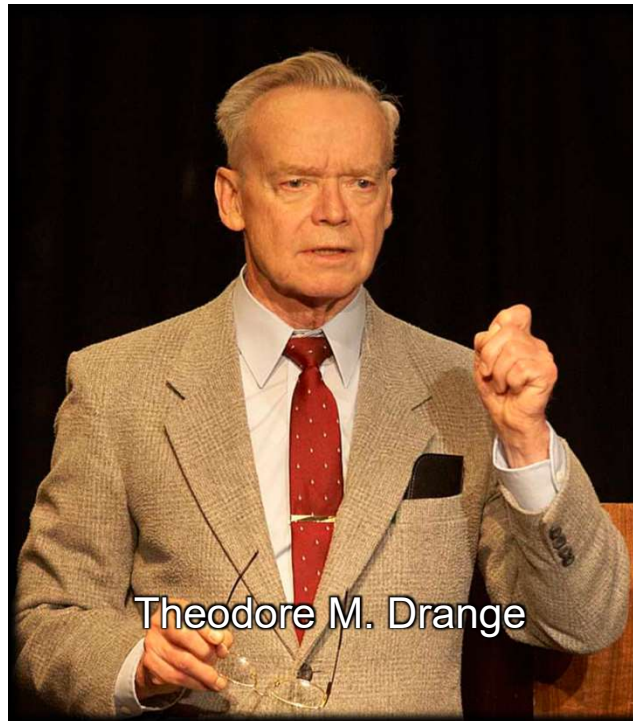
**Second, this definition conflicts with the standard academic definition of atheism.**







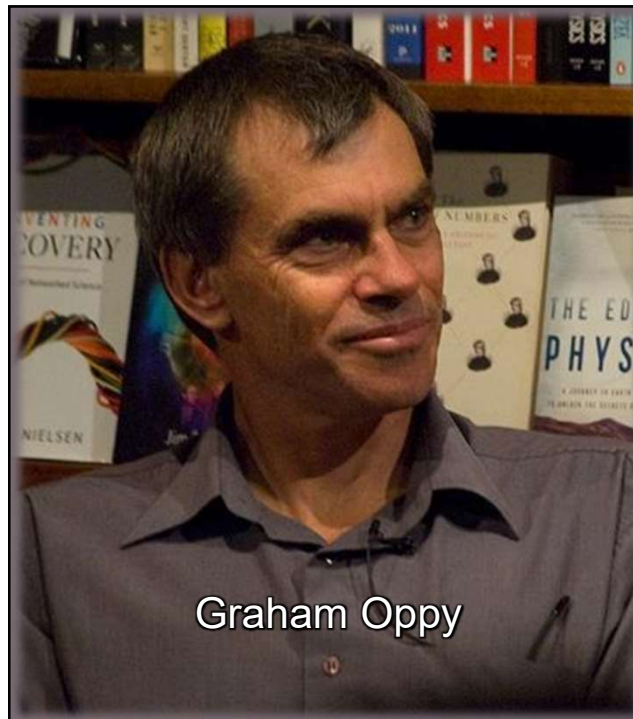




Theodore M. Drange

***"Is the proposition that God exists true or false? You are a theist if and only if you say that the proposition is true or probably true, you are an atheist if and only if you say that it is false or probably false, and you are an agnostic if and only if you understand what the proposition is, but resist giving either answer, and support your resistance by saying, 'The evidence is insufficient' (or words to that effect)."***

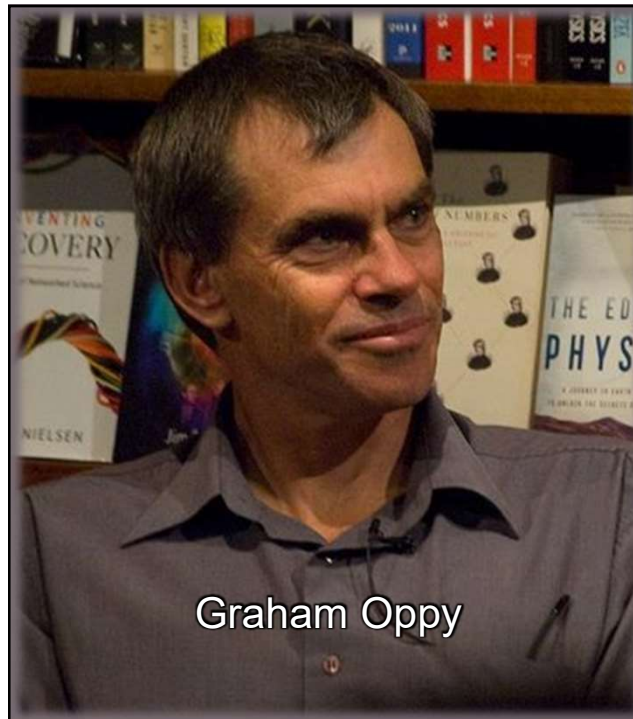
[Theodore M. Drange "Atheism, Agnosticism, Noncognitivism," from [https://infidels.org/library/modern/theodore\\_drange/definition.html](https://infidels.org/library/modern/theodore_drange/definition.html), accessed 01/15/19]



Graham Oppy

***"Properly, we should define theism as the view that there's at least one god and atheism as the view that there are no gods, and monotheism then as the view that there is exactly one God and we call that one God with a capital 'G'. Atheists then are people who believe that there are no gods and particular in our context, they believe that God doesn't exist."***

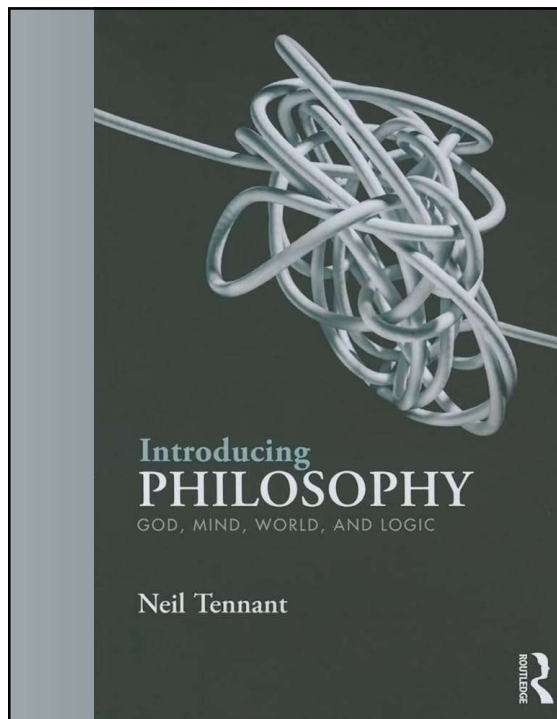
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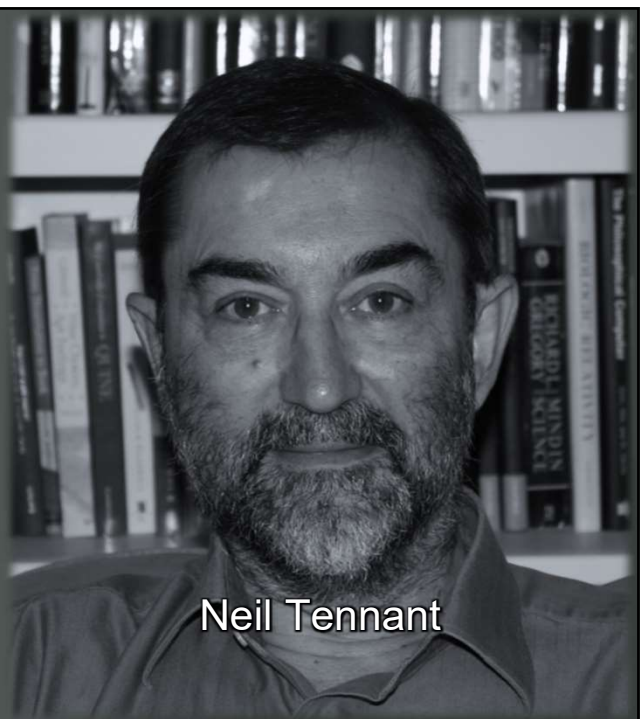
Graham Oppy

