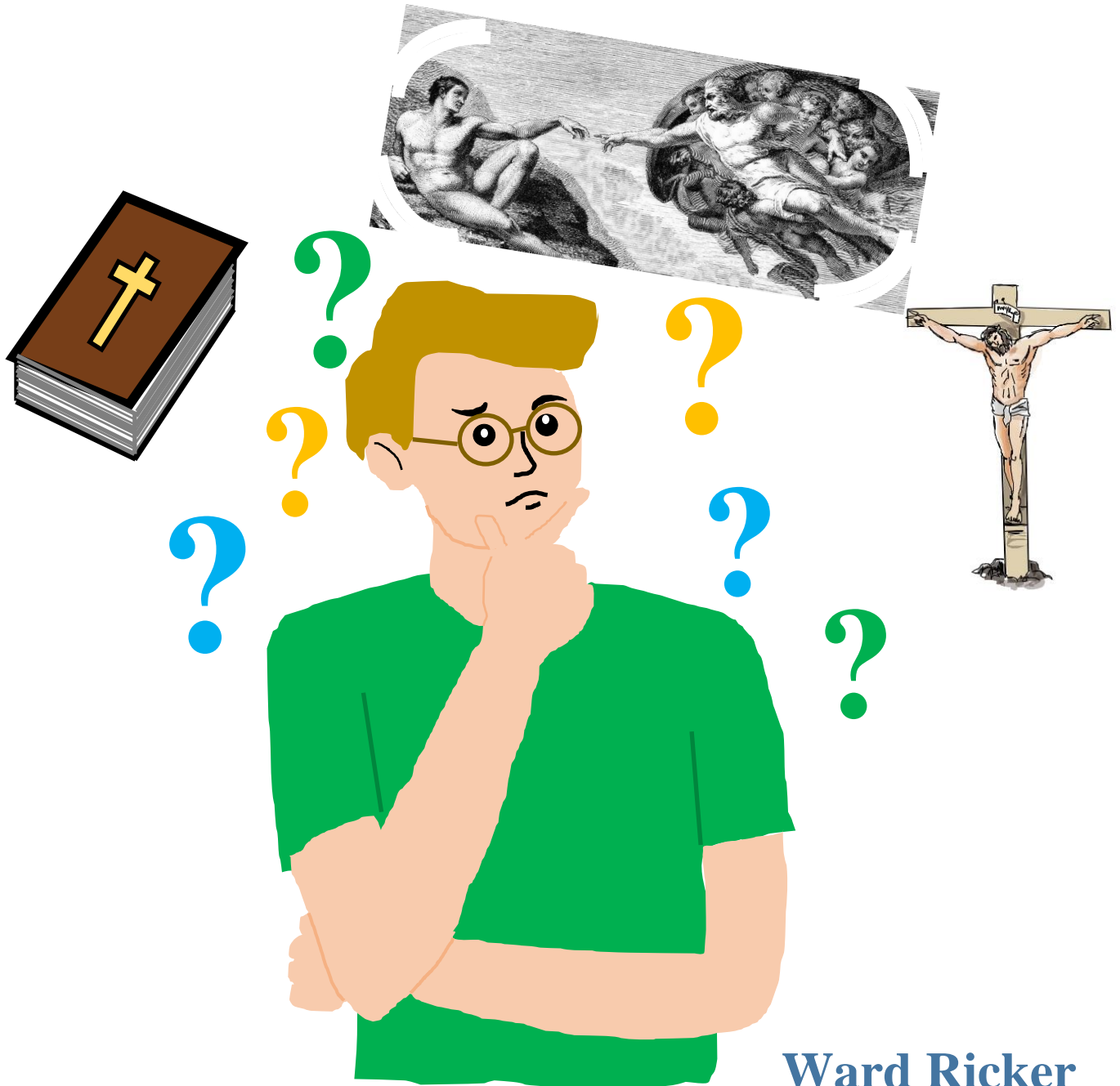


Why I Don't Believe in God or the Bible



Ward Ricker

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The first reason that I should state as to why I do not believe in God or the Bible is that the question itself is invalid. The question needs to be what reason does a person have for believing in what he or she believes in. If there is no reason to believe in a certain thing, then why would someone believe it? In other words, the burden of proof is upon the one who wants to claim that a system of beliefs is true; it is not the burden of the one who doubts those beliefs to have to disprove it. If you go around trying to believe everything that you cannot find a way to disprove, you will be one mixed up person, for sure! So my first reason for not believing in God or the Bible is simply that I do not have a reason for believing in them.

As a corollary to this first reason, there are probably thousands of religions or other belief systems on the face of the earth today. If I were going to believe in one of them, which one would I choose? Of course, most people in the U.S. would probably say "Christianity", meaning whichever of the probably thousands of different versions of Christianity that they happen to believe in, but there are also Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Spiritism, Animism, astrology, the occult, "New-Agey believisms", etc. How do I know which one to believe? In order to come up with the answer I have to have some sort of *reason* for deciding that way. When I start employing reason I am no longer in the realm of religion; I am in the realm of science! I can just close my eyes and have "faith" in some randomly picked (or handed down to me) superstition (and, yes, your superstition is just as much superstition as all those other belief systems that *you* call superstition), or I can employ reason and follow science. And any realistic application of reason or understanding of science clearly leads me to disbelieve all these superstitious ideas.

However, there are indeed many reasons specifically for not believing in such things, and I will proceed to describe some of those reasons that I find particularly pertinent. I have grouped those reasons into three categories below: 16 reasons I base on factual observations; 11 reasons I base on value judgments, essentially the judgment that God and the Bible are abhorrent; and 6 are in a final miscellaneous category for those reasons that don't fall into the first two categories. That makes a total of 34 reasons when combined with the one reason in the first paragraph. There are undoubtedly many more that I am just not thinking of.

