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Dialog with a British Atheist

By Freddy Davis

Recently I posted a video on YouTube for the MarketFaith Ministries website entitled "What is Religion?" (You can view it at: <http://www.marketfaith.org/wp-admin/post.php?post=10554&action=edit>)

This one was particularly making the point that Atheism is a religious point of view. I think there are some Atheists who seek out these kinds of videos on YouTube in order to attack Christians, and that is certainly what happened here.

Whenever that happens, I always try to turn it into an opportunity to share Christ with them. Here is the conversation I ended up having with Jerry.

Jerry
You are insane ??

Freddy Davis
Really? Why would you say that?

Jerry
@Freddy Davis read a dictionary. The definition of religion.

Freddy Davis
@Jerry Perhaps you need to read the dictionary. There is more than one definition, you know. Besides that, I carefully defined what I meant in the video. So what is your real problem?

Jerry
@Freddy Davis is religion a bad or good thing?

Freddy Davis
@Jerry I'm not sure what you mean by that question. What does it have to do with either the definition or with your complaint? All I was doing in the video was making the point that Atheism is a religious faith (a false religion to be sure). Perhaps you would like to get to your real point rather than simply throw out vague insults that don't seem to have any relevance to anything. It is difficult to give an intelligent response to comments and questions that have no context.

Jerry
@Freddy Davis you have like 6 subscribers and no comments apart from us. If you want to be successful on YouTube, you need to work at it.

If religion is a good thing, then thank you for the compliment.

If religion is a bad thing, then calling atheism a religion is an insult

Freddy Davis
@Jerry I am not trying to be successful on YouTube. It is merely a host site for my videos so I can link to them from my website.

Actually, your attempt to determine the goodness or badness of a religion based on the criteria you seem to be advocating does not relate to reality. Human beings don't get to decide Truth. It is what it is - objectively. Atheism is a religious point of view (that is, has to be believed by faith), and is a false religion (does not represent reality). It is a matter of truth or falsity, not good or bad.

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Jerry

@Freddy Davis link them to who? Nobody is watching

Freddy Davis

@Jerry People see it from my website and on other social media platforms. You have no idea how many people are seeing it. It seems you don't understand how that works.

Jerry

@Freddy Davis Humans don't get to decide truth? Then who does? Dolphins?

Freddy Davis

@Jerry Truth is revealed from God. I am not aware of any dolphins that are self-conscious and able to reason.

Jerry

@Freddy Davis are you narcissistic?

Freddy Davis

@Jerry No. Are you?

Jerry

@Freddy Davis morning from England. I've no idea what "truth is revealed from god" means....

I live in Buckinghamshire England. That statement is either true or false. I do live in Buckinghamshire England.

So that statement is true.

I don't see where your "god" is required for this

Freddy Davis

@Jerry Well, it seems that you have stated the painfully obvious. The reason you have no idea what "truth revealed from God means" is that you base your entire reasoning on the presupposition that God does not exist - or at least that is what seems to be the case. (And I

actually never questioned the existence of Buckinghamshire, England. I also never said anything about God being required to confirm its existence, so I'm not sure why you brought that up. Perhaps you would like to elaborate on that seemingly random statement.)

But before I go any further, it would be helpful for our conversation if you actually stated what you believe. Your statements will make a bit more sense if I know their context, but without that your comments seem rather random. Are you, indeed, an Atheist as you seem to indicate? And if you are, what made you choose that faith position?

