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Conversation with an Agnostic

By Freddy Davis

I find it extremely fascinating how people view certain of my videos on YouTube and proceed to attack me using the very principles they attack me for. Essentially, they attack me for promoting beliefs which cannot be demonstrated by empirical science using beliefs which cannot be demonstrated by empirical science. For the most part, people who do that are Atheists who think their atheistic beliefs are not really beliefs at all, but are facts established in settled science. Obviously that is not true, but they believe it and cannot see the contradiction in their attack.

Below is another of these conversations. This one is an attack on a video which is nothing more than a short explanation of a theistic worldview (<http://www.marketfaith.org/2011/09/what-is-theism>). As you will see, the attacker in this conversation has no clue regarding the internal contradictions in his own assertions. He is, literally, all over the place and does all kinds of contortions to try and get out of the holes he has dug for himself.

It is my hope that in reading this conversation you will gain more insight into how to recognize this kind of contradiction when people try to do this to you. It is my prayer that you will also be able to become more effective at standing up for your Christian faith in the face of these kinds of attacks.

Kore Sesa

Mr. Davis, I sincerely want to know why you think anyone should believe that God "revealed" his/her word to Paul of Tarsus and other bible writers but that they should not believe it when it comes to the

Quran, the Dhammapada, the Bhagavad Gita, Tao Te Ching, or Oracles of Delphi, Mormon bible, Kemetic sacred text, etc...

Freddy Davis

Kore, actual reality is structured in a particular way and it is not structured in any other way. If you would make the effort to study the various texts you have referred to, you would find that there are serious problems with all of them as it relates to the way they describe reality. The Bible does not have those kinds of issues. That is part one of an answer to your question.

The other part of the answer is more personal. God has not simply given to us a book. What has been revealed in the book is an actual person (God). It points us to him and shares with us who he is and how we can know him. But it is up to each individual to open up his or her life to actually come to know him in a personal relationship. It is, ultimately, the relationship which expresses the revelation. You don't come to know the book, you come to know God. The book is merely a guide to do that.

As for why anyone should believe, they should believe because it is true. I personally believe because I have come to know that truth in my personal relationship with God..

Kore Sesa

A.) The Dhammapada and Tao actually accord with reality FAR more than literal interpretation of the bible (talking snake, a man living inside a fish for 3 days, sacrifice of a virgin to appease the God...etc). If you take the bible figuratively, you are on equal footing

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with those who regard any other sacred text as allegorical.

B.) The bible is rooted in oral tradition and has been through several permutations through the centuries. So, if the eternal destiny of all humanity really depends upon acceptance of this message, aren't there more convincing ways for God to reveal himself to modern man than by playing "telephone" using highly superstitious Bronze Age, Iron Age and first century cultures?

C.) You state that the bible is "true" but have provided no objectively verifiable evidence pertaining to its veracity. That's like saying you believe in Bigfoot or have been abducted by aliens. Even if many others agree, it's still only hearsay. Please provide OBJECTIVE not SUBJECTIVE proof.

Freddy Davis

Really? You have listed two texts which present a vision of reality which, by their own teachings, cannot even be known intellectually. Then (in C) you ask me to provide you with objectively verifiable evidence pertaining to the veracity of my belief system? That is rich. Based on this alone, your attack on me is a joke. The very starting place of your argument has built in contradictions which cannot be reconciled, which makes what you have said rather meaningless. Which do you believe - a naturalistic or a pantheistic/monistic approach to understanding reality?

As far as the nature of the Bible, it is hard to even know where to start. You have made some broad generalizations to characterize the history of the text, the methodology of God in giving his revelation, and the motivations of God for making his revelation the way he did. As far as your characterization of the text, you are simply wrong. What do you

even mean "has been through several permutations?" There is an entire academic discipline which tracks the historical progression of the biblical text. Perhaps you should get up to speed. As far as God's revelatory methodology, what makes you capable of judging his approach? How do you even know that your "telephone" analogy is even correct? What special abilities do you have to see into transcendent reality. Finally, who are you to judge the motivations of God?

Yours is a pretty arrogant post based on nothing more than your own personal unsupported assertions and unsubstantiated opinions about the nature of God and the nature of reality (with a little bit of misunderstanding of the facts of history thrown in). I am very interested, first of all, for you to spell out how you think reality is actually structured (you have indicated that you know), and how you know that what you have said is true. Give me a reason to take you seriously.