***"Other people like to say that atheism is just lacking the belief that God exists which lumps together ... the class of agnostics with the class of atheists; if you define it that way, which I don't like."***

[Graham Oppy vs. Ben Arbour, "The Ontological Argument" on *Capturing Christianity*, YouTube video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udxfuPgq4TY>, @1:05:20, accessed 06/13/22]



Neil Tennant

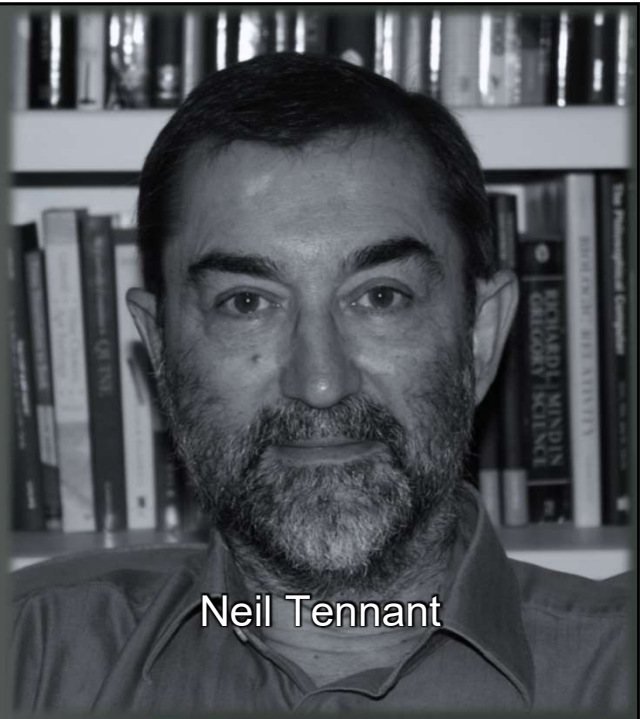


Neil Tennant



***"['Does God exist?'] is a philosophical question. At one extreme, the theist will answer 'Yes', and off all manner of arguments and considerations in support of that answer. At the other extreme, the atheist will answer 'No', and likewise offer all manner of arguments and considerations in support of that answer."***

[Neil Tennant, *Introducing Philosophy: God, Mind, World, and Logic* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 29]



Neil Tennant



***Third, this definition entails an absurdity if not an outright contradiction.***



***The absurdity is that atheism could be true and God still exist. In other words, atheism would be indifferent to the question of God's existence.***



***The contradiction would be that theism and its opposite, atheism, could both be true at the same time!***





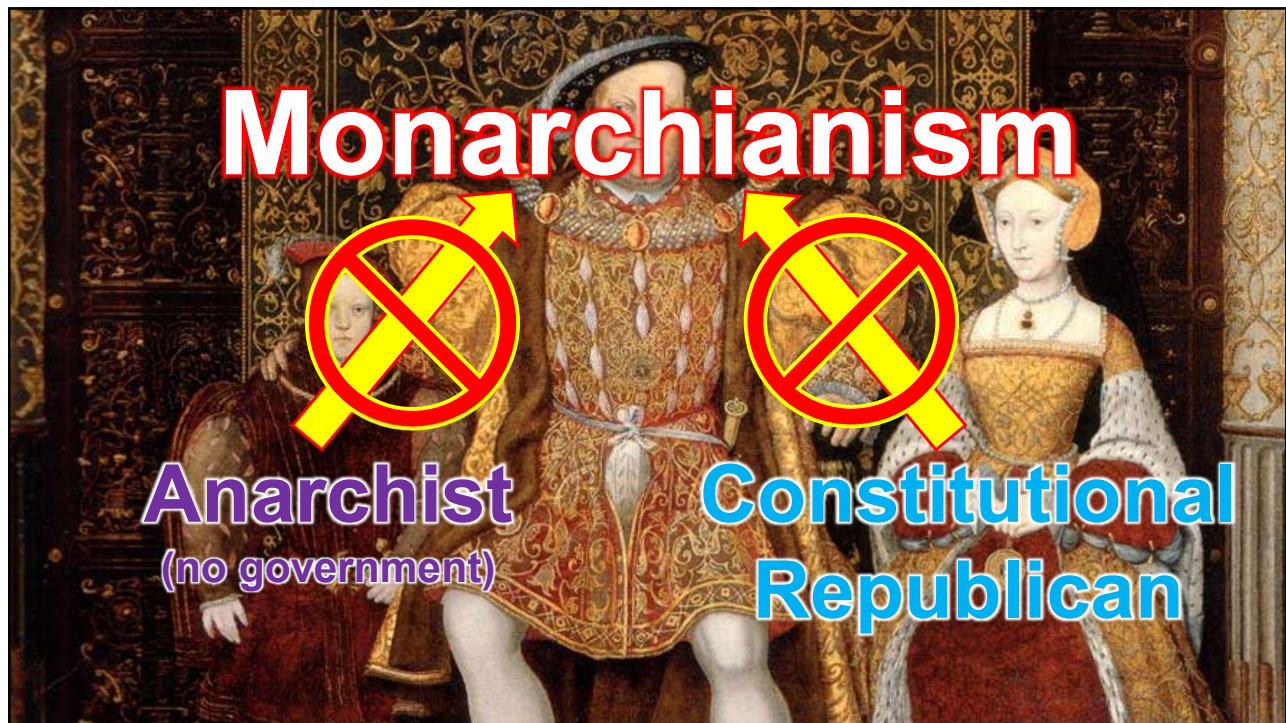
***We are all atheists  
about most Gods. I'm  
just an atheist about  
one more God  
than you.***