Jerry

@Freddy Davis many animals are self conscious and able to reason. Were you home schooled by religious parents? (There has to be an explanation for your poor education)

Or are you American? (That would explain your poor education)

Freddy Davis

@Jerry It all depends on how you define reasoning ability. Human beings are the only material creatures who are able to self-consciously reason. And no, I was not home schooled at all. In fact, my father was the principle of a public school. And yes, I am American. Now there certainly are serious problems in certain parts of the American public education system, but it does not follow that a person has a poor education simply for being educated in that system or from being an American. There is a massive spectrum within that system. Some of the schools are among the best in the world. I feel pretty confident that you have the same situation in England. You have accused me of having a poor education, but statements like that seem to indicate a deficiency in your own education. You should know that your can't judge people by stereotypes. That is the height of ignorance

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and bigotry. Certainly that would not characterize you, would it? I suppose in England everyone in the entire country are academic elites, right? I don't think so. That would be like me telling you that everyone in England is a terrorist because your country has had a problem over the years with terrorism. That is just silly. Certainly you are better than what you have displayed with these comments. Perhaps if you were a little more respectful

Jerry

@Freddy Davis ok we can talk more respectfully. So when you say "truth is revealed by god" , which truth are you talking about? (If it's not about the existence of Buckinghamshire, then what IS it about?)

Jerry

@Freddy Davis and my dog doesn't have to hear the word " walkies" to reason that I may be about to take him for a walk. Just putting my coat on is enough to get him excited. His brain is reasoning

Freddy Davis

@Jerry There is a difference between "Truth" and facts. Facts are mere data that have to be interpreted in order to come to the truth. Truth represents the actual structure of reality. Some facts are material (such as the existence of Buckinghamshire, England, and can be verified by empirical means (observation and experimentation - science). Other facts transcend the material but still are based in the material world (ex. one person's love for another). These have to be evaluated on a different level. Then there are facts that are based in transcendent reality (ex. God). The only way we can know about those in the last category is by God revealing them to us. And God has revealed Himself to mankind in numerous ways with the Bible being our key to understanding it.

Your dog does not learn that you are ready to take him for a walk by reasoning. It is purely by Pavlovian response. There is a MASSIVE difference between that and self-conscious reasoning. Your dog is incapable of that. You need to discern the difference.

So far, you have still ignored my question and I would appreciate and answer. What is your faith foundation? Are you an Atheist as you seem to indicate? And if you are, what made you choose that faith position?

Jerry

@Freddy Davis yes I'm agnostic atheist. The reason is the overwhelming lack of evidence for any of the thousands of proposed gods. The onus is on the positive claim that the god (of whichever religion) actually exists.

And every religion on the planet has failed miserably to demonstrate that their god exists

Freddy Davis

@Jerry So are you saying that you believe the natural universe is all that exists?

(BTW, I have not proposed thousands of gods - only one. And he has positively revealed Himself to mankind. You don't seem to want to receive the evidence for His existence, so what kind of evidence would you require?)

Jerry

@Freddy Davis no I'm saying that the natural is all that has been demonstrated to exist. If you want to claim there's more , you need to demonstrate it. All those other gods of all those other religions, you don't believe in any of them. We are not that different.

Now have a think, a serious long think, about why you don't believe in the gods of other religions. Take your time and be honest with yourself.

When you figure out why you don't believe in those other gods, you will understand why I don't believe in yours

Jerry

@Freddy Davis Muslims tell me there is no truth without Allah .Allah has revealed the truth through the Quran and the word of Mohammed.

Sound familiar?

Freddy Davis

@Jerry I can't answer you unless you answer the question I asked above. What kind of evidence would you require?

Jerry

@Freddy Davis an omniscient, omnipotent god would know what would convince me. The ball is in his court.

Now 2 hypothetical questions for you

1: if you had been born into a Muslim family in Pakistan, which religion would you be?

2: if you had been born into a Zeus worshipping family in Greece 2,500 years ago, which god would you be following?

Freddy Davis

@Jerry That is a totally unacceptable answer. Knowing something is not the same as acting on it. God has gifted human beings with free will, revealed what is necessary to know Him in a personal relationship, and told us to choose. He does know, but is allowing your personal decision to prevail. The ball is actually in your court. If you end up eternally separated from Him when you die, it was your choice.

But beyond that, I am not God and cannot read your mind. You are just too far away and outside of my telepathic powers. :-) The truth is, you asked ME for answers, and if you actually want an answer and are not simply dodging the discussion, you will tell me what kind of answer would satisfy your inquiry.