Kore Sesa

"Really? You have listed two texts which present a vision of reality which, by their own teachings, cannot even be known intellectually." - - No sir, Dhammapada essentially teaches cause and effect between thoughts, actions and outcomes as well as wisdom and ethics. All this can be tested and observed in real life. Tao is also very philosophical and advises on ethics and wisdom but more poetically styled. I wonder if you've actually read and studied these texts?

"Then (in C) you ask me to provide you with objectively verifiable evidence pertaining to the veracity of my belief system?" - - Yes sir, but you seem to be avoiding by attempting to shift the burden of proof.

"That is rich. Based on this alone, your attack on me is a joke. The very starting place of your argument has built in contradictions which cannot be recon-

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ciled, which makes what you have said rather meaningless. Which do you believe - a naturalistic or a pantheistic/monistic approach to understanding reality?" - - Interesting that you view being asked to provide evidence for your claims as a personal attack. My view of reality is based in science and rational philosophy that can be tested and observed.

"As far as the nature of the Bible, it is hard to even know where to start. You have made some broad generalizations to characterize the history of the text, the methodology of God in giving his revelation, and the motivations of God for making his revelation the way he did. As far as your characterization of the the text, you are simply wrong." - - So the bible is NOT based in oral tradition and was NOT authored by people of Bronze Age, Iron Age and first century cultures? And superstition was not a prominent feature of these pre-scientific revolution cultures? And God did not give his "revelation" for the benefit of humanity?

"What do you even mean 'has been through several permutations?' " - - Permutation means to change or rearrange. Gone from oral to written to transcription and language translation to a myriad of English editions. Not to mention a 'not very clear' and non-unanimous canonization process which was decided by human vote.

"As far as God's revelatory methodology, what makes you capable of judging his approach? How do you even know that your "telephone" analogy is even correct? What special abilities do you have to see into transcendent reality. Finally, who are you to judge the motivations of God?" - - Sir, I am simply making observations and asking reasonable questions. Modern man requires solid evidence. Non of which you have provided.

"Yours is a pretty arrogant post based on nothing more than your own personal unsupported assertions and unsubstantiated opinions about the nature of God and the nature of reality (with a little bit of misunderstanding of the facts of history thrown in)." - - Then please enlighten me with thy bountiful trove of knowledge oh teacher of truth! For I thirst but thou have only responded with incredulity instead provided EVIDENCE for thine grand assertions.

"I am very interested, first of all, for you to spell out how you think reality is actually structured (you have indicated that you know), and how you know that what you have said is true." - - Science and reason.

"Give me a reason to take you seriously?" - - Beside the fact that I really want to know why you believe what you believe, God told you to answer me. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. - 1 Peter 3:15

Thanks in advance!

Freddy Davis

Do you realize that the Dhammapada is a Buddhist text? Do you know what Buddhists believe? Do you realize that the Tao uses the same underlying philosophical principle as Buddhism and believes that knowledge of life is only "intuitive" and cannot be grasped otherwise. That is the exact opposite of your claim that we can only know things through science and reason. So which is it for you? It can't be both since the presuppositions of the two different worldview systems that you have put forth as representing reality literally contradict one another. Yet you posit them both as representations of reality.

And, you are doggone right I have shifted the burden of proof. You stroll in here attacking my worldview beliefs using a set of worldview beliefs which is incoherent because of its internal contradictions. Why would I conceivably accept your assertions about me when they are coming from a place which simply cannot even be true? I did not and I will not.

As for the part of your view of reality that is supposedly based on science and rational thought, it simply is not. Your approach is based on a belief system which asserts that the material universe is all that exists. With that as a starting point, science and reason is all you can conceivably posit. The only problem is, how do you know that the natural universe is all there is? What evidence do you have of that which can be demonstrated by your own requirements of having to be proven by science and reason. There is no science that can account even for the existence of the natural universe. Everything you have put forth is based on a faith system. What you are saying is only true if you can prove by experimental science that it is possible for the natural universe to have come into being from nothing or that it is eternal. I will be very interested to see your data.

As for the origin of teachings which ultimately made their way to a written text, I never indicated that the origin was not in oral tradition. But so what? Are you saying that the people who passed it on before it was written down made it up? What evidence do you have of that? You have made characterizations based on assumptions that you have not, and cannot, demonstrate to be true (another betrayal of your own principles). And your characterization of the transmission of the text after it was written down, as well as what came to be the biblical canon, is simply wrong. I indicated this before, but you really need to go back and do some study on this.