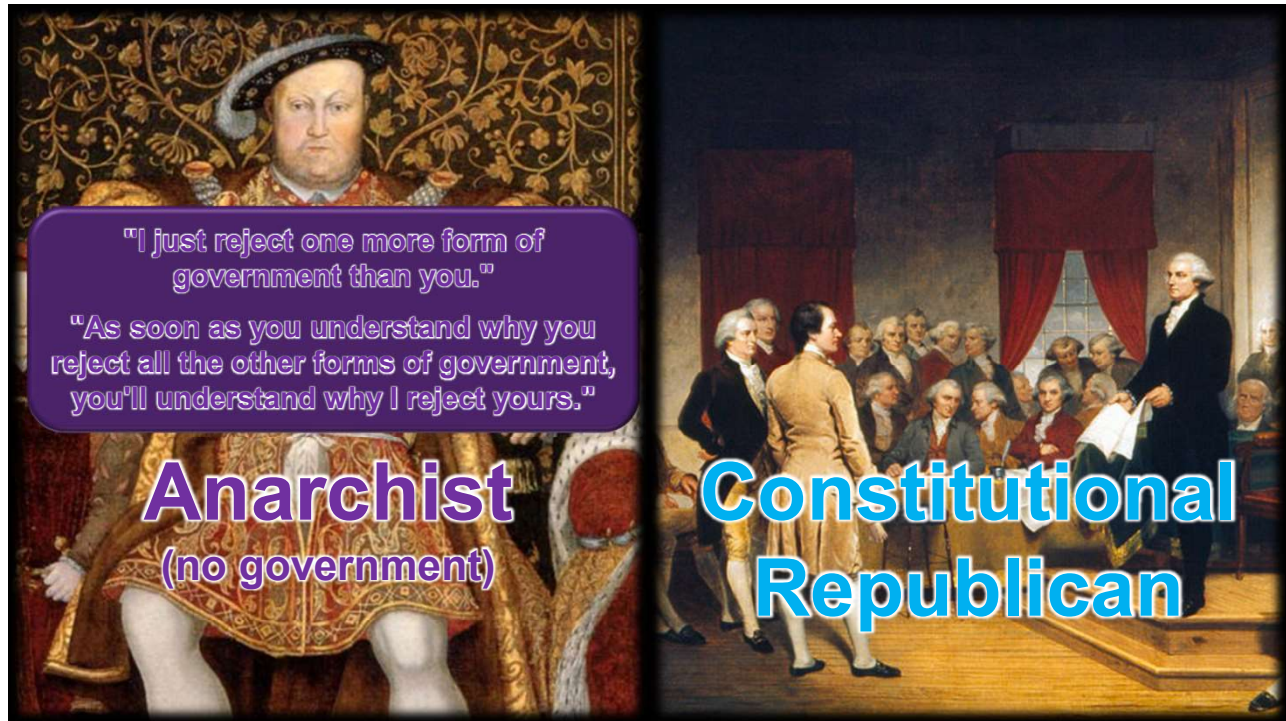








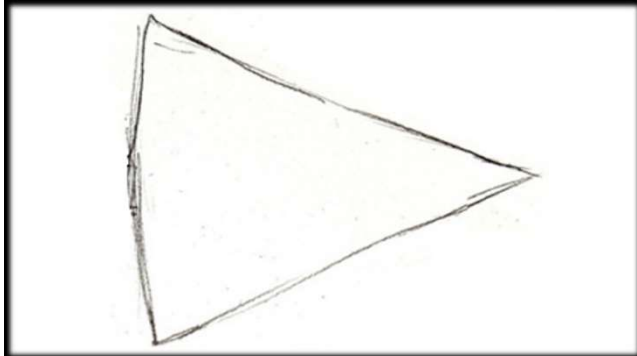
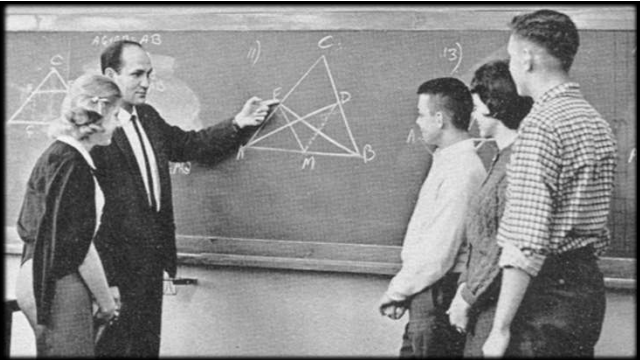








**Compare individual triangles with "triangularity" itself.**







**Classical theism  
does not regard God  
as one example of a  
"kind" or "genus."**



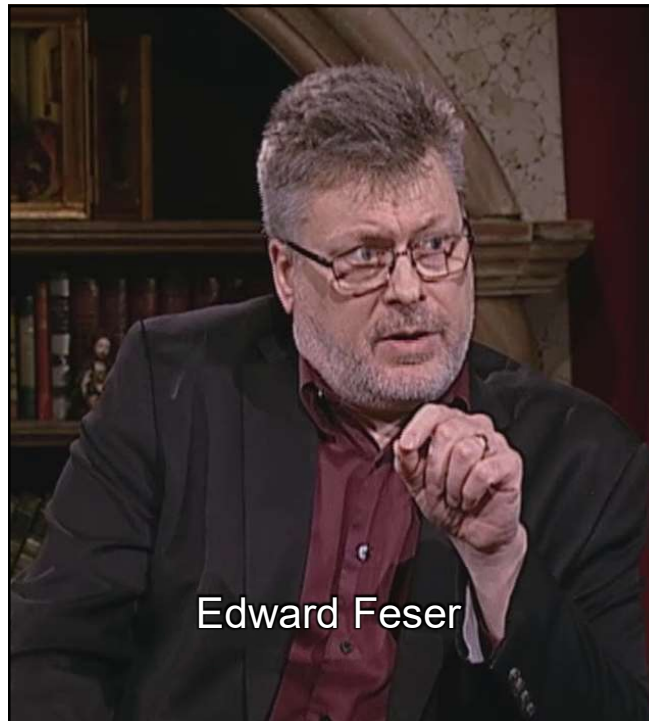
**Philosophically speaking, the God of Christianity is not just one example of the category "God" or Deity in contrast to other examples like Zeus or Apollo or Horus or Osiris.**



Edward Feser

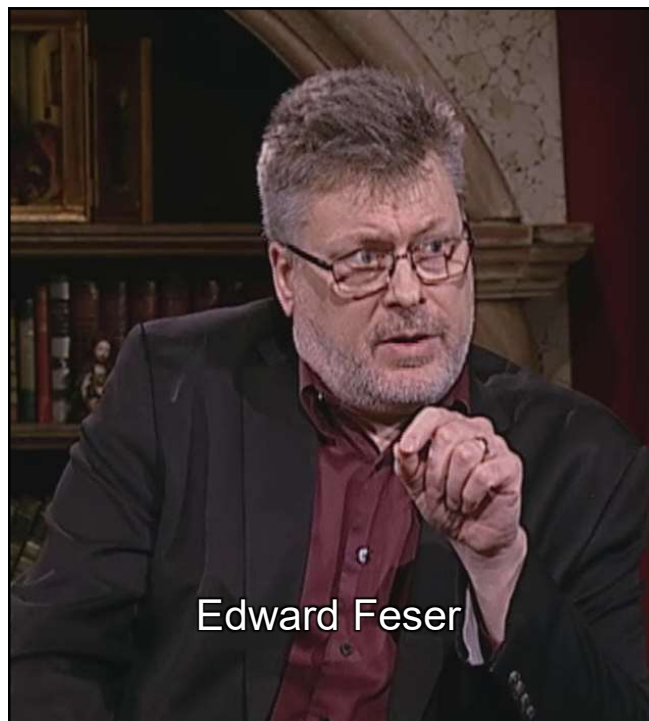
"The ... 'one god further' objection supposes that the God of classical theism is merely one further superhuman being alongside others who have found worshippers – Thor, Zeus, Quetzalcoatl, and so forth – only a superhuman being of even greater power, knowledge, and goodness than these other deities have.





Edward Feser

"But of course, that is not what God is at all. He is not 'a being' alongside other beings, not even an especially impressive one, but rather Being Itself or Pure Actuality, that from which all mere 'beings' (including Thor, Zeus, and Quetzalcoatl, if they existed) derive the limited actuality or existence they possess.



Edward Feser

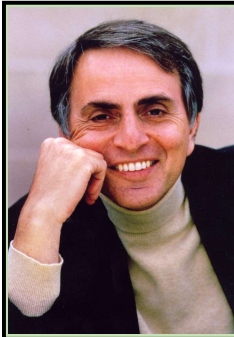
"Neither does He 'have' power, knowledge, goodness, and the like; rather, He *is* power, knowledge, and goodness (where the 'participation' relation in Plato's theory of Forms is transformed by the classical theist into a relation between created things and their uncaused cause, in light of the doctrine of divine simplicity – and also thereby transformed, by Thomists anyway, into a kind of efficient-causal relation)."

[Edward Feser "The 'one god further' objection."  
<https://edwardfeser.blogspot.com/2011/04/one-god-further-objection.html>, accessed 01/22/24]



***Extraordinary claims  
require extraordinary  
evidence.***





***Extraordinary claims require  
extraordinary evidence***

- Carl Sagan  
(1934-1996)





***Why must  
extraordinary  
claims require  
extraordinary  
evidence?***





***Why must a claim  
that has  
characteristic X,  
necessarily have  
evidence that has  
characteristic X?***



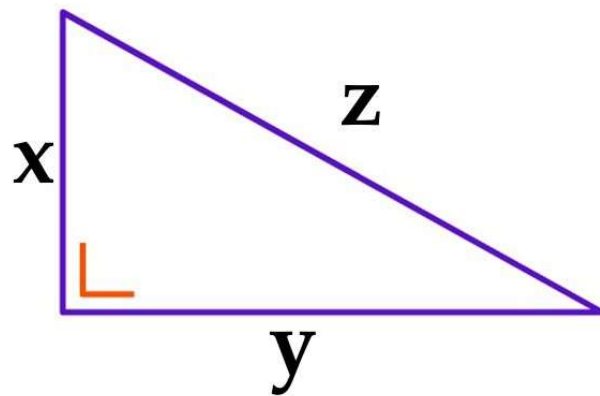
***If a claim is simple  
and rather  
straightforward, must  
the evidence for that  
claim also be simple  
and rather  
straightforward?***



***Consider  
Fermat's  
Last Theorem.***



**Pierre de Fermat**  
1601 - 1665



**Pythagorean Theorem**

$$x^2 + y^2 = z^2$$



Fermat's equation:

$$x^n + y^n = z^n$$

This equation has no  
solutions in integers  
for  $n \geq 3$ .