Factual Observations

1. The Bible contradicts itself.

This, of course, has been argued over and over, and believers of the Bible will completely deny that there are any contradictions in the Bible. But one only has to take a casual look to see that such denials are simply futile attempts to explain away the obvious. I will start off by saying, however, that people sometimes get carried away in trying to prove that there are contradictions in the Bible. For instance, it says in one place in the Bible that Jonah was swallowed by a whale, and in another place it says that he was swallowed by a big fish. We all know, of course, that whales are not fishes, and that is, therefore, according to our modern understanding, a contradiction. But we need to realize that this was not a contradiction at the time that these were written. At those times there was no realization that fish and marine mammals were two different things. According to the definitions of things at that time, a fish was any of those squiggly creatures that squirms its way through the water, no matter how big or how small. That was the

definition of "fish" at that time. The fact that we have defined things differently in our modern age does not make what was written at that time a contradiction.

Having said that, though, there are indeed plenty of clear contradictions in the Bible. In Numbers 25 God sent a plague throughout Israel that killed 24,000 people. According to 1 Corinthians 10 it was 23,000 people. Matthew Chapter 1 lists thirteen generations from Abraham to David, but the same chapter says later that there were fourteen generations. Ditto for the 13 or 14 generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ in the same chapter. (Apparently Matthew just wasn't very good with numbers!) When Jesus sent forth his disciples he told them to take staff and sandals in Mark 6, but according to Matthew 10 he told them not to take those things. According to Mark 15 Jesus was crucified at the third hour (9:00 am), but John 19 says that Pilate didn't even present him before the people until noontime. According to Matthew 27 and Mark 15 both thieves that were crucified along with Jesus reviled him, but according to Luke 23 only one of them did; the other asked Jesus to remember him in his kingdom. Matthew 27 says that Judas killed himself by hanging himself after betraying Christ, but Acts chapter 1 says that Judas bought a field and "he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out". Doesn't sound much like a hanging to me. Michal, the daughter of King Saul of Israel, had no children according to 2 Samuel 6, but in chapter 21 of the same book it lists her five children. Those are but a few of the clear contradictions in the Bible. Then there are the "almost certain" contradictions such as the different stories of the woman or women (whichever version you believe) who came to the tomb on the morning of Jesus' resurrection. Depending on which book you read about it, there were either one or two women, either one or two angels, it was dark or in the morning. It might be perhaps possible to reconcile the different accounts, but the mental gymnastics required to do so are pretty ridiculous (and I have offered \$2000 to anyone who can do so! See www.wardricker.com/resurrection_challenge.php). For a more complete listing of contradictions, download my free book, *Unholy Bible: The Unholy and Unreal Parts of the Bible*, at www.WardsBooks.com.

2. The Bible contradicts known reality.

Once again, I will start by pointing out that not everything that people sometimes point to in the Bible and say "that simply isn't correct" is a valid argument. For instance, the Bible refers to "the four corners of the earth". We know today, of course, that there are no corners to the earth. It is a sphere (approximately). This was not known at the time that the Bible was written, and some would claim that the statement that the earth has corners is contrary to scientific fact. Of course it is, but I doubt that anybody in the day and age that these writings were written had any idea of whether the earth had corners or not and was trying to say that it did. The use of the phrase "four corners of the earth" should not be interpreted literally to mean that the earth has four corners. It was almost undoubtedly used as an expression, just as we use the expression that the sun rises or the sun sets. We know, of course, that the sun does no such thing. It is the earth that turns that makes it appear that way. The fact that this is true does not mean that you and I are telling a lie when we refer to the sun rising or setting. It is an expression that we use, just as they used the expression "four corners of the earth".

Having said this, it is nevertheless true that the Bible contradicts known reality. The Bible states that God created the world and the universe in six days, and that he created every organism to reproduce "after its own kind"; hence, Christianity's antagonism toward evolution. The fossil record, however, clearly shows that species on earth today evolved over very large periods of

time, many millions of years, from simple to more complex organisms. A creation of everything in six days is simply not the way it happened.

Furthermore, there are things in the Bible that simply cannot be true. If we believe the Bible, we have to believe that Noah was able to fit every land-dwelling species of animal into an ark about 450 feet long. With well over 1 million named animal species today, most of which would not have survived a worldwide catastrophic flood and would not be with us today if Noah hadn't protected them in the ark, we know that such a thing is not even close to possible, even just for species that are on earth today. If the dinosaurs and all the other many, many extinct species were still alive in the days of Noah, as they presumably were since only nine generations (Adam - Seth - Enos - Kenan - Mahalalel - Jared - Enoch - Methuselah - Lamech - Noah; Genesis 5) had passed since the creation of earth until the day of Noah, it would have taken hundreds or thousands of such arks to house all those animals. (As a sort of "fun fact" in this regard, I have calculated at my website (www.wardricker.com/braincalc1.php) how fast it would be raining in order to dump enough water on the face of the earth to raise the oceans over the top of the highest mountains, including Everest, in 40 days. It would have to rain an average of six inches per minute. Quite a rain, indeed!)

3. Why are dinosaurs not mentioned in the Bible?

And what of those glorious creatures of old--the dinosaurs? I cannot help but mention such grandiose creatures, some around one hundred feet long and weighing many tons. The larger ones would completely dwarf the largest land animal on earth today. Hardly a child grows up without becoming mesmerized by those magnificent creatures, so I could hardly fail to mention them. However, the Bible could. No mention of *Argentinosaurus huinculensis*, over 100 feet long and weighing on the order of 100 tons. No mention of our old friend *Tyrannosaurus rex*, with foot-long daggers for teeth and an insatiable appetite for flesh. It must have been quite an annoyance for Methuselah, Abraham, Moses and all their lot to dodge those mean *T. Rexes*. Somehow, I just find it rather difficult to believe that a book that goes all away back to the very creation of planet Earth would fail to mention such creatures.