But to get to the bottom line, you are trying to interpret data about Biblical Theism through the lens of a naturalistic worldview. To do that is simply absurd and it makes your entire argument invalid.

As for why I believe what I believe? God is an objectively real person who has revealed himself not only propositionally, but also personally. Anyone who opens their life to him can come to know him in a personal relationship. I have done that and it is possible even for you if you are willing.

I hope that thou hast now been enlightened, oh seeker, by my bountiful trove of knowledge.

Kore Sesa

Lol! I'm truly happy to see some humor there with that last comment! However, thy trove has been found to be barren as thou hast merely alluded to the teleological argument for the existence of God but nothing objective to prove that thine God is the one and only true God. I am happy that you feel you have a personal relationship with your God as I am for anyone else of other religions feel the same way about their God. You simply have not substantiated your claim that the bible is "true".

To be clear, I NEVER said that I personally BELIEVE Buddhist or Taoist views. You seem stuck on what those religions believe and seem to have mistaken them for my views. I only said that they offer a MORE realistic view of reality than the bible. Even if I'm wrong about that, it still does NOT prove that the bible is really "god's word" nor does it matter that it conflicts with my stated views (science and reason).

The common flaw of ALL "revealed" religion is that it's only hearsay unless it can be proven objectively. The original point of this conversation was to give you the opportunity to support your premiss. Instead of doing that, you spend more time getting side tracked from the main issue. When you do state why you believe, you only assert "propositional and personal" reasons. That is quite a weak argument sir. Nonetheless, I sincerely thank you for trying but I see that you can offer no more OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE than any other theistic religion has to offer.

Freddy Davis

Yeah, that was pretty funny, wasn't it? :-)

So, from your subjective point of view concerning the nature of reality, you are calling my view non-objective? Do you not realize that your Naturalism is a faith position? You have NO objective evidence that the material universe is all that exists.

I really am entertained when people like yourself attack me for not having "objective evidence" while basing their attack on a set of presuppositions which do not even meet the standards they demand of me.

You have misspoken, however. There is objective evidence for the truth of the Christian faith. It is just that based on your naturalistic presuppositions, you will not acknowledge it. What you really meant, how-

ever, was that there is no objective "proof" (meaning repeatable experimental evidence). Your problem is, there is no experimental proof for any worldview belief system - including your own. That does not, however, correlate with whether or not it is true. There is an actual way reality is structured and it is not structured any other way - even though it is impossible from our position in the natural universe to prove it empirically.

The fact that you have rejected God does not mean he does not exist. All it means is that you have not been willing to look in the place where he exists - even though he has revealed himself.

I do understand that you never said you believed in Buddhist or Taoist views. However, since you put them forth as being closer to the structure of reality than the Christian faith, I figured that you must have had some empirically verifiable way of knowing that (since your naturalistic faith requires that kind of verification). The truth is, you believe in your naturalistic religion based on a blind faith that does not correspond with the presuppositions of that religion. Must be kind of hard to reconcile that.

Kore Sesa

It seems that you have falsely jumped to the conclusion that I reject the existence of God. In fact, I do not reject the existence of God. Due to lack of sufficient proof or evidence and reason, I lean towards rejection of the existence of a "theistic" God (including but not limited to the God of the bible). Also, I don't claim to have the answers, so why do you even bother trying to discredit what you think I believe as if it somehow would make your belief true???

Since you can not ADEQUATELY "prove" or provide SUFFICIENT evidence for your positive statements that the bible is true and El/Yahweh is indeed the one true God... you resort to trying to shift the burden of proof. How does this help your case? Again, I have made no positive statement that requires a burden of proof. I am only asking questions, not asserting any absolute epistemological claim. The burden of proof is STILL on you sir but it's clear that you can not meet it. Thanks for trying though.

Freddy Davis

Do you not realize the absurdity of what you have just written. First you made a really big deal of saying you won't believe anything that cannot be demonstrated by science and reason, and now you turn around and indicate you believe in some kind of God (just not a

theistic one). Since Naturalism does not allow for any kind of transcendent reality, that means you must believe in a non-theistic God. And since you have already dismissed a pantheistic approach to understanding transcendent reality, all that leaves is an animistic approach. But that would also be silly because that also cannot be explained using science and reason. On top of that, you are still requiring me to "prove or provide sufficient evidence" for my beliefs but are still not willing to apply the same requirements to your own. In fact, you keep changing what "evidence" even means. Yes, you are doggone right that I am going to chafe against that. If you can't live up to your own standards, I am certainly not willing to acknowledge that your criticism is even valid. In fact, the more you write the less sense you make.