As for your questions, you should know that hypotheticals are totally meaningless. There are so many variables that cannot be taken into account without way more detail. There are a lot of people born into Muslim families who eventually become Christians. And even in 478 BC Greece, there were numerous religious traditions that were prominent, and people changed belief systems all the time. So provide for me all of the variables that would have actually been my personal possibilities and it might be possible to at least contemplate the questions. Outside of that, the questions are meaningless.

Jerry

@Freddy Davis as for evidence, god apparently came down to earth a lot in the old testament. Doubting Thomas had to put his fingers in the wounds. Someone got a road to Damascus experience. I want that

Freddy Davis

@Jerry God gave you way more than that. He actually raised Jesus Christ from the dead. In addition to that, we have the historical record of many miracles that Jesus did, and the testimonies of millions of people throughout history who have met God personally. Beyond that, we have a very clear revelation about how to know God in a personal relationship. Do you not believe history?

And what happened to the post (copied in below)? Did you delete it? It is actually quite pertinent to the answer here.

(Jerry apparently posted this comment, then deleted it. Since an e-mail was sent to me with the initial post, I received it even though it is no longer on YouTube. I pasted it in here and responded to it because it was pertinent to what we were discussing.)

[Jerry

@Freddy Davis you are lying to me and to yourself. Very few Muslims convert to Christianity. (Actually a higher percentage become atheists) . And it was impossible to convert from Zeus to Christianity because your religion hadn't been invented yet.

The truth is simple. 98% of people in Pakistan are Muslim because it's the prevailing religion and they are subjected to immense religious propaganda from birth. Overcoming such deep brainwashing is difficult, and most never achieve it.

You are American and Christianity is the prevailing religion and you succumbed to it. You are a victim . Don't feel ashamed. There is still time to save yourself]

Freddy Davis (continued from before the insertion)

The fact is, I am not lying. All you are showing is your lack of knowledge of what is going on in the world. In one way you are right - relatively speaking a small percentage of Muslims have become Christians. But even a small percentage can be a pretty large number. You are obviously not aware of the many Muslims who have become Christians through dreams and various other miracles. In fact, apparently Iran has a very fast growing Christian population that has the government worried. You are obviously not aware of the many African Animists who have become Christians because God has revealed Himself to them through various kinds of miracles. You are obviously not aware of the explosive growth of Christianity in officially atheistic China - to the point that the government has become so concerned that they are cracking down hard on it. And this kind of thing is going on in many other parts of the world, as well.

But even those amazing happenings are totally beside the point. The Bible is pretty clear that the large majority of people in the world will reject Him - as you have done up until this point in your own life. That is even true in places that have a long Christian tradition - like America and England. The fact that most people choose to reject God has absolutely nothing to do with whether or not He exists. Absolutely NOTHING! Your argument along this line is a total red herring.

But there are also many instances where people have witnessed God's obvious revelation to them and still rejected Him. If Jesus Christ appeared to you in a dream or vision, would you receive Him or would you write it off as having eaten something that didn't sit well with you? If he appeared to you physically, would you do what so many other people in His day did and reject, even persecute, Him? The truth is, God has orchestrated our interaction in this very conversation as a way to touch you directly. So far, you have rejected that, too. Far from actually being open to the possibility that I might be right and exploring possibilities, you have done pretty much nothing but reject and insult. As you alluded to before, as an omniscient and omnipotent God, He really does know how you will respond. And until you are at least willing to make an honest inquiry, why should he play your game?

Believe me, I'm not offended by you, but EVERY response you have made has been one of rejection and attack, not openness. You are not really looking to find the truth, you are only looking to justify your own rejection of God. Ultimately that is your business, but you also must also realize that you are responsible for the decision you make. God really does exist, he loves you, and wants you to know Him personally - and it can happen if you are willing.

Jerry

@Freddy Davis you are letting your confirmation bias show.

You don't believe that Allah split the moon in two , despite the Quran saying it happened and lots of witnesses saw it..

