

A response to an Atheist's fallacious nonsense

1. I just know that God exists
2. You're really just an agnostic
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10. Deep down you really believe in God
11. You'll go to hell, heathen
12. Evolution is only a theory
13. There are no Atheists in foxholes
14. You're just mad at God
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17. God doesn't need to be visible to us, since he wants us to have faith.
18. "Look at all the wonderful things in the world! They must be from God."
19. Somebody had to start everything!
20. God is the source of all morality.
21. "You can't see air, and you believe in that!" (aka Miscast Empiricism)

1. I just know that God exists

Atheist's Answer:

I can respect when people say "I am certain God exists," but if your goal is to convince me you'd have to explain why I should take your word over all the other sincere folks who say the same thing about other God(s) or belief systems.

Real Answer:

The subterfuge here is in obscuring the meaning of the word "know." If I know something, that means I have knowledge of it. This is not the same as the word "believe." If I believe something, then I have good reason to accept that something as real, or true.

If I know something, then I have personal, subjective knowledge of that thing and I am convinced that it is real. If I say "I just know that God exists" I'm not necessarily trying to convince you of that existence. If I were to say that "I just know that God exists and you can know that too," then I'm offering to share the source of my knowledge so that you (the listener) may have the opportunity to see the same source as I did. Whether or not you accept that source is entirely up to you.

2. You're really just an agnostic

Atheist's Answer:

Agnostic: One who believes that there can be no proof of the existence of God but does not deny the possibility that God exists.

"Soft" Atheist: One who presumes there is no god based on lack of evidence.

"Hard" Atheist: One who claims with certainty that there is no god.

Real Answer:

These definitions are inventions. This is perfectly fine, as long as the use of these definitions are consistent. Unfortunately, they're not. The truth of the matter is very simple:

Agnostic ag•nos•tic | ag'nästik |

noun

a person who believes that nothing is known or can be known of the existence or nature of God or of anything beyond material phenomena; a person who claims neither faith nor disbelief in God.

Atheism | 'äthē,izəm |

noun

the theory of belief that God does not exist.

DERIVATIVES

a•the•ist (one who follows, accepts, or adheres to Atheism)

Christopher Hitchens carefully states that he is not an atheist, but rather an anti-theist. Richard Dawkins is careful to admit that he accepts that while the possibility of God exists, the probability against the existence of God is so great as to make it negligible.

No person of intellect would paint themselves into a logical hole and call themselves a pure atheist. To be a pure atheist is to assert the absolute; there is no God. First, in order to substantiate the belief that there is no God, one must present evidence of that non-existence. No one can empirically prove that there is no God. Second, in order to prove that there is not now, nor has there ever been such a being as God, one must be God, thus proving the existence of God. The Atheist must argue from a purely rational, probabilistic method. In other words, they have to state the odds of Gods existence, then conclude the non-existence of God based on those odds. This is not logic, it is rationalism. Logic destroys the probabilistic model:

Given: The Law of Non-Contradiction

If a and b, then c:

If God is ever-present, all-knowing, all-powerful

and The probability of God exists

then God exists

Because the probability of God exists, God exists; for God cannot be "ever present" and not "ever present" at the same time.

3. You're just trying to be rebellious

Atheist's Answer:

Wouldn't that be easy for you if I were? However, if you really knew me you'd know I wasn't that type. (Unless you consider dropping by the record store and buying indie music on the way to my suburban home from my 9-to-5 job rebellious.)

Real Answer:

Of course the atheist is being rebellious, it is their contention that the status quo is religion and that they are the champions of the minority irreligious. If you read the answer to item 16 you'll see that this particular person has contradicted themselves within the same page! The truth is that the atheist wants to be an atheist because they don't want to live by the rules of any particular religion. This, in no uncertain terms, is rebellion against religion.

4. Prove that God doesn't exist, Mr. Smarty pants

Atheist's Answer:

Essentially, the burden of proof is on the person claiming that something does exist.

Real Answer:

This is just plain silly. The burden of proof is on the person making the assertion; either pro, or con. That is the nature of debate, forensics, and logic. If the atheist asserts the non-existence of God then it is, indeed, incumbent upon the atheist to back that assertion.