And seriously? You up front admit that "I don't claim to have the answers," yet you attack my beliefs? If you don't have the answers, then on what basis do you say I am wrong? I'm sorry, but your assertions about reality are simply nonsense. And your disclaimer that you have made no positive statement that requires a burden of proof and that you are only asking questions is false on its face.

The truth is, the God of the Bible is an objectively real person who has revealed himself. He has done it propositionally and he has done it personally. The fact that you are not willing to even to look where he says he is demonstrates the disingenuous nature of your attack on my video. God does exist and he can be known. Whether or not you honestly look in his direction is your choice, and it is you who must live with the results of your choice.

Kore Sesa

- 1.) Nothing absurd about requiring proof for belief.
- 2.) You again jump to a false conclusion by assuming that I must believe in a non-theistic god. I said due to lack of proof, I "LEAN towards rejection of a theistic-god." You are desperate to apply a label. I simply don't know. You could say "agnostic" since I have not completely rejected the possibility of a god. If there is a god, I think "deism" would accord better with reason than "theism".
- 3.) You say that my disclaimer is false, but you are wrong again. I am a seeker and I see no other way to ascertain truth than to ask questions.
- 4.) It's unfortunate that you see any challenge to your beliefs as an "attack" instead of an opportunity to

actually support your claim. You fall back on the generic rhetoric of "proposition" and "personal" that other theistic religions also claim. Also, you resist acknowledging any criticism because I'm not trying to prove a position of my own??? That's irrational. Proving your own position should not be contingent upon disproving mine.

5.) You are egregiously wrong again when you judge me without knowledge by calling me disingenuous by saying that I will not look where you claim that god has revealed himself. You do not know me sir. I grew up with the bible and was a christian for decades. I just see no real reason to believe it any longer and want to know if there is any "proof" that I missed. This is why I initiated this conversation. All you have done is make false assumption after false assumption about me while NOT sufficiently backing your claim.

Freddy Davis

1) Except you exempt yourself. If you play that game you are a hypocrite.

2) You again say you have no clue yet you persist in attacking a different position as if you really did know something. Agnosticism is practical Atheism. You operate "as if" there is no God and do not do the one thing that would show you the truth. And why would you even consider Deism? There is less evidence for that kind of God than there is a biblical one - and there is no way to even get at that. It is a total dead end. Desperate to apply a label? If you can't identify something, you can't affirm or discount a thing. It looks to me like you are desperate to avoid knowing the possibilities with the hope that you can avoid responsibility for your choices. Sorry, but it just doesn't work that way.

3) Your only problem is, you refuse to act on your seeking. Asking questions only has meaning if you are willing to actually explore the possibilities. You are only willing to seek according to your own thoughts. You have chaffed at every answer I have given.

4) A couple of things. First, disproving yours eliminates a possibility. Disproving others eliminates other possibilities. I guess you don't believe in the process of elimination. Second, I have given support to my position. The fact that you reject what I say out of hand is not on me. Also, I do acknowledge your criticism. The only problem with your criticism is that all of it is based on demonstrably false logic. Now that's irrational.

5) The only thing I have to respond to is what you have said. You have over and over again contradicted yourself and when I call you on it you move in a different direction. The disingenuous part is not me judging your motives, but your bouncing all over the place with your claims. It is not personal with me. I am only reacting to your changing positions. Your biggest problem is that when you set aside your Christian faith, you substituted a different faith for it - one that has giant problems that you are seemingly not willing to acknowledge. While you may not realize it, your criticism of Christianity is based on the acceptance of a set of presuppositions which are simply not true (and I have explained that several times in this string). And as evidence of that, you continue to insist that I prove Christianity based on your non-Christian, non-theistic presuppositions. You simply can't have it both ways. You may have been raised in a Christian environment, but you obviously never really grasped the foundational elements of a Christian worldview. A Christian worldview is based in relationship, and until you enter the relationship you simply will not be able to grasp the concept.