4. Why no mention of the nature of the universe?

And on a similar note, why is there no mention in the Bible of the nature of the universe. There are billions of stars (that is, suns, some smaller and some larger than our own) in our own galaxy alone, and millions, if not billions, of galaxies spread throughout the vastness of space. If you read the creation myth in Genesis, however, even though it doesn't specifically state, "The earth is the center of the universe, and all these other celestial bodies were put there for our benefit," such a message is abundantly clear from the reading. No other interpretation could possibly be made. Why did God even bother to make all those galaxies, since we cannot even see them from our planet Earth and cannot even see most of the stars in our own galaxy? What was the point of it? Yes, God created the Earth first, and he didn't create all those stars (and presumably the invisible galaxies) until the fourth day. Clearly the earth is the center and reason for it all!

5. Why earthquakes and volcanoes?

Where did such phenomena as earthquakes and volcanoes come from? They come, of course, from the fact that the earth is a geologically active planet, with fiery magma seething below the surface and crustal plates floating around on the surface. Where did this all come

from? When God created planet Earth he created a pristine planet, safe for everyone to live on happily forever, if only they had not sinned. Right? Perhaps when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit they sealed their fate and gave up their everlasting life, but somehow I find it difficult to believe that biting into a fruit caused the earth chambers to open up and start all this commotion. God allowed his perfect and beautiful creation to be destroyed by the bite of a piece of fruit. Right!

6. Why was God's creation so faulty that those dinosaurs died out?

And going back to those dinosaurs, why is it that they all died out, along with more than 90 percent of all the species that have ever existed on the face of the earth? Was God's creation so faulty and imperfect that the biggest part of it simply died away to extinction?

7. "Creation" is imperfect in the heavens also.

And it is not just down here on earth where great imperfections lie. The heavens are filled with chaos and destruction. Just look at our own moon. Without a protective atmosphere like the earth, it is pockmarked with craters from impacts with celestial debris. There are impact craters on earth also, such as Meteor Crater in Arizona. The Tunguska explosion in Russia in 1908 was almost certainly from an errant meteor striking the earth. And many of us remember what happened to Jupiter with the impact of Schumacher Levy. Supernova are exploding and things are crashing into each other all over the place. God's creation in heaven is far from perfect, also. It is chaos out there! I guess that bite from the fruit caused all hell to break loose out there as well!

8. Why the appendix?

And what of that appendix that you have in your abdomen, assuming it hasn't become infected and had to be removed? Why did God put that there? What purpose does it serve in God's "perfect" creation? Or perhaps it simply popped into existence when Adam and Eve ate of the fruit just so that God would have one more thing to use to punish us for our sins! Or maybe it is the "eternal life" organ that became inactivated because Adam and Eve sinned! However, I think it much more logical and reasonable to assume that it is an organ that served a function during our evolutionary development but which is no longer needed to serve that function. We can point to other things in the human body as well. The tonsils could be included along with the appendix. We don't need them, right? Why is the human spinal column so prone toward damage? So much for God's "perfect" creation.

9. God gave me five senses but refuses to let me know him through them.

This is certainly one of the biggest reasons why I can't help but confine God to the realm of superstition. "God" gave me five senses with which I am able to perceive the world and universe around me. It is through those senses that I am able to even know that there is a universe about me and other people in it. It is through those senses that I form relationships and learn all the knowledge that I store in my head. That's it! I have only those five senses and no others. Yet this God who supposedly loves me refuses to let me know him through any of the five senses that he has given me. Does this make God the supreme practical joker? Perhaps it makes him the greatest deadbeat dad. If I had a child and refused to let that child ever see me, hear me, touch me or know me through any of the five senses that he or she has, what would you think of me? Would you consider me a loving dad? For some reason, people apply a completely

different set of criteria to God. Instead of holding him to the highest standards, since he is supposedly perfect in every way, they do not even hold him to the basic standards to which we hold our sinful human companions. If God was truly a God of love, he would at least make himself known to me through the tools that he has given me to perceive things.

10. Taking things on faith.

Would you buy a piece of supposedly beautiful waterfront property in Florida for a mere \$25,000? Surely that is an incredible bargain! It is a big spacious lot with a nice sandy shoreline, lined with palm trees, ready for you to build your dream house upon. And I will be happy to sell it to you for the ridiculously low price of \$25,000. There is one slight catch, though. You are not allowed to see the property until you have paid for it. You just have to take my word for it that it is beautiful and wonderful and worth far more than what you are paying (and that it exists at all). I will take the \$25,000 anytime you feel like handing it over.

Feeling a bit hesitant? Do you think that you might perhaps want to have some first-hand knowledge of what you're getting and some insurance that you are getting what you are promised before you hand over your money? Yet people everywhere give not just their money, but dedicate their whole lives to some promise that after they die they will receive some reward. They have absolutely no guarantee of this reward. They haven't seen it. They have no way of seeing it or verifying that it exists. But they are supposed to dedicate not just their money, but their entire lives, to a system of beliefs in order to get it.

We have a word for people who make such offers. Conmen!

11. The Bible came to us because men made decisions as to what to include in it.

The contents, or canon, of the Bible has come down to us through the decisions of men. There is no declaration by God as to what the Bible should contain. Church leaders, such as those who instigated such things as the Crusades and the Inquisition and more recently have engaged in pedophilia, made these decisions. Somehow, if the word of God actually exists somewhere in some writings, I don't feel that I could trust these men to be able to figure out which ones they are.