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**Andrew Wiles' proof of Fermat's Last Theorem was over 100 pages in the Annals of Mathematics 1995; very complicated evidence for a very simple claim!**

Wiles, Andrew (1995). "Modular elliptic curves and Fermat's Last Theorem." *Annals of Mathematics* 141 (3): 443–551.

*Annals of Mathematics*, 142 (1995), 443–551

## Modular elliptic curves and Fermat's Last Theorem

By ANDREW WILES\*

For Nada, Clare, Kate and Olivia

*Cubum autem in duos cubos, aut quadratoquadratum in duos quadratoquadratos, et generaliter nullam in infinitum ultra quadratum potestatem in duos ejusdem nominis fas est dividere: cujus rei demonstrationem mirabilem sane detexi. Hanc marginis exiguitas non caperet.*

Pierre de Fermat

### Introduction

An elliptic curve over  $\mathbf{Q}$  is said to be modular if it has a finite covering by a modular curve of the form  $X_0(N)$ . Any such elliptic curve has the property that its Hasse-Weil zeta function has an analytic continuation and satisfies a functional equation of the standard type. If an elliptic curve over  $\mathbf{Q}$  with a given  $j$ -invariant is modular then it is easy to see that all elliptic curves with the same  $j$ -invariant are modular (in which case we say that the  $j$ -invariant is modular). A well-known conjecture which grew out of the work of Shimura and Taniyama in the 1950's and 1960's asserts that every elliptic curve over  $\mathbf{Q}$  is modular. However, it only became widely known through its publication in a paper of Weil in 1967 [We] (as an exercise for the interested reader!), in which, moreover, Weil gave conceptual evidence for the conjecture. Although it had been numerically verified in many cases, prior to the results described in this paper it had only been known that finitely many  $j$ -invariants were modular.

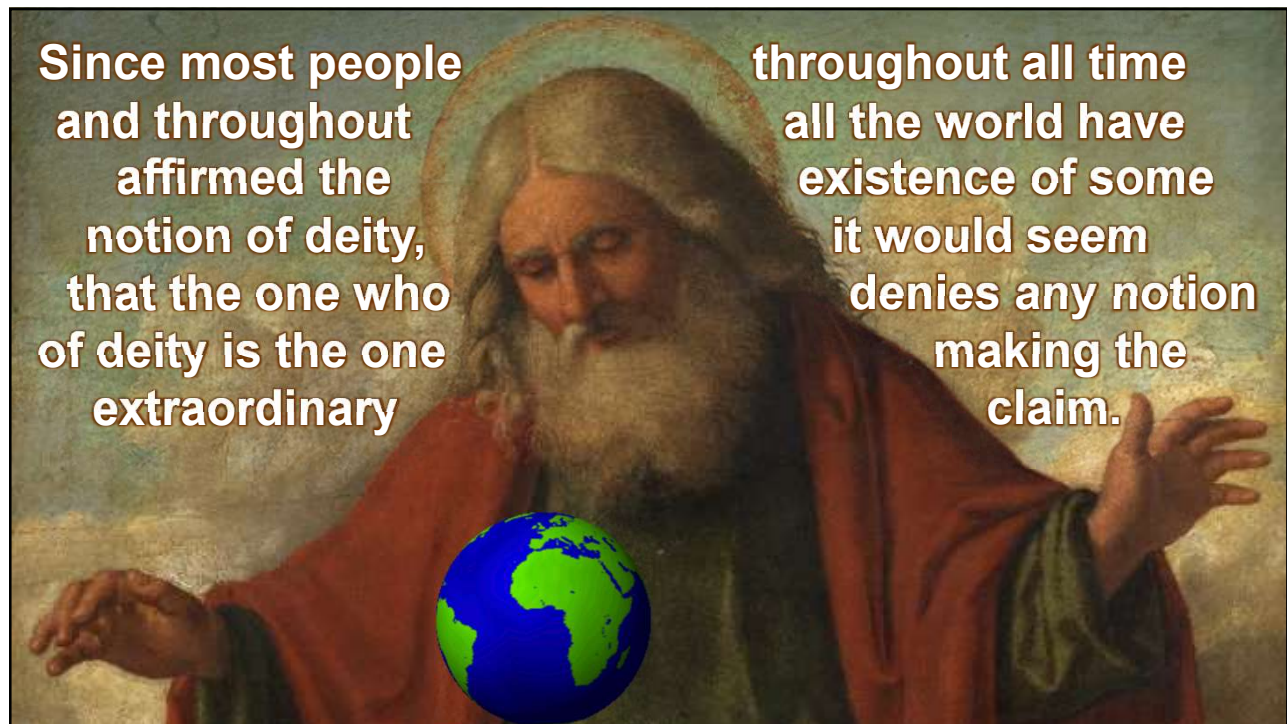
In 1985 Frey made the remarkable observation that this conjecture should imply Fermat's Last Theorem. The precise mechanism relating the two was formulated by Serre as the  $\varepsilon$ -conjecture and this was then proved by Ribet in the summer of 1986. Ribet's result only requires one to prove the conjecture for semistable elliptic curves in order to deduce Fermat's Last Theorem.

\*The work on this paper was supported by an NSF grant.