Let me suggest something for you. You need to come to understand the various worldview possibilities so you will know what presuppositions you are working from. Then you need to examine the strengths and weaknesses of each (something I have been trying to share with you). Then you will be in a position to actually come to a logical conclusion (BTW: the MarketFaith Ministries website is full of material which deals with that topic). Until you do that, you will continue to chase rabbits. I hope this helps.

Kore Sesa

I have not changed my position because I have not taken one except saying I don't know. What I have rejected is the unsound reasoning that you've presented. All I can say at this point is thanks for the conversation. At least you responded as best you could.

Freddy Davis

Your response is very strange. You have said several times, and again here, that you don't know what truth is, then turn right around and say my reasoning is unsound. How can you make that judgment if you don't have any idea what is sound and what is unsound?

The fact is, you have changed your position. You began this whole diatribe asserting the correspondence with reality of the Dhammapada and Tao and asserting how science and reason could get us to truth. Then, in your more recent posts you have said you really don't know what you believe. I am sure you don't know what you believe, but you are also rejecting outright anything I am saying because, presumably, you just don't want to go there. Well, that is your choice, but it is not because of my explanation, it is because of your choice. But don't feel alone. There are many others who also choose to live their lives in that kind of darkness.

Kore Sesa

Your response is very strange. You have said several times, and again here, that you don't know what truth is, then turn right around and say my reasoning is unsound. How can you make that judgment if you don't have any idea what is sound and what is unsound?" - - Your claim that God is revealed propositionally and personally can't be validated any more than that of other theists who make the same claim. It is only hearsay, (along with all other revealed religions) therefore it is unsound as a basis for belief. You seem to suggest that the bible corresponds to reality. How can any rational thinking person accept the idea of a talking snake or a dude living inside a fish for 3 days...etc, as corresponding to reality? This is never happens in real life, therefore science and reason dictate that such belief is unsound.

"The fact is, you have changed your position. You began this whole diatribe asserting the correspondence with reality of the Dhammapada and Tao and asserting how science and reason could get us to truth." - - Untrue sir. I said those texts are MORE realistic IN COMPARISON to literal interpretation of the bible (Light and "day and night" created BEFORE the sun, wooden staffs turning into snakes and eating each other lol...etc) NOT that they actually correspond to reality. As for how I determine reality in my daily life, I find that science and reason are a better means than any religion. That's not a change in position sir.

"Then, in your more recent posts you have said you really don't know what you believe." - - Congrats, when it comes to God, this is the closest you've come to accurately representing my actual claim! applause Lol

Yes, "agnostic" literally means "without knowledge". So again, I NEVER, claimed that I had definitive answers to questions about God. Saying I don't know isn't a change of position because I never said otherwise. Lol

"I am sure you don't know what you believe, but you are also rejecting outright anything I am saying because, presumably, you just don't want to go there." - - All you've said is that I'm wrong and the bible is true and tried to validate that statement based on personal experience. I've actually been there and done that. Saying I'm wrong to be agnostic does nothing to add support to your claim. How does that line of reasoning give your claim any more validity than other theists who the same thing?

Perhaps you will again say "reality is constructed in a certain way and not any other way"? If you would be so kind, please explain the "certain way" in which you think reality is constructed. You've said that many times but never explained it.

"Well, that is your choice, but it is not because of my explanation, it is because of your choice." - - I'm making a choice not to believe ancient hearsay documents. Jesus could easily manifest himself and speak to me in person right now (as he is said to have done with the reasonably skeptical Thomas and Saul) but chooses not to. Got it. :)

"But don't feel alone. There are many others who also choose to live their life in that kind of darkness.?" - - Wow! What a flippant, snarky remark to underscore your 1 Peter 3:15 "gentleness and respect". Well done sir! At least you don't pretend to actually give a damn about me spending eternity in hell (supposing you actually believe in eternal hell) LOL! As you said before, it's not personal to you. I get it... you can say you

offered "propositional" and "personal" claims (just as other theistic religions also claim) and rest easy. I always knew "truth seasoned with grace" isn't a standard feature among Christians. Anyhow, that's not what I'm really after here. All I care about is proof/evidence beyond "propositional" and "personal" rhetoric. However you've made it clear that you can't provide that either. ;-)

Freddy Davis

I hate it when people mischaracterize both my words and my motives, but alas, that is pretty standard fare for people who come to my site and make attacks on what I say in the videos.

First of all, I was not being snarky and flippant. I do, indeed care about whether or not you spend eternity in the presence of God. That said, I have no control over that. All I have done is acknowledge the fact that what ultimately happens concerning your eternity is in your hands, not mine. All I can do is share the truth with you.