5. Pascal's Wager: If you believe in god, you go to heaven. If you don't, you go to hell. If God doesn't exist, you die whether or not you believe. So why not believe in God just in case He exists?

Atheist's Answer:

Like with most bad arguments, there are some hidden assumptions in this wager:

A. That it would even be possible to truly believe based simply on a decision to believe.

Think about it: could you believe in Leprechauns if you simply told yourself to?

B. God wouldn't see through this ploy

It seems to me He'd be a pretty stupid God to get hoodwinked by this loophole

C. There's no harm in believing in God even if He doesn't exist

Really? How about all those wasted Sunday mornings, where I could've spent time reading the newspaper more carefully and learning more about the world as it truly is? How about the ongoing worries about God's disapproval? Or the wasted energy in deciphering an ancient text?

D. God is the Christian version of God, or even the particular flavor of Christian God you'll happen to choose

You may think I'm being facetious, but think about it! Would I become a Catholic? Seventh-Day Adventist? Mormon? Sunni or Shia Muslim? I can imagine the reply: "Why, my religion, of course!"

Real Answer:

The wager is not an attempt at proving God's existence, rather, it is an attempt at challenging an individual with the thought that each individual has already chosen a path, and has already begun practically walking that path. Agnosticism is not an option, it is merely the failure of the rational mind to accept the existing conditions of reality. You either believe in God and live accordingly, or you don't.

Pascal was attempting to show that reason alone cannot be trusted, and that belief in God cannot be based upon any empirical certainty alone. Therefore, a combination of logic and data must be employed to display the *probability* of God's existence, whereupon reason may be used to evaluate that probability. If reason alone can be trusted on the question of God's existence, then the wager simply does not apply.

The wager provides us with a formulae which exemplifies a sound logical decision making process when considering these factors:

	God exists (G)	God does not exist (~G)
Living as if God exists (B)	Go to heaven (+ ∞)	No Result f ₁
Living as if God does not exist (~B)	?? Limbo, Purgatory, Death, Hell (f ₂)	No Result f ₃

	God exists (G)	God does not exist (~G)
According to decision theory, the only value that matters in the above matrix is the $+\infty$. Any matrix of the following type (where f_1 , f_2 , and f_3 are all finite positive or negative numbers) results in (B) as being the only rational decision.		

6. The evidence is everywhere, you just need to believe first

Atheist's Answer:

You're making a common logical error called "Begging the Question" This is a favorite style of argument among delusional people.

Essentially, you're saying that I need to be biased and interpret everything with my "God Glasses" on. As a philosophical Frankenstein monster would say: "Bias baaaaad!"

Real Answer:

Facts are facts; by themselves they do nothing. A rock exists, it's composition remains the same whether you observe the rock or not. The rock got to where it is somehow. The question is; how did the rock get there? Unless you watched the rock, throughout it's entire journey to the spot where you observe the rock, you don't really *know* how the rock came to rest in that spot. You can, however, speculate how it happened based upon available evidence. This is a science called forensics.

However, no matter how well formed your thesis for how the rock came to be, unless you actually saw the rock move to it's current location, your thesis it is nothing more than an educated guess. It is the observer's mind which forms the reason for the placement of the rock. Granted, that reason is based upon certain known principles and some reliable data, but in the end, it's still nothing more than a crap shoot (see item 5 above). Atheists see the universe and proclaim "you see, it's all natural." Christians see the universe and proclaim "you see, it's all created."

In other words, the evidence is everywhere, you just need to believe first.

7. CS Lewis' "Lord, Liar, or Lunatic" Trilemma

Atheist's Answer:

However, are those really the only three choices? A more complete set would be "Lord, Liar, Lunatic, Deluded, Misquoted, Fabricated, or otherwise Fictionalized."

Real Answer:

The author has removed the argument from it's context. This is a very common tactic. Take the fish out of the water, then challenge it's design as being faulty. There are some basic precursors that must be considered:

1. CS Lewis was making this argument based upon the words of Jesus as they are recorded. As there is no other primary source material for the words of Jesus, other than the Gospels, then these materials are what we must evaluate.
2. The question of the accuracy of the texts of the Bible is a completely separate matter, which the author secedes in his very next point (item 8, below).
3. The dilemma is based upon Jesus' claim that a) there is no other way to heaven than himself, b) that he was and is co-equal with God and c) that if you don't do what he says, he will judge you after you die and find you guilty.