**What is more,  
exactly what  
makes a claim  
extraordinary in  
the first place?**



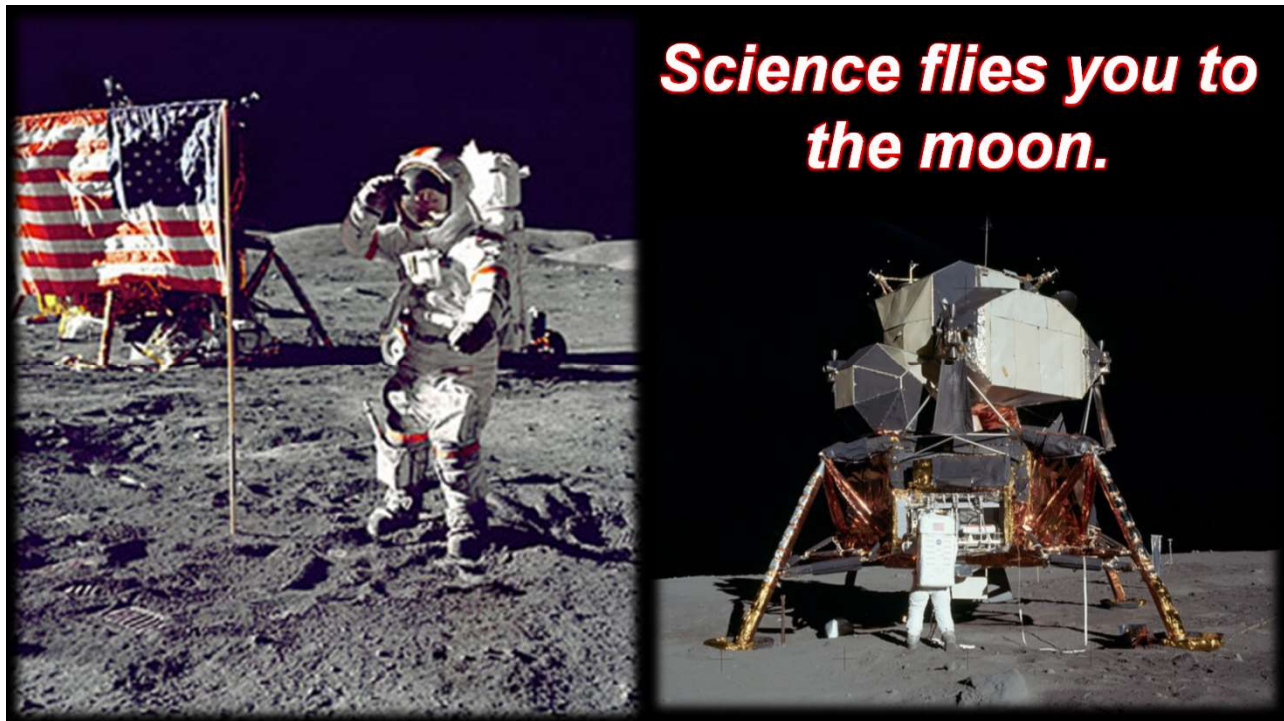




***Science flies you to  
the moon. Religion  
flies you into  
buildings.***

science  
flies you to  
the moon  
Religion  
flies you into  
buildings

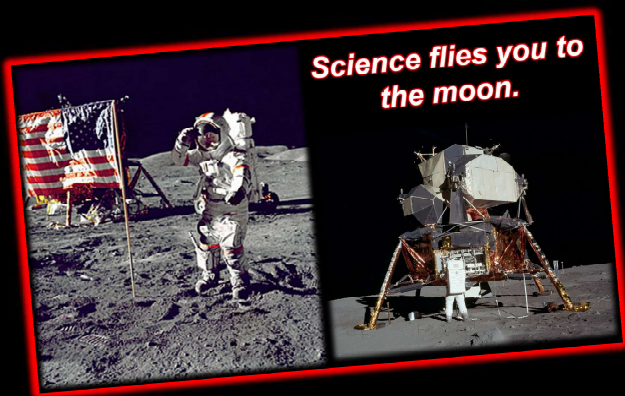




***Religion flies you  
into buildings.***



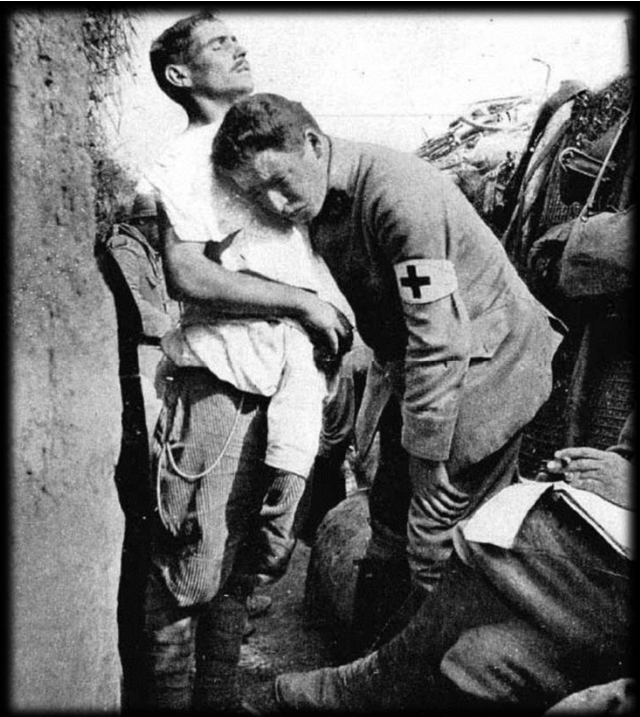
***Science is good.  
Religion is bad.***







***Religion cares for  
the injured, sick,  
and hungry.***





**Religion is good.  
Science is bad.**

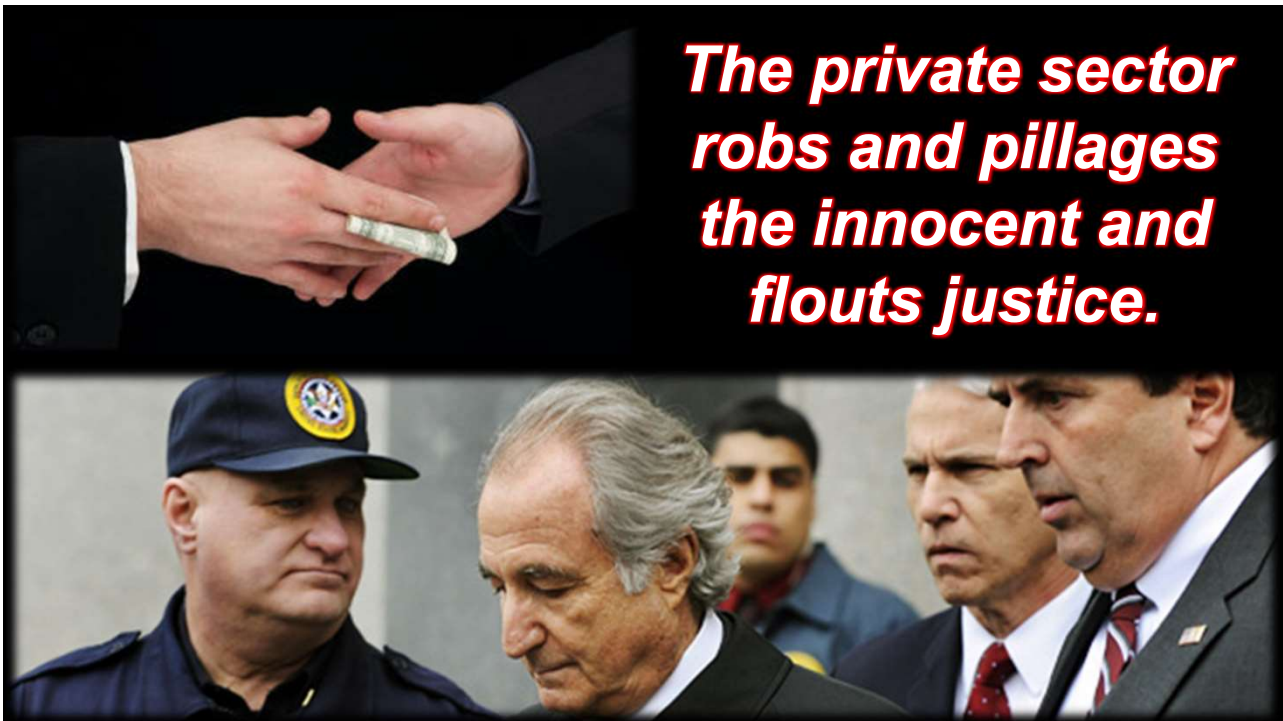




*Government protects  
the innocent and  
establishes justice.*



*The private sector  
robs and pillages  
the innocent and  
flouts justice.*



# **Government is good. The private sector is bad.**

*Government protects  
the innocent and  
establishes justice.*



*The private sector  
robs and pillages  
the innocent and  
flouts justice.*



*The private sector  
contributes to  
community  
flourishing.*



BILL & MELINDA  
GATES *foundation*





**The private sector is good.  
Government is bad.**

**The private sector  
contributes to  
community  
flourishing.**

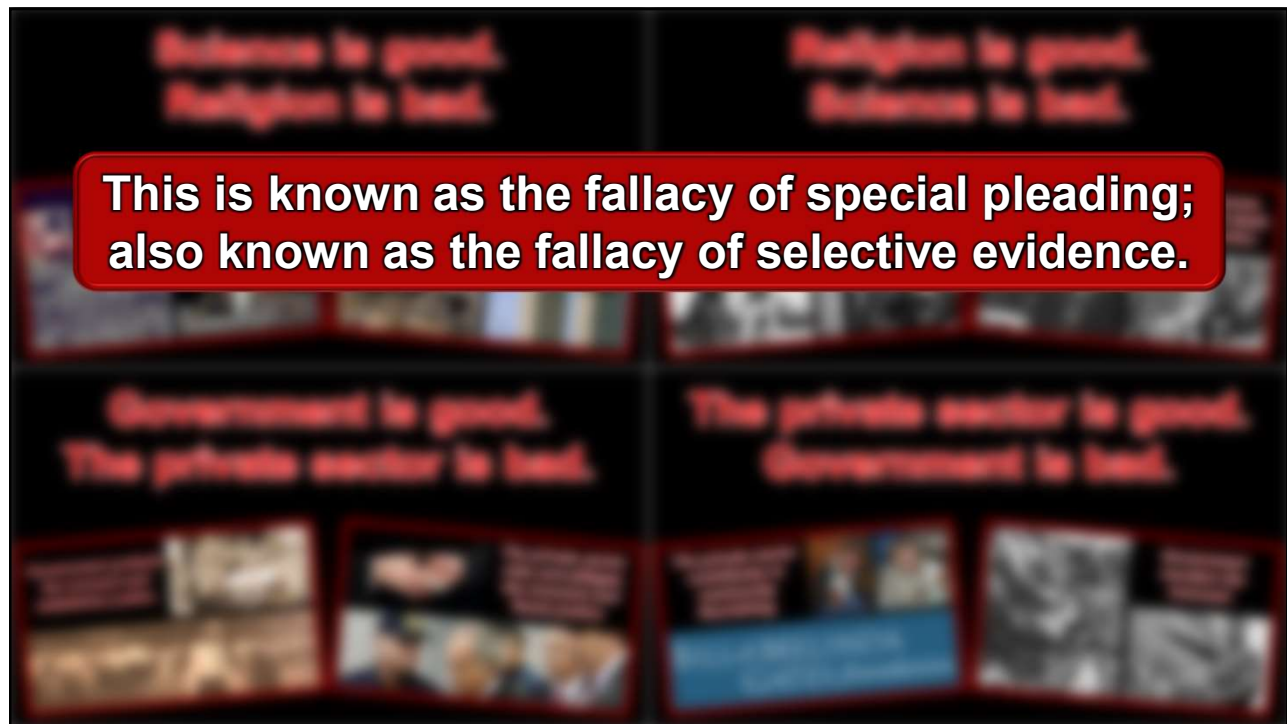
**BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation**