As for the rest of your post, you really don't get it, do you? There is no such thing as empirical proof for ANY belief system - yours or mine. But that does not mean there is no evidence to support the truth about the way reality is structured.

Here is the problem. You are asking me to provide empirical proof that can be demonstrated based on empirical science for something that transcends material reality and is not subject to the laws of nature. But when you make that demand, you are making it based on a set of beliefs which requires empirical verification but which has none. That is, your own belief has no empirical proof to back it up. You have made up the requirements of your demand out of whole cloth and it does not even meet the requirements of your own belief system. You are all over me for believing something that can't be verified in a science lab, and you have done it using beliefs that cannot be verified in a science lab. Do you really not get the irony of that? How do you know that the material universe is all that exists? And if you say, again, you don't know, then on what basis can you possibly call me wrong? The entire foundation of your argument is a sink hole.

As for your problem with various miraculous events that are recorded in the Bible, if God really does exist and he is active in his creation, then miracles are no problem at all. You, again, assert you do not know if God exists, but you attack me and my argument based on the belief that they are impossible - a non-verifiable belief, BTW. You simply can't have it both ways. If you know your beliefs are true, then prove it using empirical science. If you don't know, then where do you get off saying my beliefs are wrong? You see, even science and reason operate within a context. Science (which is a methodology, not a belief) operates strictly based on the natural laws of the universe. Reason operates within the context of the worldview beliefs which inform it. So, if you want your arguments to be taken seriously, you have to prove, using empirical methods, that your naturalistic worldview is true. That is what Naturalism requires. But you simply cannot do it.

Now, back to the idea of evidence to support truth. There is all kinds of evidence to support the truth of the Christian message: the resurrection of Christ and eyewitness testimony just to name a couple. The truth is, there is an entire academic discipline devoted just to this topic. If you are really interested in that, there are hundreds of books, videos and other resources available. But you are not interested. You have already said you are not and have simply dismissed any non-naturalistic belief out of hand. With that kind of a closed mind, there is not really much else I can say.

You see, the problem is not with the evidence but with the willingness of a person to accept the evidence. Since you have already made up your mind that you are going to follow your naturalistic beliefs (in spite of the fact that you have, numerous times, said you don't know), I don't know what else to say to you. You won't accept my beliefs, not because of a lack of evidence, but because you have, out of hand and without any objective reason, decided that you don't want to.

God does exist and I know him. Knowing him is evidence (even though you won't acknowledge it). It is personal evidence. And it is not only me, there have been literally millions across many cultures and throughout time who have come to know him. Ultimate reality is personal, not intellectual as you are trying to

insist. God loves you and wants you to enter a relationship with him. But until you are willing to open yourself to the possibility, it can't happen. You are the one who decides that.

Kore Sesa

"God loves you and wants you to enter a relationship with him. But until you are willing to open yourself to the possibility, it can't happen. You are the one who decides that." - - I have decided to be open to the possibility. But if God is theistic, he/she must know that I am like Thomas. The reason Thomas is said to have doubted the resurrection is because Jesus is said to have appeared to all the apostles EXCEPT for Thomas. Even though others claimed "personal " experience, Thomas had not had the experience himself, therefore his skepticism was reasonable. I am no different. My skepticism is also reasonable based on the fact that Jesus presumably CAN manifest in front of me right now...but inexplicably chooses not to. I am in no way blaming you for Jesus' choice not to manifest in front of me. But since you say you have a personal relationship with him, maybe you could ask him to do that for me. That's what it will take for me to believe. Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. Presumably, this is easy for God to accomplish. I'm open to it. If he/she wants a relationship with me he/she knows where to find me.

Freddy Davis

I don't mean this to sound mean, truly, but that is one of the most arrogant statements anyone could make. God is not the one in need of spiritual salvation, you are. And you don't get to determine how God will reveal himself. You are right, he could do it any way he wants, but he has no obligation to let you dictate to him how that will be.

There is a story in the Bible that Jesus told about a rich man and Lazarus. Perhaps you know the story. The rich man was a bad man on earth and Lazarus was a godly man, but very poor. Both died. Because Lazarus knew God, he went to heaven. The rich man, because he did not know God, went to hell. In the story, the rich man called out for God to rescue him from his torment. God told him that in life, he made his choice and now it was irreversible. Then he asked God to send someone from the dead to his family so they would believe because surely having someone appear from the dead would convince them. At that point God spoke of the nature of humanity (and this speaks to your situation). He told the rich man that people are fickle when it comes to belief in God and that those who choose to live separated from him will not be convinced even if someone from the dead confronted them.