12. Why are heaven and hell not taught in the Old Testament?

Yes, both heaven and hell are mentioned in the Old Testament (at least in the King James Version). The word "heaven" occurs 414 times and the word "hell" 31 times (per search at BibleGateway.com). However, heaven is never mentioned as a place for human beings to aspire to live. It is mentioned as the place of God's abode, as in 2 Chronicles 20:37, "their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place." There are places where the Old Testament mentions other beings in heaven besides God, but these are angels or spirits, not people. (Interestingly, several passages seem to equate stars, which we, of course, know to be suns, to be these angels or messengers of God. See Nehemiah 9:6 or Daniel 8:10.) The only place where there is any association between human beings and the place called heaven is in the second chapter of 2 Kings where Elijah is taken up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Although hell is mentioned in the Old Testament 31 times, nowhere is there any mention of a "lake of fire". Although it refers to the "sorrows of hell", there is no place where any mention is made as hell of a place of fire or eternal torment. If hell is a place of fiery torment to be avoided and heaven is a place of wonderful bliss for saved humans to enjoy, why did God not

warn us of this eternal fire or promise us eternal paradise in heaven anywhere in the Old Testament?

13. Older, differing versions of the Bible books come up. How do we know which to believe?

Over time, many different ancient manuscripts of the books in the Bible have been discovered. We know that these writings get corrupted over time, because these manuscripts vary in their content. Which ones are the correct ones? We will probably never know. Even if these books did start out as the true word of God, who knows how accurate what we have today is.

14. Why do animals kill? They didn't sin by eating of the fruit.

God created a perfect world. It was peaceful, and, if only humans hadn't sinned, we could be living forever in perfect peace and health right here on earth in the paradise that God created. Right? Humans disobeyed God by eating of the forbidden fruit and thereby became corrupt, sinful and violent. But what about the animals? They didn't sin by eating of the forbidden fruit. Right? So why is it that animals almost universally lead rough lives and face violent deaths. Out in the wild hardly any animal dies peacefully in its old age. As soon as they get old and slow they are taken down and devoured by some violent predator. Why are there predators? Surely there were none on God's perfect earth when he created it. They were all peaceful, right? Otherwise, people would have been killed. If lions prowled around killing and devouring, then obviously humans would have been injured, would have suffered and would have been killed. But that wouldn't have happened on God's perfect earth if humans hadn't sinned, right? It would be like Isaiah 11:6, where it says, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together", right? We know how humans got to be violent, but how did those wolves and lions get to be so violent on God's perfect earth?

15. Why do humans and animals have the same DNA code?

Also, while we are on the subject of animals, why are humans so similar to other animals in our DNA? If God created us as a separate and special being "in his own image", why do we share 90-odd percent of our DNA with chimpanzees? Why, indeed, do we share the same DNA code as all other forms of life on earth? Even though our DNA sequences differ from other animals, the "code" that determines what each of those DNA sequences means is the same for all lifeforms. If we are made in God's image, then does God have the same kind of DNA that we have (and share over 90 percent of his DNA with chimps)? If we really are a special creation of God, so much different than all the other animals that God created, I would think that we would have a completely different basis of life than they have.

16. Evolution of dogs.

Who created dogs? People who believe in God and the Bible don't believe in evolution. God created every species to reproduce "after its own kind". No new species. No evolution. So did God create dogs? Was it not humans who created dogs? Of course, dogs have been around for as long as humans have been leaving written records, so the origins of dogs is somewhat shrouded in mystery, but we know that they came from wolves, right? It is possible to mate wolves with dogs. They are the same species. Or are they? On the other hand, are all dogs of the same species?

Biologists generally define one species from another, at least when dealing with sexually reproducing species, which essentially is all of the species of life that humans are able to observe with their naked eyes, by the criteria of whether they can reproduce together. If you have two groups of similar animals and want to know if they are the same species or not, just throw some of the males and females of the two groups in together and you will have your answer. If they make babies, then they are the same species. (Caveat: The babies have to be able to grow up and produce babies or this doesn't work. Horses and donkeys are two different, but very closely related, species, because their offspring are infertile.) This rule makes a lot of sense. It wouldn't make sense to call them two different species just because one group has a different coloration to its fur or a little different shape to its head if they are able to have babies together. What species would the babies then be? To look at it in the other direction, if you call the babies "species x", then don't both parents also have to also be "species x"? Animals reproduce after their own kind, after all.

So with that thought in mind, let's suppose that a pestilence hit the earth and killed off all of the dogs on earth except for Chihuahuas and St. Bernards. You know, like the one that killed off the dinosaurs, or the trilobites, or the mammoths, or any of those many other creatures that no longer live on "God's earth". In this scenario, somehow Chihuahuas and St. Bernards just happen to have the right gene or otherwise have immunity to this particular pestilence, so they escape relatively unscathed. So now do you have one species, dogs, or two species, Chihuahuas and St. Bernards? Somehow I think that those Chihuahuas are going to have a bit of a hard time getting it on with the St. Bernards, and I would not expect to see any St. Bernhuahua puppies. So now you have two species, right? So what we have here is evolution. Not natural evolution--rather human-guided evolution--but evolution nevertheless.

So we humans have proven that evolution is real. We have produced it ourselves! So when you religious folks give up your objections to evolution and are willing to start looking at the facts and draw reasonable conclusions from the facts, rather than drawing your conclusions from superstition and trying to make the facts fit your conclusions, then perhaps I will consider your claims about God. However, if you start doing that, then somehow I don't think it will be a question anymore.

Values-based observations (God and Christianity are abhorrent.)

1. The God of the Bible is violent and capricious.

I am a peaceful person. I believe in human rights. I do not believe in violence. I believe, for instance, that we should protect the lives even of little children when they are still living in the womb. The God of the Bible has no such concern. The God of the Bible flooded the entire Earth, killing every person on it, man, woman and child, born or unborn, except for those eight people in that ark. This same God burnt to death every man, woman, and child, born or unborn, in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He killed children for the deeds of their parents (2 Samuel 12:13-18), killed countrymen for the deeds of their king (2 Samuel 24:10-15), and killed children for making fun of a bald man's head (2 Kings 2:23-24). He even killed a man for attempting to save God's Ark of the Covenant from injury (2 Samuel 6:6-7).