***Thus, depending on  
your selection of the  
evidence, you  
could argue:***









# ***Axial Tilt: The Reason for the Season***

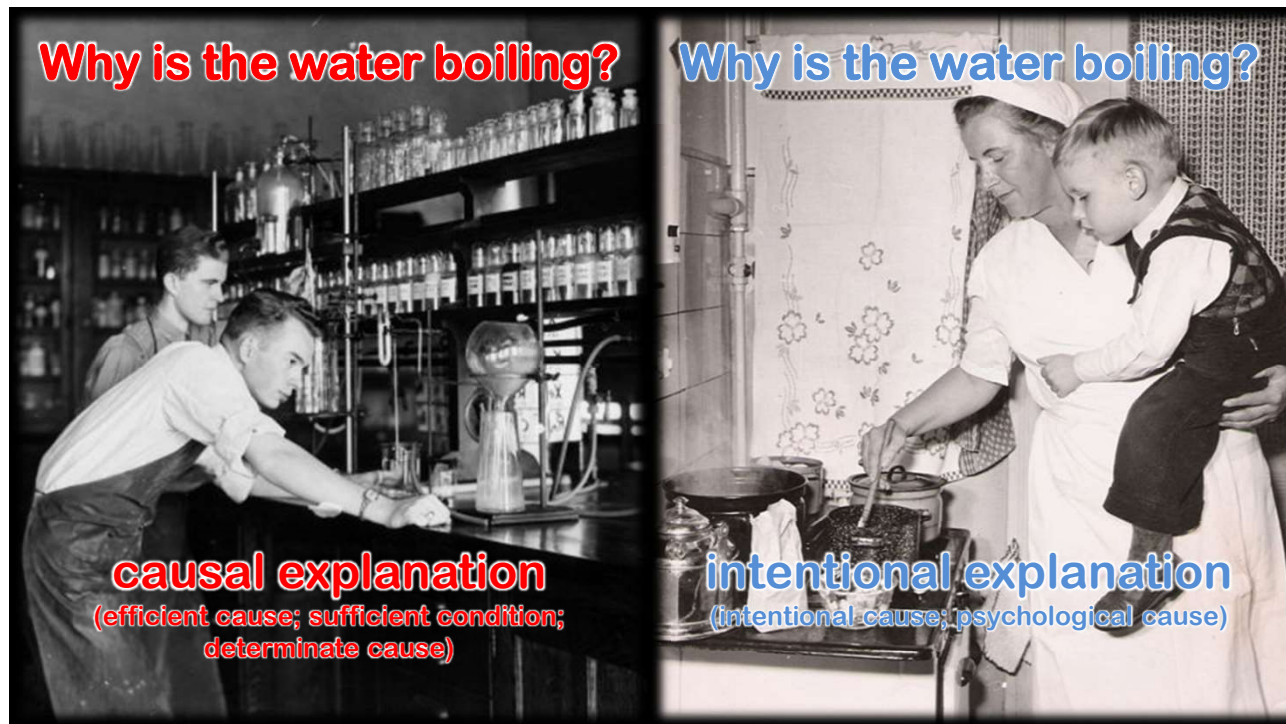
## *Axial Tilt*



*The reason  
for the season*









***Morality is doing what is  
right regardless of what  
you are told.***

***Religion is doing what  
you are told regardless  
of what is right.***



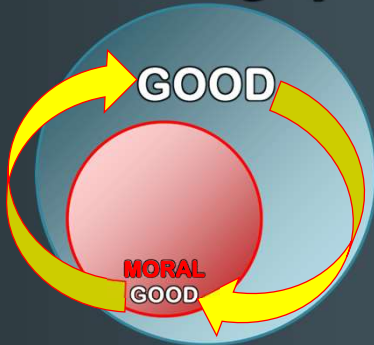


*Clearly, this "argument" is trying to make a point about human morality.*



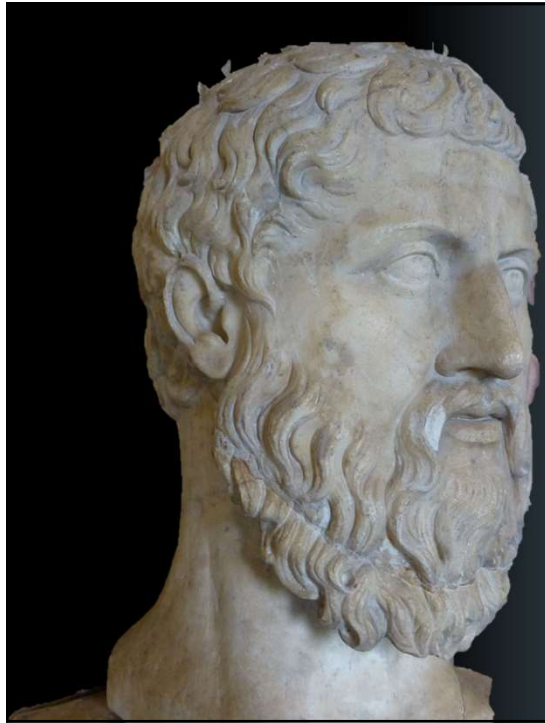


*But there is a difference  
that needs clarifying  
between good and moral  
good (or right and  
moral right).*

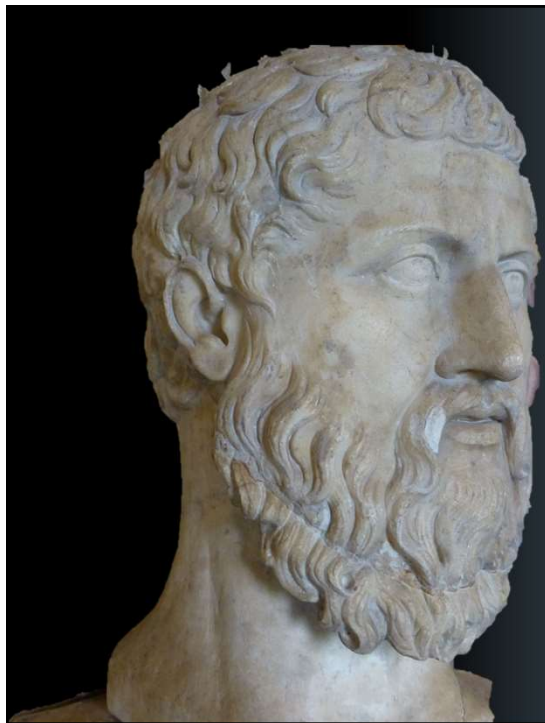


*Thus, before one can  
make any coherent  
philosophical argument  
employing the notion of  
moral good (or right),  
one must unpack the  
broader notion of 'good'.*





*In the Classical tradition, the notion of 'good' must be understood in terms of the nature of the thing about which the judgment 'good' is made.*



*But once the atheist grants the notion of 'nature' as a metaphysical category, additional metaphysical categories soon follow out of which the Classical cosmological argument can be constructed.*







Aristotle  
(384-322 BC)

- ✓ *substance and accidents*
- ✓ *ten categories*
- ✓ *universals and particulars*
- ✓ *form and matter*
- ✓ *teleology*
- ✓ *act and potency*
- ✓ *four causes*