If you were truly sincere about wanting to know God, you would not be making demands or putting conditions on him. You would not be insisting that God bow to your will. Rather, you would open your life to him and allow him to demonstrate through the relationship that he is who he said he is. Free will is an actual reality and God will not violate your will. Indeed he does know where you are. Additionally, he loves you, he desires that you enter into a relationship with him, he has provided a way for that to happen and he has revealed the means. But he will not violate your will. Truly, the choice is yours. You cannot slough off the responsibility for your life on God or anyone else.

Kore Sesa

Yes, I'm familiar with the parable. To my memory it didn't say that the rich man was bad or that Lazarus was good... only that when Lazarus died he went to "the bosom of Abraham" and the rich man went to torment in flames. It doesn't say why. It says nothing about Lazarus accepting Jesus. I get your point though. It's not that I think God needs me. It's just that I must have irrefutable evidence in order to believe the bible stories. If God would rather send me to hell due to my failure to accept inconclusive evidence, then that is not love. On the other hand, if God really does love me and wants relationship, there is nothing stopping him/her from meeting me where I am. Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. I'm not really asking for much (in terms of God's ability). I really do believe that you mean well. I wish you well sir.

Freddy Davis

I find it amazing that you require irrefutable evidence when it come to faith in God, but you have no such requirement when it comes to irrefutable evidence that only the natural universe exists. There is no evidence whatsoever that naturalistic worldview beliefs are true yet you swallow them hook line and sinker - and

Naturalism itself requires that kind of proof. Well, you keep telling God what he must do for you to be willing to accept him. Maybe he will decide he wants to serve you.

Kore Sesa

Why do you keep using the "straw man" fallacy by falsely labeling me a "naturalist"? Please show me where I said the natural universe is all that exists. I've clearly and repeatedly indicated that I'm agnostic in that regard (meaning I'm unsure but can be convinced with evidence). If I wasn't clear enough before, I'd like to reiterate that as far as the reality of the universe that we actually live in, science and reason are my only guides. At the risk of "mischaracterizing" your words, I do not want God to serve me any more than Thomas did.

Freddy Davis

Seriously? I have not set up a straw man. Rather, you are misusing the word agnostic to avoid responsibility for your beliefs. You have said repeatedly that the only evidence you will accept is for God to visibly appear to you. Your requirement is a naturalistic proof! Even in this post you state again that "science and reason" are your only guides." You can call yourself agnostic all you want, but by any practical measure you are a Naturalist. In real life, what you are is not what you say your are but is what you actually live by. If you were something other than a Naturalist, you would accept a different kind of evidence.

By requiring God to appear to you in a particular way, you are requiring that he bow to your will.

Kore Sesa

when I say agnostic, all I mean is "I don't know" about stuff that I have no direct knowledge of or experience with (in this case, some sort non material reality). Truth is, I'm open to new knowledge and experience with a possible non material reality. But until then, I can only go by what I know and experience now. To be a naturalist, I would have to exclude even the possibility of there being more than the natural universe.

If taking the words "ask and you shall receive" at face value (as I'm doing now) is requiring God to "bow to my will", then it's obviously by invitation.

Freddy Davis

Well, just in case you really are interested, here are a couple of articles I have written to help you down that path. These were written to help Christians who are interested in sharing their faith with others, but contains the info that you would need to know if you are interested in meeting God in a personal relationship.

The first one can be found at: <http://www.marketfaith.org/2015/04/what-you-need-to-know-christian-worldview-context>. This one will give you a big picture understanding of what a Christian worldview looks like. Some of the things you have said previously about Christianity reflect beliefs which are not part of biblical Christianity. This should help you get oriented.

The second article is at: <http://www.marketfaith.org/2015/04/what-you-need-to-know-gospel-presentation>. This one is more of a step-by-step understanding about how you would actually move toward entering that relationship.

And, of course, I am open to any questions you might have further.
Blessings.

Conclusion

As is almost always the case in these kinds of conversations, this person finally seems to recognize the hopelessness of his position and finally just quits writing. It is my sincere hope and prayer that this will end up being seed sown in his life that, at some point, someone will be able to harvest for Christ.

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