When "God's people" entered the land of Canaan he commanded them to brutally slaughter every person--man, woman, and child, born or unborn--in those cities which he "gave" to the people of Israel. (I am, of course, taking great liberties to assume that such accounts are

actually true. Most of them, of course, are not.) They were to show them no pity, no mercy, but to viciously slaughter each and every one.

Personally, I "thank God" that there is not truly any such God as this evil and vicious creature!

2. The Bible is immoral.

When Abraham traveled into a country where he was afraid someone might kill him for his beautiful wife Sarah, he lied and said that Sarah was his sister. (He tried to justify it by claiming that Sarah was actually his half-sister as well as his wife. Hmmm? Marrying his half-sister? How does that strike you?) When the leader of the country took Sarah into his household because he rather took a liking to her, what did God do? He punished Abraham, right? Oh, no. He punished that king's household. When it was found out that Abraham was a coward and a liar, what was the result? He was rewarded with lots of cattle and other goods. (Genesis 20) His son Isaac pulled the same trick (Genesis 26:6-9), and God rewarded him, as well. Cowardice and deceit tend to run in the family, I guess.

Any good Sunday school student is familiar with the story of Jacob and Esau, the two sons of Isaac. Jacob cheated Esau out of his birthright and then out of his father's blessing. Who did God favor and create his great nation from? The cheater.

The Bible gives a clear message that if you lie and cheat God will look favorably upon you, and you will get ahead.

One other little thing about Abraham. When his wife, Sarah, was not able to have children, because, according to the Bible, God had "closed her womb", Sarah had a slave named Hagar and "gave her to her husband" to use her to have children. (Genesis 16:1-4) The slave didn't exactly have a choice, did she? Sound a little bit like rape, does it?

So God chose to create his great nation out of liars, swindlers and rapists. Doesn't that give you a warm feeling right down in the bottom of your heart?

And while we're on the subject of rape, do you happen remember the news reports of a Muslim woman held in prison because she refused to marry the man who had raped her? Well, if you are appalled by such barbaric Muslim traditions, think again. It comes straight from the Bible! (Deuteronomy 22:28-29)

Also, who was the one man that God saved (along with his family) when he destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? Abraham's nephew, Lot, right after he offered his daughters to the town's men to be raped (Genesis 16:6-8).

Aren't you glad God offers us such great examples of morality in his book?

3. Would you send your son or daughter to hell because he or she sinned?

Most parents I know love their children. They would never do anything to intentionally harm them. No matter how "bad" their children turned out, they would still love them and want the best for them. Not so with God. If you commit even the slightest sin ever in your entire life, he is perfectly willing to condemn you to eternal suffering in agony. But just remember while you are there, God is love!

4. It is worth it to God to send billions to hell in order to have a few million in heaven.

According to the Bible, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). The Bible makes it clear that most people are going to hell, and only a few will make it to God's paradise. The rest are going to suffer horribly

in agony forever and all eternity without respite. That didn't stop God from creating mankind and letting him blunder into sin. God doesn't care how many people suffer as long as he has his few to worship and adore him. Not exactly my kind of guy.

5. Good people suffer and die at the hands of bad people. Would you let one of your children kill or hurt another?

Yes, this is the age old question. We look around and ask, "Why do good people suffer and bad people get ahead?" The answer is simple, of course. Those people wouldn't do those bad things if it didn't get them ahead. If those things would hurt them, then obviously they wouldn't do them. They are selfish people, like we all are to at least some degree, and they do what benefits them even if it hurts someone else. Nothing too secret there.

But the question is, "Why does God allow it?" God is in control. Right? He is omnipotent, as well as being a loving God. Right? Why doesn't he step in and do something to stop all the horrible things that people are doing to each other? (For the moment we will ignore all the horrible things that God does to people. That will be the next question.) If you had children, and one of them was going to do terrible things to hurt or kill some of the others, would you just sit back and let it all happen? If one of your children was, for whatever reason and perhaps through no fault of your own, violent and hateful and was about to stalk over to another of your children's houses and kill his or her brother or sister, would you just let that happen? Or would you take whatever actions you could to stop what was about to be perpetrated on the one you love, at least warning him or her so that he or she could avoid the act, and even calling the police, if necessary, to intervene and prevent the one from killing the other? If you would sit back and do nothing while one killed the other you would not have my respect. Neither would your "god" if he acted that way.

6. Why pestilences?

But we know that God isn't satisfied with just letting other people do harm to others. He causes immense suffering and death himself. We already mentioned earthquakes and volcanoes above, but that was just in the context of physics--how it is that they came to be a phenomenon on the peaceful earth that God originally created. Now we must ask why he allows such things to hurt and kill so many people. How many people are hurt and killed by hurricanes, tsunamis, tornadoes, and other "acts of God"? Why does he allow droughts and floods that destroy crops and leave people starving? What of Ebola and AIDS in our age, and "the plague" and the Spanish flu in history? These things only hurt and injure the "bad" people, right? Those who are hurting others. No? Not correct?

Why does God do these things? Once again, would you send such horrible pestilences upon your children just because they had strayed from the way that you thought they should live? I suspect you have more compassion than the "God" that you claim to serve. I sure hope so!

7. Job

I have to make a separate entry just for Job. (If there are any of you out there who aren't familiar with Christian stories or the Bible, that is pronounced "Jobe"; rhymes with "lobe", not like a job, the thing you go to each day to earn money.) Job, of course, was a holy man. Righteous. God-fearing. But that didn't stop God from letting Satan use him as a test subject in an evil experiment. He even encouraged it! "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is

none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (KJV)

So God allowed Satan not only to take away all his riches, but to afflict his body with sore boils so that he suffered daily. Nice way to treat a faithful follower, huh? But that wasn't the worst of it. Not only did God encourage Satan to do all these things to Job himself, he also allowed Satan to kill all of Job's children just to show off to Satan how devoted his follower Job was. All to win his bet with the devil! What a wonderful God, huh? (And if you have a gambling addiction, don't worry; God has the same problem.)