Please apply the same scepticism to your religion

Freddy Davis

@Jerry So, anything you disagree with is confirmation bias? How do you know that is true? Actually, you don't. You don't know me or what I know. Your comment here is blind deflection. You get to believe what you want to believe, but you are in no position to judge what I am saying.

Jerry

@Freddy Davis why aren't you willing to accept Allah?

Allah exists and He loves you.

All you need is to be willing.

Do you see how pathetic that argument is?

If that argument wouldn't convert you to Islam, why do you think it would convert me to Christianity?

Jerry

@Freddy Davis and you have chosen to ignore Allah. Allah gave you the evidence of his existence and free will. If you end up separated from Allah that's your fault.

Freddy Davis

@Jerry Have you ever studied Islam? If you had, you would not be making comments like this. You really showed your lack of knowledge on the topic with this comment. If you want to defend the viability of Islam, then I am up for that discussion, but simply attempting to throw out a hit and run statement should be below you. It is not a good look. You are talking as if the God of the Bible did not exist or that anyone can just make up anything and it be true. That does not reflect reality. The God of the Bible is an objectively real person that we can know in an objectively real personal relationship. The fact that you don't have any sense of how to interact with spiritual reality does not make your point of view true. If you are so convinced of the validity of your Atheism, then prove to me it is true - using your own criteria. At this point you are talking gobbledegook.

Jerry

@Freddy Davis and that is why the Bible is wrong from page 1.

If an omniscient omnipotent god actually inspired the Bible, it would have got things right.. .

So here's what actually happened. A bunch of men presumed a god existed , then tried to guess how it created everything. Suddenly, genesis creation account makes sense ??

Because if you were taking a guess at how a god would have created everything thousands of years ago, you would come up with the genesis creation account.

See how it all makes sense?

It's a fictional book

Freddy Davis

@Jerry Seriously? Are you touting that as a scholarly assessment? Besides that being a totally illogical argument, you have asserted something that it is absolutely impossible for you to know. You have no idea what an omniscient, omnipotent God would do. To have that kind of knowledge you would have to be God over God. What you have written is nothing more than your imagination running wild with NOTHING to back it up. It is a meaningless assessment.

So what kind of theological, or other scholarly, credentials do you have that gives you any kind of credibility in making that kind of pronouncement? If you were to propose that among any group of people who have actually studied the topic, you would be laughed out of the room.

In our conversation, you have already made numerous assertions about Christianity, about Islam, about science, and even about the definitions of words that are simply false. You are touting yourself not only as an expert, but are basing your entire argumentation on a totally unsupported set of presuppositions that atheistic beliefs are true. It is going to be really hard to take you seriously from this point on unless you can demonstrate, using your own atheistic presuppositions, that Atheism is a viable belief system and even capable of making the kind of judgment of the Christian faith that you are attempting. (Actually, I'm not even sure at this point if you even understand what I am talking about - but if you need further clarification I can point you in the right direction with that, as well.)

If you are really serious about this discussion and not merely trolling, you are going to have to do better. Your arguments are pure junk. In fact, they are so pitiful that they are making you look rather uneducated. You might get away with that when dealing with someone who is not familiar with this topic, but I am not that person. I want you to know that I am more than willing to continue this conversation, but it is honestly time for you to make some kind of argument that represents something more than surface level fluff. So, you can begin by answering my previous question that you have steadfastly avoided: How do you know Atheism is true? You have no right to question ANY other faith unless you can answer that question.

Jerry

@Freddy Davis good evening from England....

Atheism is the doubt position. It's the null hypothesis. These positions don't require evidence.
Theist: "there is a god"

Me: "can you please demonstrate the existence of your god?"

Theist: fails miserably to demonstrate that their god exists

Me: "given your abject failure to demonstrate that your god exists, I have no option than to disbelieve your claim. It's the only intellectually honest thing to do"

That's atheism. It's not a positive claim and requires no evidence

Jerry

@Freddy Davis so please demonstrate that your god exists. Because until you do that, any other discussion is pointless

Freddy Davis

@Jerry Once again, your logic is flawed. Atheism is NOT a null hypothesis. Atheism absolutely is a positive assertion that God does not exist. So just on that level, if you are going to claim to be an Atheist, you must prove that your belief that God does not exist is true. Your definition is simply another false statement to add to your previous ones.