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- ✓ *four causes*
- ✓ *essence/existence*



 <p>Aristotle (384-322 BC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>substance and accidents</i></li> <li>✓ <i>ten categories</i></li> <li>✓ <i>universals and particulars</i></li> <li>✓ <i>form and matter</i></li> <li>✓ <i>teleology</i></li> <li>✓ <i>act and potency</i></li> <li>✓ <i>four causes</i></li> <li>✓ <i>essence/existence</i></li> </ul>	 <p>Aquinas (1225-1274)</p>
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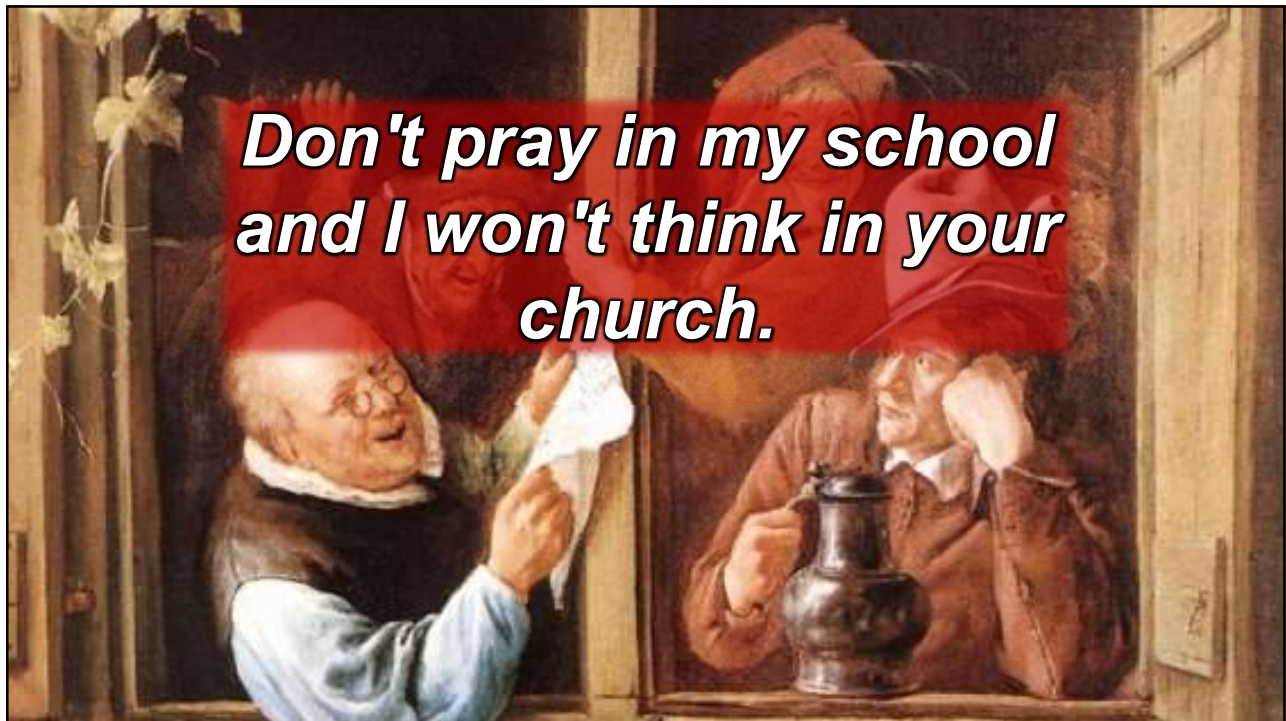
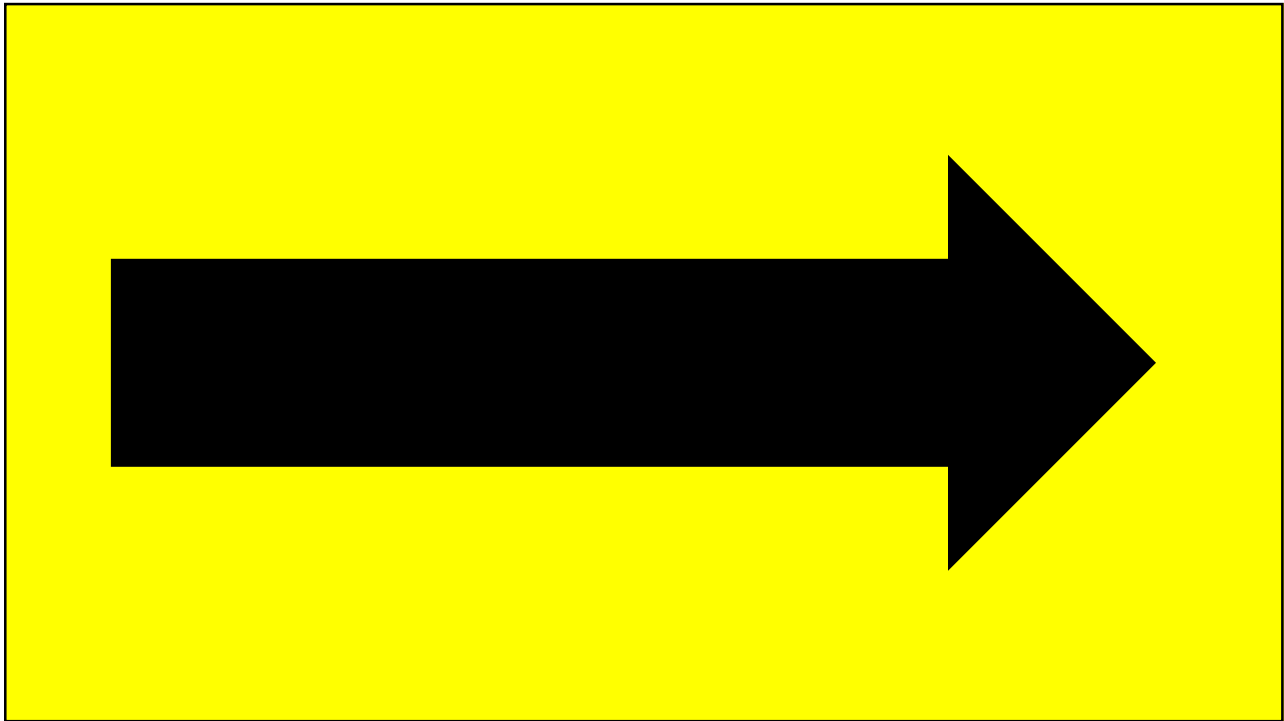
 <p>Aristotle (384-322 BC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>substance/accident</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Ten Categories</i></li> <li>✓ <i>universal/particular</i></li> <li>✓ <i>form/matter</i></li> <li>✓ <i>teleology</i></li> <li>✓ <i>act/potency</i></li> <li>✓ <i>four causes</i></li> <li>✓ <i>essence/existence</i></li> </ul>	 <p>Aquinas (1225-1274)</p>
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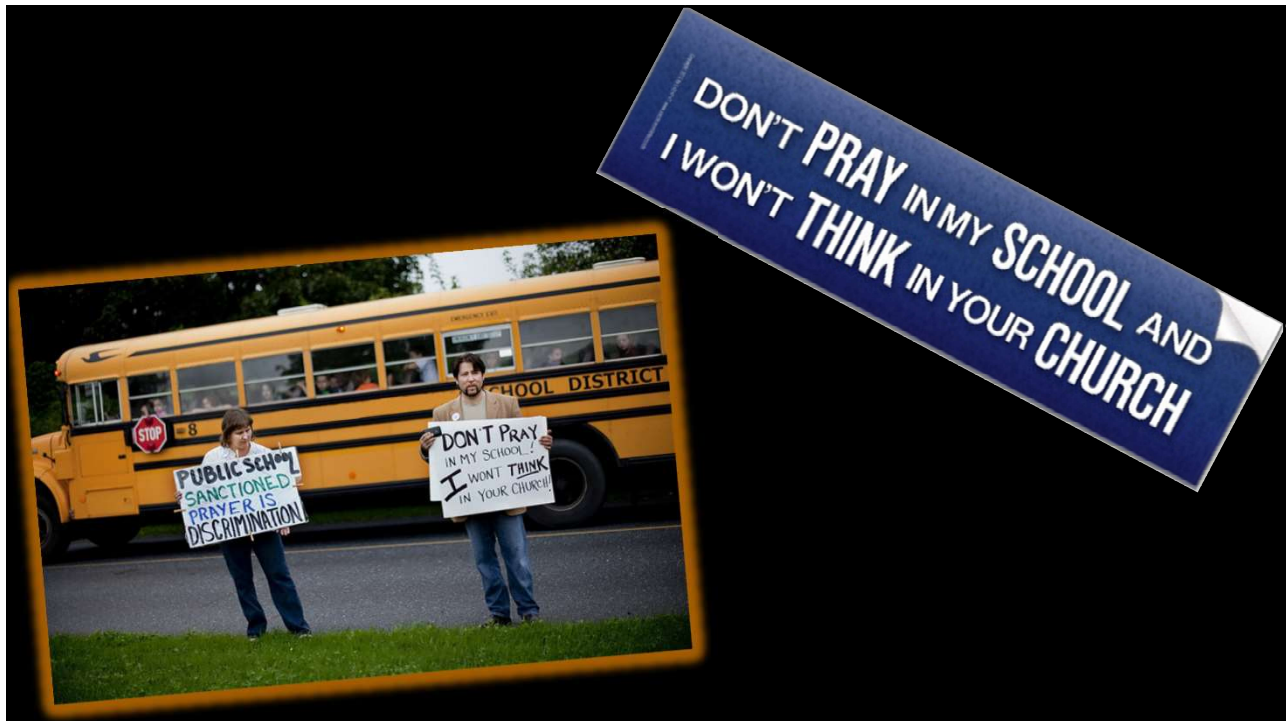