This set of claims demands that the followers of the Christ die in his name, rather than denounce belief in him as God. If we accept that the words written about Jesus in the Bible are the basis for all basic Christian faith (Mere Christianity as CS Lewis puts it), then we are not challenged with proving whether or not what was recorded is accurate. We are merely challenged with asserting that Jesus cannot be relegated to the realm of “good teacher,” or as Islam would assert, just another prophet. Jesus claimed to be co-equal with God, and the texts of the Bible substantiate this claim, so either you accept that Jesus is God, or you must attribute some other purpose to his claims. Because of the dire consequences to those who follow the Christ, one must accept that if Jesus was lying, he was either who he claimed to be, “a lunatic - on the level of a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make the choice.”

8. The Bible is Historically Accurate. Therefore what it says about Jesus is accurate

Atheist's Answer:

Even concerning the issue of the very existence of Jesus, the only independent sources of evidence are suspect (such as a transcribing Monks' suspected forgery in Josephus, for example). Besides, just because the Bible says there was a war between the x's and y's doesn't validate the whole thing. After all, that's like saying that everything in "Gone With the Wind" is true because there really was a Civil War.

Real Answer:

The clue to this absurd answer lies in the last sentence. The Bible is nothing like *Gone With the Wind*. *Gone With the Wind* is a fictional novel. It uses pseudo factual circumstances to describe fictional events. This is the art form known as the novel.

Most of the Bible was written before the idea of the novel was invented. The concept of a novel written purely for entertainment was not introduced into Europe until the Middle Ages. Before this, epics, or poems were written as early as 1300-1000 BC, but these poems are known to have specific reference to real events, and real people. Even the Sumerian epic of Gilgamesh is known to describe real events in the life of a real person. Why? Because while parables, or moral tales were written in early civilization, the idea of lying about historical events didn't come into vogue until the late 17th century.

Throughout history both the authors and the readers of these works have clearly distinguished these works as fiction, rather than fact. An excellent example of this principle is in Dan Brown's *The DaVinci Code*. Dan Brown asserted that the book was based on facts and history. Soon after the book was published, both secular and ecumenical historians were quick to show how this book was completely false. Only those who were easily duped, or woefully ignorant didn't get that this book was complete balderdash.

Had the writers of the Bible asserted this type of claim, it would have set off an alarm with it's contemporaries, and we would know it. Even early Greek tragedy is clearly marked as Greek tragedy, and is not assumed by anyone to have been written as works of historical significance beyond their artistic value.

Historically, the Bible has always been seen as a work of history, not fiction. It is only over the last 100 years has the idea that it is a work of philosophy, or fiction become more and more common place.

Evaluating the authenticity of the Bible is no different than evaluating the authenticity of any other work of history. First is the consideration of authorship. The Bible is a collection of 66 books, written by over 40 authors, over the span of some four thousand years. The Bible contains legal, historical, prophetic, apocalyptic, ancient biographical, epistolary, wisdom, poetic,

and dramatic literary forms. Second there must be an evaluation of the material against other historical sources. Every source relevant to the Bible affirms its assertions. The Bible also passes the most stringent of transmission tests. A copy of several books of the Bible were found with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Most remarkable is a complete copy of the book of Isaiah, penned between 300 and 150 BC. Comparing this scroll against a more modern copy (mid 1300's AD) shows virtually no difference between the two documents. This accuracy is a testament to the rigor by which these documents were transcribed from generation to generation. Third, there must be corroboration between the historic work, and what archaeology tells us about the works. Archeology has done more to substantiate the claims of the Bible than any other historical work known to mankind.

It names people, places and events which have been proven to be accurate from both a historical and archaeological stand point. It has been proven that texts from the Bible came into being between 34 AD and 70 AD based upon physical evidence of manuscript fragments, literary references from early letters and historical reference. The greater balance of literary critics agree that the Bible, at the very least, asserts itself as a work of history.