However, perhaps the most interesting thing that you learn is at the end of the story. (You never do learn the answer to why God allows good people to suffer.) At the end, because of Job's faithfulness through all this tragedy, God restores Job's health and all his great fortune. He even allows Job to have children to replace the ones he had lost. So all was well. So, if God encourages Satan to kill your children--don't fret. As long as you are faithful God will give you new ones to replace them, and everything will be swell!

8. If god knew that people would sin so bad that he would have to drown them all, why did he create and then destroy them?

God is omniscient. He knows the beginning from the end. He knows what will take place before it happens. There is nothing that God doesn't know. Right? So he knew before he ever started the project that his creation would turn out badly and that he would feel constrained to kill them all (except for Noah and his seven cohorts) in a huge flood. Did he create them just so he could kill them all? If God is some big goofball who doesn't know what he is doing, then perhaps we could understand that this was just an experiment that didn't work out (although I still have a hard time understanding how he could just kill a whole world full of people. Pretty violent!). But that is not the God of the Christians. He is perfect and knows just what he is doing. He created humans just so he could kill them all. I suspect that even those poor wretched sinners who read this, who would have no way of knowing ahead of time how things would turn out, would not raise a batch of kids and, seeing them turn bad, kill them all off and start over again. But God did it knowing full well ahead of time that he would kill them. Kind of sounds like premeditated murder to me!

9. Can you live with the fact that people you know and love, such as family members, are going to hell? And are you going to live in bliss and happiness for all eternity while they suffer in hell?

Are you a Christian? Do you believe you are going to go to heaven and live in bliss forever? I suspect that you have a least one or two family members or close friends that you love who don't follow the same religious beliefs that you have. Too bad they are going to spend the same eternity in the exact opposite situation--in a "lake of fire", suffering in agony forever and ever. It is such a pity, isn't it? But don't sweat it; before long you won't have to worry about pity. You are going to be in paradise without a care in the, ah, well, heaven, I guess. There will be no tears there. Right? Only pure happiness living in ecstasy with your beloved Lord and Savior. Right?

This reminds me of a cute little story that I just have to throw in here. I was travelling on a bus one day with a bunch of folks, all of whom were probably Christians. I was talking to this one lady who asked me about my parents, whom I told her had died. She asked me, "So are you ever going to see your parents again?" I responded, "No. They're dead." She said, "Oh! That's so sad!"

I didn't actually have a chance to respond to her, because at that very moment someone else on the bus got everybody's attention about something or another, and that was the end of that conversation, and I am not sure just what I would have said on the spur of the moment if our conversation had continued. But I didn't have to think very long later on to realize that what I should have asked her is, "Do you have family, friends or other loved ones who don't follow your religious beliefs?" I'm sure she must know at least one. Then I would have asked her, "So do you believe that person is going to suffer horrible agony in a lake of fire forever and ever while you are enjoying your heavenly paradise?" She would, of course, have to say, "Yes." Then I would simply have said, "Oh! That's so sad!"

Do you really think you can live with the knowledge that, not only will you not see those beloved ones again, but that they are going to suffer and suffer forever while you enjoy your bliss? Is it conceivably possible that you could do that? What about that wayward child of yours? I am sure I could never even start to be happy living in any kind of paradise, knowing that my child who "backslid" away from God was forever suffering in agony. Not only that, but that Lord and Savior that I adore so much sent her there to suffer forever in agony.

Well, maybe I don't adore him quite so much!

10. Christianity has a violent record.

And, of course, we know how being good Christians leads people to do good things, right? Like all those Crusaders who invaded the Holy Land raping, pillaging and plundering! That inquisition that violently rooted out all those terrible "heretics". All those Catholics and Huguenots who butchered each other in the European religious wars. It isn't only the Bible that is violent and immoral. Those Christians who have followed it have continued the violence down through the centuries. We point our fingers at the Muslim extremists who took down the twin towers and commit other acts of terrorism. "Bloody thugs they are"! But they are just trying to get caught up with the Christian record--that's all!

11. God punishes, well, who knows who?

In the last chapter of the book of 2 Samuel in the Bible God punished King David for conducting a census of Israel. Such a horrible sin, you know! What did the punishment consist of? Did David have to go to prison? Was he afflicted with a horrible disease? Did they throw him in stocks and throw rotten tomatoes at him? No. Nothing at all happened to David. No. What happened was that God sent a pestilence through the land that killed 70,000 people. Nice of God to commit mass slaughter because one person sinned!

Why did God stop slaughtering after he reached 70,000? He was grieved because of the calamity! Imagine that--God, sorry for what he had done!

And the real kicker to the whole thing is why David conducted the survey in the first place. Why? Because God "moved David" to do so!

Once again, for more about how violent, immoral and abhorrent the god of the Bible is, download my free book *Unholy Bible: The Unholy and Unreal Parts of the Bible*, at www.WardsBooks.com.

Miscellaneous

1. God scattered humankind when they tried to build a tower to heaven. Why doesn't he do something to stop us today when we have travelled into the heavens?

In Genesis 11 we read that after the flood the people of the earth migrated to a single area and started to build a tower "whose top may reach unto heaven" (a.k.a., the tower of Babel). God was greatly concerned. Apparently he felt threatened that the little creatures called humans on this tiny little planet in his huge universe of billions and billions of stars and planets were somehow going to get out of hand. "[T]his they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do". I am not sure why the great and omnipotent God and creator of the universe considered these little creatures in his creation such a threat, but he did, and he went down and "confounded their languages" so that they would not be able to talk to each other. Therefore, they discontinued their project and spread out over the whole earth.

I suppose one question we would tend to ask is why it is that all the languages of today are interrelated with each other. It is clear that, just like all the different species on earth today, they all evolved from common predecessors. It seems strange that God would create all these different languages and make them all similar enough to others that it looks like they all just evolved from others over time. But, then again, he did the same thing with species in the fossil record, so I will just leave that question aside for the moment.