***With these philosophical truths, the classical philosopher can demonstrate the existence and attributes of the God of Classical Theism.***





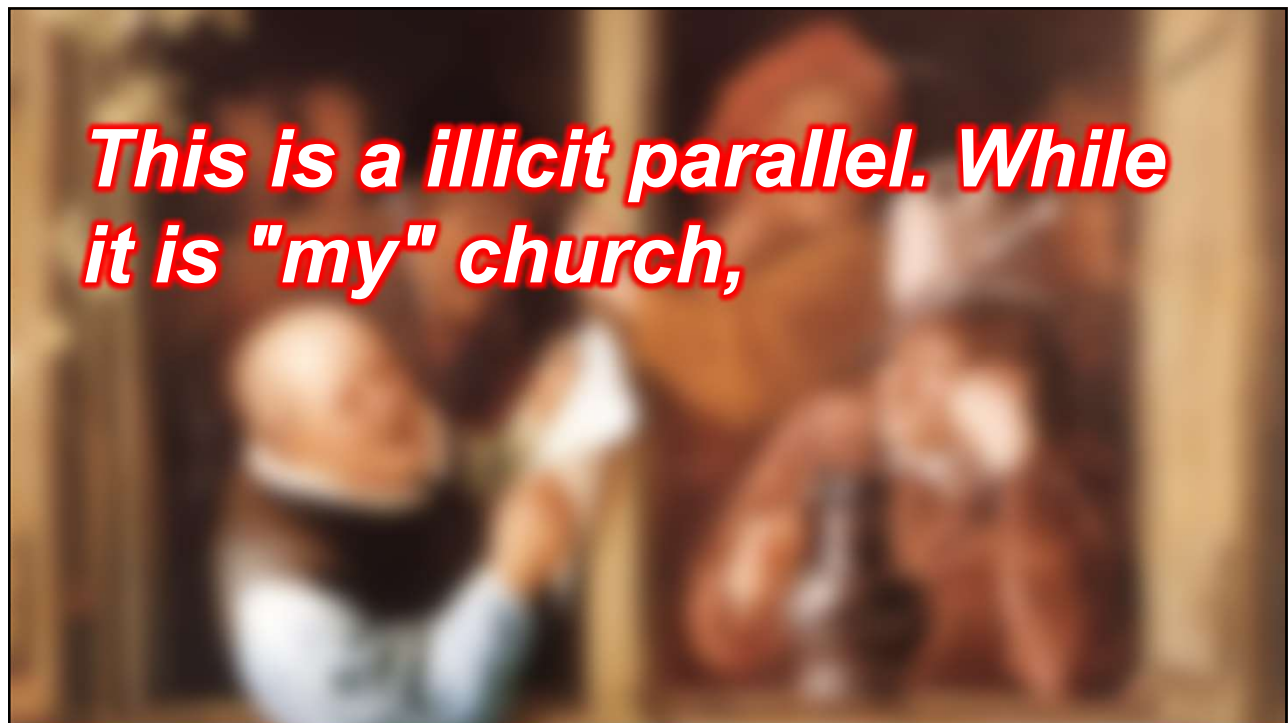
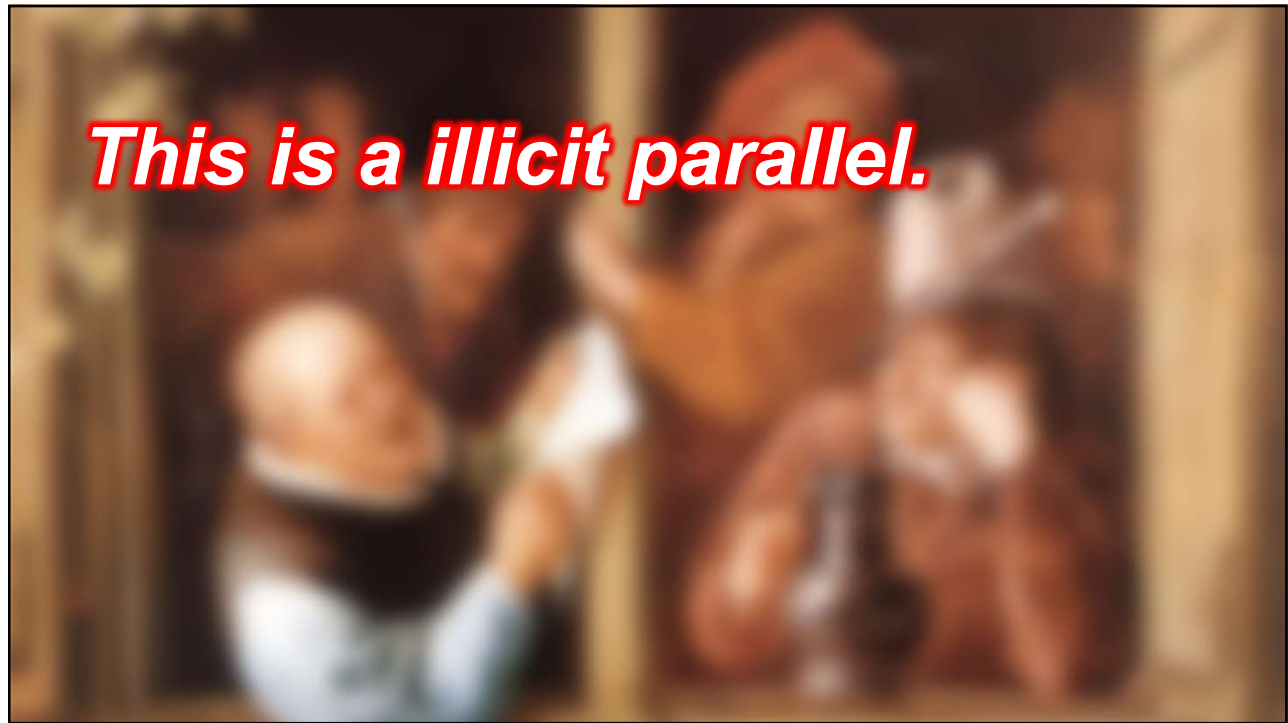








***Funny response:  
You already "don't think"  
otherwise you wouldn't be  
an atheist!***







***This is a illicit parallel. While it is "my" church, it isn't "your" school.***



***This is a illicit parallel. While it is "my" church, it isn't "your" school. Instead, it's "our" school.***

***Science speaks of facts  
without having absolute  
certainty.***

***Religion speaks of  
absolute certainty  
without having facts.***