The idea that there are limited "independent" sources is also a misnomer. The Bible is not a single book, but rather a compilation of separate books. In modern terms it is a collection of short stories in the non-fiction genre, each of which written by a different author. Each of the gospels is an independent source.

While no one can absolutely, empirically prove the absolute accuracy of the Bible, remember this: the earliest extant copy of Homer's *Illiad* was penned 1000 years after the original work was written. For a long time the battle of Troy was thought to be legend. In 1871 Heinrich Schliemann not only discovered one Troy, but actually discovered 9 Troys. No one doubts that the battle of Troy happened, they simply doubt the existence of sirens, sea monsters and nymphs. The question becomes, did these things exist back then, and are we simply assuming based on what we know now that the *Odyssey* and the *Illiad* are only part truth?

No serious scholar of history denies the existence of Jesus as a real person, nor denies the Bible as a book intended to be history. The real debate is as it has always been since Jesus walked this earth; can Jesus have done miracles or couldn't he?

9. Being an Atheist requires faith

Atheist's Answer:

It's not that I have faith that there isn't a God, I simply lack faith in a God. Understanding this distinction will help you understand what I believe.

Real Answer:

Once again, redefining words is a relativist's staple in life. The word faith comes from the legal term "bona fide," or the latin "bona fidelis." This means in good faith. In law, it means that a witness cannot be prosecuted if their testimony is given with good intent. In other words, if a witness believes that they are telling the truth, but later on the facts are found to be contrary to that testimony, the witness cannot be held guilty for not knowing the facts.

The word faith means that you have accepted a certain circumstance to be true and accurate. We have faith that the sun will "come up" in the morning. We have faith that there will be water in the faucet when we turn it on. Both of these assumptions are made based upon certain preconditions. The same is true of any religion, and Atheism is certainly a religion:

religion lri'lijən
noun

the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, esp. a personal God or gods : ideas about the relationship between science and religion.

- details of belief as taught or discussed : when the school first opened they taught only religion, Italian, and mathematics.

- **a particular system of faith and worship : the world's great religions.**

- **a pursuit or interest to which someone ascribes supreme importance : consumerism is the new religion.**

10. Deep down you really believe in God

Atheist's Answer:

Such folks can't grasp that it's really possible to disbelieve. It is. In fact, it's easy.

Real Answer:

This is the first thing this author gets right. It is easy to disbelieve. All you have to do is ignore reality, logic, your conscience and two thousand years of Western civilization.

11. You'll go to hell, heathen

Atheist's Answer:

Why does anyone think this will convert people? Why would I want to adopt a belief system that condemns free thought? Why respect a God that uses extortion to get people to worship Him?

Real Answer:

This isn't an attempt at conversion, it is a statement of fact. However, I don't recommend that one opens a conversation with this line. The truth of the matter is, everyone wants there to be an ultimate justice, they just don't want it applied to themselves.

12. Evolution is only a theory

Atheist's Answer:

Anyone who tries to argue against Evolution should make an effort to understand what Evolution claims. Every single Creationist who has responded to me has been ignorant of some of the basic tenets of Evolution. Chances are, if your evidence against Evolution comes from Creationist literature, your argument has been soundly defeated.

Real Answer:

Once again; semantics. Adaptation is the process by which living things (including plants) modify themselves to fit environmental challenges. This is a proven fact. Evolution is a theory, based upon the observations of adaptation, that asserts that all creatures come from a common ancestry through the process of adaptation.

Darwin's assumption was that it was natural selection of breeding that brought about this process. Since then, his hypothesis has been disproved through the discovery that genes like to stay the way they are, and through the lack of transitional forms in the geological record.

Because of this, Stephen J. Gould (along with others) developed the idea of "punctuated equilibrium." This is a modification of Darwinian Evolution that asserts that once in a while extreme conditions cause organisms to make radical leaps in evolution, causing new species to come into being.

First things first, the real use is the word genus, not species. Both of these terms are inventions, applied to nature by the observer as a means of identifying a given creature. While it

is true that it is possible to cross over the species line, the species line is really an amorphous guideline that scientist themselves cannot seem to agree on. However; no animal has ever been observed to cross over the genus line, nor will they.