I suppose one other question one might ask is just what is meant by "reaching heaven". Did God really believe that human beings would be able to build a tower that actually reached out into space? If they were going to build a tower that would "reach unto heaven" I would assume that it would at least be taller than any of the mountains on earth. They are part of the earth, not part of the heavens, right? We know that people cannot even breathe when they reach such heights unless they have supplemental oxygen. The temperatures are extreme. How many people have died trying to reach the peak of Everest? Why was God so concerned that people would build a tower that would "reach unto heaven". However, I will leave that question aside also for the moment.

Another question that comes to my mind is, How did some of those people get to the New World? You know, those "Indians" that Columbus "discovered"? Pretty amazing that they were able to cross the oceans! I don't think they had seafaring ships that could cross an ocean in those days, did they? I doubt they had jet planes? Well, I guess he just picked up some of them and plopped them over there. He is God after all. (But what a baffling story this truly is!)

The thing that I really don't understand, though, is, if God was so concerned about what humans would do if they built a tower that would "reach unto heaven", why hasn't he done anything about the fact that we have travelled to the heavens? We have orbited the earth. We have built a space station in space. We have walked on the moon. It probably won't be all that much longer before we will be walking on Mars. If it was so troubling to God that those humans would "reach unto heaven" and that, if they did so, that there would be nothing that they wouldn't be able to do (They would become gods, I guess.), why hasn't he stopped us from doing this? I guess he must have just fallen asleep when the Apollo missions were going on.

2. Can you possibly believe that a single individual intelligence created this vast universe?

I don't know if there is any way to expand on this question. Somehow, I just don't find it within my being to think that some incredible mind could just suddenly create the billions and billions of sun and planets that extend through the galaxy. If you can believe that you have a far greater imagination than I have.

3. Can you believe that the same being is intimately concerned about your daily activities?

I printed off a picture one day from the internet to take and show to my atheist buddies. It was a sort of a mural, if you will, showing first the earth, then the solar system, then the galaxy, etc., until the whole universe was in the picture. It then showed a final picture of a concerned Jesus bending over it all and reminding us, "Don't masturbate."

I also remember reading somewhere where this guy was talking about a friend of his who had joined a 12-step-type of group to try to control his drinking. 12-step groups, as you may know, talk about relying on God's power to help solve their problem, and this writer was telling how his friend would talk about how God was helping him in his vicious struggle with alcoholism. The writer, however, noted that while he listened to his friend talk he couldn't help think that we live in a world with millions of people suffering from hunger, disease and many other scourges, and thought that it was just a bit audacious of his friend to think that while God is allowing children in Africa and other parts of the world to starve to death, he is nevertheless intimately concerned about this person's success with his drinking problem.

Do people really believe that a God that has a universe of billions and billions of stars and planets to tend to, including Earth with its seven billion humans and growing, is intimately concerned about their individual personal activities? I mean, really?

4. Christians themselves don't believe what they claim to believe.

I don't see why I would want to believe a system of beliefs in which its adherents don't really believe. Why do I think that they don't believe what they are saying? Well, what do Christians believe? Lots of things, of course (or, at least, claim they do), but one of the core beliefs of the Christian faith is that one will go to heaven and live in bliss and joy forever with God when he or she dies. If this afterlife doesn't exist, the Christian belief system just sort of withers away, I believe. But do Christians believe in heaven?

I am reminded of a joke which was actually told to me by the preacher of the church in which I grew up. He seemed to think that it was quite funny, as did I at the time, and I still do. However, what does the joke say? You see, there is this preacher who comes around preaching to children on the street trying to get them "saved". He doesn't seem to be getting across to them, even though he is telling them what a wonderful place heaven is for those who go there. Seeing their seeming reluctance, he asks one of the children, "So, son, don't you want to go to heaven?" The child replies somewhat hesitantly, "Well, yeah. Sure I do. But I thought you were trying to get up a load to go now!" ("Ha-ha. He-he." Funny!)

People have somewhat different reactions when people die. Generally they are ones of sadness--understandably. I didn't hold a big dance party when either of my parents died. Christians might tell you they are sad because their friend or loved one has left them, and they feel a loss, not that they are sad about their friend (assuming he or she was "saved") who is now living joyously in heaven. (Right! I believe that. And I'll take your money anytime for that lot in Florida!) However, there is one reaction that I have never in my life seen from any Christian or person of other faith: "Damn! Why couldn't it have been my turn!"

Well, you do believe that heaven is a place of incredible wonder, joy and bliss. Right? It is way, way better than anything that this earth has to offer. Right? So it would be only natural to feel just a little bit envious. Right? You remember when your friend took that two-week vacation to tour Europe. (Unless you live in Europe. Then maybe they were touring the U.S.) Come on, admit it! I know you were happy for your friend, but you also felt just a little bit of envy at the same time. Right? Don't try to deny it, now! Or perhaps you yourself permanently moved to

some place that you really wanted to move to. During the last few weeks before you moved you could hardly think of anything else. Right? You just couldn't wait to get there! You were anxious indeed. Hard to concentrate on your work when you were dreaming of the exciting new life that lied ahead. Remember?

Yes, when you have an exciting new adventure to look forward to you are just "biting at the chomp" to get there. Right? And heaven is way, way better than anything down here on earth. Right?

Hmmm. But it's not quite so with heaven! Hmmm. Perhaps heaven isn't quite the incredibly wonderful place that it's made out to be. At least, perhaps you don't believe it is. Well, if you don't believe it, perhaps I won't either.

For nine other examples of how Christians don't really believe what they claim, take my Are You A True Believer quiz found in the last chapter of my aforementioned *Unholy Bible: The Unholy and Unreal Parts of the Bible*.