At this point, however, I recognize that approaching the topic from that point of view is logically impossible. But what is stated from a negative point of view can also be stated from the other side. The foundation of naturalistic Atheism is based on the belief that the natural universe operating by natural laws is all that exists. Based on everything you have been saying so far, that is your position. You have given no indication that you believe in a pantheistic type of Atheism, and all of your demands of me have been to give naturalistic proofs. Therefore, I have every right to expect you to defend it using the presuppositions associated with that point of view. If that is not what you believe, then up until now your entire argumentative framework has been deceptive and you need to lay it out clearly. No discussion can continue when one person is allowed to have a moving target.

But there is another problem that also exists here. I have offered you the proof that God exists and you have refused to believe it. I have told you that if you would acknowledge before God that you are a sinner, then sincerely open up your life to Him and invite Him into your life, He would reveal Himself to you. You obviously

have not only not done that, but have totally rejected even the possibility. You seem to think that the natural universe operating by natural laws is all that exists, and have rejected what exists transcendent to that. You have no evidence that a spiritual reality doesn't exist, but you have rejected it out of hand anyway. Let me give you an illustration: If your house was on fire and I told you there was one way out but you refused to believe me and take my advice, would it be my fault that you died in the fire? There actually is such a thing as spiritual reality, and I have shared with you how to access it. Your refusal doesn't prove it doesn't exist, only that you are not willing to look in that direction.

But if you are going to continue to make your arguments based on the assumption that there is no God and no transcendent reality, then it is incumbent on you to prove it to me using your own presuppositions. You see, while I have been quite open about my desire for you to believe in the truth and reality of God, you have been proselytizing me about your faith without giving any evidence that it is true. You owe that if you want to be taken seriously. Quit deflecting.

Jerry

@Freddy Davis stop trying to do the "shifting of the burden of proof" fallacy..

The positive claim that something exists always comes first, then people decide, based on the evidence, whether they believe that thing actually exists...

And it's irrelevant what the thing is... The Loch Ness monster, Santa, fairies, the god of your religion, Bigfoot, Yeti, the god of a different religion or ghosts...

You claim it exists, the onus is on you

Freddy Davis

@Jerry You're not serious, right? Shifting of the burden of proof fallacy? That's not even a thing. That's one more false thing we can add to the list.

I think I have already said this a couple of times in this conversation. Maybe the third time's a charm. I have given you the proof. You refuse to check it out. God is spirit, so the proof for God must have its roots in the spirit realm. Rejecting that out of hand without examining it doesn't mean I am wrong. It means you have rejected even considering my evidence. So since you won't accept the proof I have offered, we are back again to what kind of proof you are willing to accept. Do you require empirical proof for God's existence? Is that what you are saying? Quit trying to play the moving target game.

How it Ended

At this point, Jerry just dropped off the radar. He, for whatever reason, decided that he no longer wanted to continue the conversation.

This is not actually unusual when I have conversations like this on social media. In fact, it is pretty much the norm. There virtually always comes a point when the person doing the attacking begins to realize that they cannot defend their own point of view. And the reason this happens is that the worldview beliefs of

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Atheism are simply not true. When the right questions are asked and an individual begins seriously having to think about defending their false beliefs, at some point the actual truth becomes evident.

While Jerry quit rather than acknowledge, or even seriously engage, the truth, the genuineness of a biblical worldview was presented to him and he was forced to make some kind of decision. I recognize that most of the time when I engage these conversations, the antagonist will not immediately come to Christ. However, in these cases I consider myself a soil tiller and/or a seed sower. It is my fervent prayer that Jerry will, at some point, recognize the futility of his atheistic beliefs and, by the witness of another believer, come to faith in Christ.