The very principle of Evolution is that it either takes millions of years of gradual change, or an extreme change in environment to force a new form of life to come into being. No human being is going to be able to track change over millions of years, and even if they tried, we would be so far “evolved” at that point, we probably wouldn’t care to anyway. And, if the change comes in an isolated group, how are we ever to know if what we’ve discovered was recently formed, or had always been there and is just now discovered?

Evolution is a theory which cannot be proved empirically, but for which evidence can be asserted. Please refer to item 6 above. On the contrary, the arguments for creation haven’t been soundly defeated, they’ve just been removed from the debate arena by legal wrangling using a badly formed, fundamentally false interpretation of the Constitution.

13. There are no Atheists in foxholes

Atheist’s Answer:

What this argument is really trying to say is that atheists don’t have the strength of their convictions. Again, even if this was true, what would it prove? Would this be any better of an argument than if an atheist told you that many Christians have crises of faith?

Real Answer:

Actually, the statement is an attempt at showing that even the most stringent atheist cries out for a benevolent savior in times of mortal duress. Everyone wishes that there was a greater power waiting somewhere in the wings to “make things right.” Atheists notice that things don’t always go the way they ought to, and attribute that to a lack of God, or at the very least, disgust with the lack of divine intervention.

The difference between a Christian’s crisis of faith and an Atheist’s call to God is very simple; the Christian challenges the veracity of what they know, the Atheist denies the existence of the thing they wish they could have.

14. You’re just mad at God

Atheist’s Answer:

In other words, I really believe that God exists, but I think he’s a jerk. While it’s true that I think the Christian God would be (at best) an insecure codependent and (at worst) murderously psychotic if He existed, that doesn’t mean that’s the reason I disbelieve. Those who make this argument blithely ignore all of my arguments against the existence of God; they feel their only option is to offer a hand-wave like this.

Real Answer:

Although many Atheists are angry at the concept of God, the atheist isn’t angry at God; they’re angry at what men have done in God’s name. Please keep in mind, to an atheist, there is no God to be angry at. It’s much easier to point at the atrocities committed by men in the name of God and say “aha! You see, religion is evil!,” or perhaps “You can’t possibly accept a God who would (insert heinous act here)!” You really can’t blame them for this. People do stupid things all the time, it’s our nature.

Rather, the atheist doesn’t see the value in accepting the existence of God over simply living life the way they see fit, doing the things that make them “feel good about themselves.” To the relativist, it’s all about emotions, feelings and self-gratification.

After all, would you rather believe in a God who says it's okay to stone people to death for adultery, or go out and have sex with your neighbor's wife? It's not anger, it's a value judgement. The non-Christian simply can't factor the value equation because they can't understand the relevant values.

15. You just want to live an amoral life

Atheist's Answer:

Here, the claim is that my disbelief arises from pure selfishness. How better to justify my nonstop orgies, crack addiction, and Napster use than to believe that I won't be judged in the hereafter?

Of course, if I wanted to live an amoral life, I'm doing a pretty bad job of it. For the most part I'm a straight arrow: good job, suburban home, pregnant wife, clean teeth and gums... Sure, I've had a few ethical lapses in my life, but I never justified those lapses by invoking the nonexistence of God.

The basis for this argument is the smug assumption that atheists are immoral. This belief is so astonishingly ignorant of ethical Philosophy that I can only see it as intellectually dishonest.

Real Answer:

Living a life without absolutes allows the justification of just about anything. Here's a practical example that I got from an atheist friend of mine:

Shooting up heroin is bad. Snorting cocaine is bad, but not as bad as heroin. So, by comparison smoking dope isn't all that bad, and smoking cigarettes is legal, so it's okay too. Besides, I never smoke in the house anyway, so my kids don't get second hand smoke.

Here's another one:

The record companies make millions of dollars off of someone else's talent. If I rip off the CD and give it to my friends, the record company really isn't hurt, and I'm actually helping to promote the band.

