

Why Don't People Believe in God?

Intro:

1. The Bible makes some fantastic claims:
 - There exists in unseen dimension a living Creator of all things.
 - This Creator has visited the earth in human form - the person of Jesus Christ.
 - This Creator has given laws by which He will judge, assign eternal destiny.
2. There is either evidence to support these claims or evidence which proves them false.
3. If true, *everything* is at stake. If false, there is no judgment/hell/duty **but** no ultimate goodness, no heaven, no prayer, no true purpose to life.

1. Reasons Why People Don't Believe in God

A. Not lack of evidence but choice to avoid consequences of believing.

1. **Rom 1**: “knew God ... changed glory of God ... exchanged the truth of God ... did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (**vs 21, 23-24, 28**). To acknowledge God's existence would be to condemn their lifestyle, desires, ambitions.
2. **But**, does rejecting reality on the basis of consequences change the reality?
Illus: WWII: Nations ignored Hitler as he annexed other countries. Did hiding from Hitler change his nature, ambitions? It merely delayed the inevitable.
3. *Accountability*: God gives us freedom to disbelieve, but we will answer for our choice: 2 Thes 1:7-9.

B. It is not intellectually acceptable.

1. Secular humanism is filtering down to mainstream culture via schools/universities, media and entertainment industries. *Humanist Manifesto II*, 1973:
 - a. We believe that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race. We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. Humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.
 - b. This human-potential outlook considers belief in God to be ignorant, superstitious nonsense and therefore an *impediment to progress*. Hope for man's fu-

ture is seen in education, science, technology, diplomacy and other inward-looking disciplines.

2. Is not **Jer 10:23** consistently upheld by human experience? Man **has** done some wonderful things but why can't we solve the drug problem, teenage pregnancy, poverty, genocide in other countries, etc. ?

3. **Illus:** See Bio-sphere article. Difficulty in creating "perfect environment."

C. How can good, powerful God exist with all the pain and suffering in the world?

1. Our material existence, coupled with the misused free-will with which God endowed man, **does** result in suffering. This suffering is not to be minimized: the effects of gravity, disease, violence are horrible, indeed.

2. The Bible puts suffering into perspective and enables us to deal with its effects:

a. All suffering is a result of man's corruption of God's creation by sin. God allows it as a guarantee of free moral agency. **Illus:** We may free a guilty man to protect civil rights and due process. The **majority** of this world's suffering would be alleviated by men acting in a godly fashion.

b. All suffering can be turned into strength and richness of spirit and character - **Jas 1:2-4; Rom 5:3-4**. God shows us how to use suffering to our advantage. Pain confronts us with our deficiencies and humbles us before God.

c. All suffering in this life will be replaced by reward in heaven - **Rom 8:18**. God will punish all evil once and for all - **Rom 2:5-9**.

3. God's own *participation* in our suffering shows us that He is concerned and compassionate as we undergo trials - **Heb 2:17-18**. Jesus looked with compassion upon sufferers; He healed, encouraged, comforted and shared man's sorrows.

2. Believing in an Unseen God

A. God is not far from us - **Ac 17:26-29**.

B. God will not be found through emotional experiences or inward contemplation. We come face to face with God by looking into His revelation - **Jn 20:30-31**.

C. If one does not *wish* to believe in God there will be many reasons not to. But for those who desire fellowship and eternal life, no obstacle will be too great to overcome. *What is holding you back?*