5. Jesus was a false prophet.

Okay, you have to understand properly what I am saying here. It's not that I actually believe in prophets. They're just as real as God is (or Santa Clause, or the Tooth Fairy, ...). But if we assume for the sake of argument that there are indeed prophets who are sent by god, then the Bible gives us a clear test by which we can tell the true prophets from the false prophets. In Deuteronomy 18 God states, "And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously." Of course, this is a "no lose" scenario for god, who simply takes credit for those things that go right and denies those things that go wrong, but, nevertheless, this is the test the Bible applies.

So how does Jesus fare in this test? In Matthew 16 he stated, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." I defy anyone to show me alive any of the people who heard him say this! If it is even true that there was a person named Jesus who made such a statement, any of those listening to him say it "tasted of death" a long, long time ago. So by the test that God gave to determine if a prophet is truly speaking his words, Jesus fails. He is clearly a false prophet by the Bible's standards.

6. Experience.

Okay, I saved the best for last--my own personal story. Let me tell you about all the joys and wonders I have experienced at God's hands. Oh, did I forget to tell you that I used to be a Christian? Oh no, not one of those half-way Christians that flood our beloved country. I was a *real* one. I was the "Bible boy" in high school who carried my Bible (God's precious word, you know) to every class. I probably knew more scripture verses that I could throw at you than most preachers did. Hey, I ate it up! Yes, I was the one telling all the others how wonderful it was to be one of God's own. There was only one problem ...

It wasn't!

After years of reading my Bible, praying, going to church and telling others how they needed to get "saved", there was just one problem: Where was this God that I claimed to be serving? You know, that personal God who loves me and has great plans for me, the one that I am supposed to have that great communion with, the one I tried to tell other people that I had this

personal relationship with, the one for whom I lived and upon whom I depended for direction so that I could spend my life "doing his will". Yeah, that guy! Well, it just seemed that he was off on vacation--a very long vacation--long enough that I never got to meet him.

Yeah, it just seems that God didn't really have any plan for my life. He just kind of forgot us little fellows out in "the burg". (I grew up in a little town called Phippsburg.) No use for us, I guess.

Okay, maybe you think I'm just a goofball who just likes to crack up and make jokes about things other people consider "sacred". But this is serious. Listen to me, especially if you are a young person about to "cast your life upon God". In my fifteen or twenty years of "serving God" I learned one thing: there is no such thing. There is no reality to it, my friend. God never spoke to me. God never directed me. God never did anything either good or bad to me. I was as serious of a young believer in God and "follower of Christ" as you will ever meet, and I can tell you it isn't real. I only regret that I wasted such an important part of my life having to figure that out. But maybe you won't have to waste yours. I wish I could at least say that it was a harmless episode that I just moved beyond and am now living a perfectly recovered and wonderful life. Unfortunately, that isn't exactly the case. "Jesus" really screwed up my life. (Of course, it wasn't "Jesus". There is no such being, so he could not possibly do anything. It was my following of a superstition that was handed down to me that screwed it up.)

As just one example, after I embarked on a different path in life I decided to go back to school and get my college degree. I have great interest in science (What else? Once you drop the superstitious stuff, you kinda want to know where real knowledge comes from.), so I ended up getting a degree in biology (another thing you young folks might want to avoid if you actually want to get a job when you graduate). I swear I am the stupidest biologist or scientist of any kind. Why? Well, I don't think it's because I am just naturally stupid. I do tend to get A's and score well on IQ-type tests. But I am sure it has a lot to do with the fact that I just didn't pay a whole lot of attention to science when I was young. I didn't take chemistry or physics in high school. Why not? That is a damn good question. It had a lot to do with the fact that I had "God". When you are "in" with the creator of the universe, what do you need science for? I mean, my friend Jesus, he made all those rules that scientists are working to figure out. Why did I need to bother with the amateurs when I had it in with the head guy?

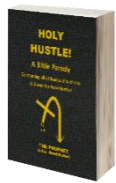
What I am saying is that my religious beliefs essentially squelched my curiosity, my interest in learning. When you have all the answers you need in one neat little book there just isn't a whole lot of need to look further. Instead of being an inquisitive young person asking lots of questions and trying to figure it out and looking for new ways to broaden my horizons and my awareness, I just settled for "the book", the word of "my Lord and Savior". That put me way behind, even if my grades may have looked good. Years down the road, going back to school and trying to make sense of things when you never made sense of the things that other 12 or 13 year-olds learned way back there, that is hard.

Please, whether you are young or old, no matter what your background is, who your parents are, where you live or any other factor, before you launch your "soul" into any kind of religion or belief system, make sure you know why you are doing it. Just because you were brought up that way, just because it makes you feel good, just because it provides you with a social network, just because your friends or family are there--those are not reasons to throw your life upon some mysterious claim that someone back in yonder centuries thought might explain the universe. Believe whatever you will, but make sure you have good reason for believing what you believe. Are you going to buy that lot in Florida from me? Not without clear assurance that

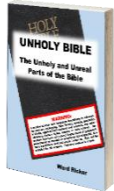
Why I Do Not Believe in God or the Bible

you are getting what you pay for, right? Demand at least as much when you are going to base your whole life on something.

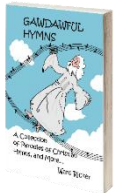
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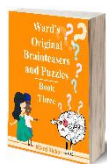
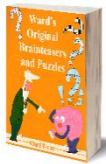
Holy Hustle! A Bible Parody – A humorous and irreverent take on the so-called “word of god”. Sure to bring many a laugh (if you have a sense of humor about religious matters)!



Unholy Bible: The Unholy and Unreal Parts of the Bible – A FREE book! Lists the many contradictions and other parts of the Bible that your pastor or priest would rather you didn't know.



Godawful Hymns – A collection of over 300 songs which I wrote, mostly as parodies of Christian hymns. Also sure to bring a laugh or two.



Ward's Original Brainteasers and Puzzles – A three-book series of tantalizing questions and puzzles to challenge your thinking.



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