The simple fact is that to a relativist, these two statements actually make sense. They really believe that what they do behind a closed door doesn't follow them when they walk out. They don't want to live an amoral life; they just want to be able to pick and choose the moral set they do use, when they want to use it.

16. Why do you care so much to create this [material]

Atheist's Answer:

The US faces a religious/spiritual majority, and in my own small way I hope to offer an antidote.

Real Answer:

The Atheist is the salvation of mankind. We must free ourselves from the bonds of religion and oppression so that the real tasks of humanity can begin. Viva la revolucion!

17. God doesn't need to be visible to us, since he wants us to have faith.

Atheist's Answer:

Imagine if an airplane engineer, for his own self-gratification, designed an airplane knowing that a hefty percentage of its passengers would die. Imagine also that this engineer dictated that the only way for a passenger to survive a flight on this plane would be to deliberately contact him and flatter him in some way. Worse, there are different engineers, each with different sets of

rules, and the passengers have to figure out which engineer they are supposed to be in touch with.

It gets worse. Because this engineer wants his passengers to have Faith in him, there's no reason for him to make his presence known. That way, the passengers can't really be sure that any engineer exists at all. If a human behaved like this, most people (including Christians) would want his head on a plate. But since this is God's doing, this situation is somehow supposed to make sense.

Real Answer:

Imagine if an airplane engineer, for his own self-gratification, designed an airplane knowing that there might be a chance that the design would suffer from entropy and would eventually wear out, causing the potential for the death of some passengers. Imagine also that this engineer dictated that the only way to avoid this circumstance was for the ground crew to meticulously maintain the aircraft based upon a certain manual of procedures and safety checks, or to deliberately contact him, the engineer, in some way. Better still, so that there is no confusion over which engineer one should contact, he sent his own personal representative to the hanger with an offer of a personal introduction and a sit down dinner with the engineer.

It gets better. Because this engineer wants his passengers to have Faith in him, he arranges a means to distribute these these repair manuals free of charge, and teaches other people about the proper use of these manuals, then sends them out into the world to teach still more people how to properly maintain the aircraft. That way, the passengers can really be sure that the engineer exists and has a concern about their well being while on his plane. But, since you don't actually see the engineer, you deny his existence, toss the manual, shoot the person who brought it to you, try to fix the airplane all on your own and this situation is somehow supposed to make sense.

18. "Look at all the wonderful things in the world! They must be from God."

Atheist's Answer:

Well, not to be a downer, but look at all the evil, awful, nasty things, too. Would a loving God allow attacks like the one on the World Trade Center?

Don't blame all of this on sin and Satan; imagine the countless innocent infants dead from disease and disaster. And consider that even if Satan is responsible, I remind you that Satan is God's creation, too. Want to try blaming it all on Free Will? Don't you think God would've known what humans would do with their Free Will? God would have to have been pretty dim not to know what Eve would do with the Forbidden Fruit, don't you think?

Real Answer:

The statement given is a weak attempt at the teleological argument, or the argument from the apparent order of the universe. The response is from the problem of evil, or more formally the Benevolent God Dilemma. This particular variety of the problem of evil is designed to prey upon one's emotions; how do you *feel* about God? Isn't it bad that God lets bad things happen to good people?

The truth of the matter is that according to Christianity, there is no such thing as a good person. All humans have sinned against God and the penalty for sin is death. That's the point of the whole thing. Every person is equally guilty. Every person is equally destitute. The good news is, you don't have to be that way, and there is something you can do about it.

Let me explain in common terms. When the first decision was made pro-sin, the decision was made. From that point it was impossible to regress, or "go back on" that decision. Because that decision had been made, the next decision couldn't be based upon the pre-existing

conditions, because things had now changed. Therefore the very next decision was yet another decision; pro-sin, or anti-sin. The more decisions made, the deeper the legacy of decision making. Sooner, rather than later, it gets to the point where all you have are bad choices, and the decision is between the lesser of two evils.

This is why bad things don't happen to good people. Bad people happen to bad people. But, there is an escape clause, provided for by God, and it's called being born again. It's free, it's readily available for anyone to accept.

The problem for Atheists and skeptics is that this promise will not save you from the evil of others, but it will keep you safe in eternity with God. So, what about those people who claim to be "born again?" Why doesn't God make their lives happy and safe?

While there are a ton of reasons why God should, could, or would cause his own to suffer, I think lifting a phrase from an atheist might be appropriate here: "That which does not kill us, makes us stronger." Or, as Paul put it: "for me to live is Christ, to die is gain." The Christian realizes that this life is not the end, it is merely the beginning. When you have an eternal perspective on life and you know that in the end, all of the injustices will be justified, things take on a whole new meaning. The Christian doesn't seek death, but they certainly don't fear it and torture or hardship is only temporary and transient.

The atheist simply can't grasp this concept, so don't try. Instead, read and study the real teleological argument.

19. Somebody had to start everything!

Atheist's Answer:

1: You're assuming that time is linear and finite. Sure, it seems so from our limited perspective, but who's to say that this is the case at the edges of time and space? Check into modern physics: the "Big Bang" isn't as stupid a theory as you think.

2: Even if time is linear and finite, does God really solve the infinite regress problem? Essentially, you're saying that God extends infinitely backward in time. Yet again, God is patched into a mystery not because of evidence but because it's easier to assume there's a conscious process instead of trying to truly understand the mystery.

Real Answer:

First things first, the "Big Bang" is a slander leveled by Fred Hoyle against George LeMatre for coming up with the concept that the universe had a beginning. George LeMatre was an MIT trained astronomer and a Jesuit Priest. Up until that time Copernican cosmology was the standard model, which asserts that the universe is eternal. A note to Atheists: don't go co-opting the Big Bang as purely naturalist. In fact, the premise is specifically creationist.

Second, the idea of a beginning has nothing to do with time being linear. In fact, time is not linear, time is a condition of the universe and as such suffers from entropy just as the mechanism that time is based upon; the traversal of our planet around our sun. Some people seem to think that humans invented time. What a singularly arrogant, ignorant, and unreasonable thought process. Time is derived from the solar system, which existed before men came into being. The clock is our solar system, we simply found a way to increment time in minutes and seconds so we could keep track of the finite time we have left to live on this earth.

Third, the argument is not that God extends infinitely backward in time, the argument is that God, as the creator of time, is superior to time. As such, time does not apply to God as it applies to us.

Here is the real argument:

Everything that begins to exist has a cause.

The universe began to exist.

Therefore, the universe must have a cause.

Because God made time, and is not subject to time, it is not necessary for God to have had a beginning, nor an end. Everything which is contained within this "time-space continuum" is relegated to beginnings and ends and as such, must have an initial cause. A tree comes from an acorn, and the acorn from a tree. There must have been either a first acorn, or a first tree, but there is no logical need for a God, before God. In fact, there could not be a God other than God, because God is "omnipresent." More than one God is simply logically contradictory.

One good variety of this is the Kalam Cosmological Argument, as espoused by William Lane Craig. A real argument against this line of thinking would be to try to deny one of the premises on which the argument is based, or to somehow prove an infinite or linear regression of time. It is clear that most people, not just Atheists, have a hard time clearly understanding the principles of this argument as it involves in-depth knowledge of cosmology, physics and philosophical logic.

20. God is the source of all morality.

Atheist's Answer:

Sadly, this is one of the most ignorant (and prejudiced!) replies that I get, as well as the most common. Otherwise intelligent people seem to lack the imagination to understand how moral behavior doesn't necessarily have to come from the dictates of a deity. (In fact, when you think about it, it's frightening to think that the only reason you're not murdering me right now is that a Big Ghost told you not to do it.)

In short, my morals come from the simple fact that certain behaviors allow people to live peacefully together. We all have one shot at life, and certain codes of conduct mean that you and I can pursue happiness without treading on each other. This may be familiar to Christians as "do unto others," but they shouldn't assume this philosophy is unique to Christianity.

Real Answer:

This is yet another misstated version of the argument. The real argument is that *objective* moral values cannot exist without God. The argument is not that an atheist cannot live a moral life without God, nor is it that an atheist cannot recognize morals unless they believe in God. The argument is that without God, morals ultimately make no sense, nor do they have real value. Rather, morals are merely transient and illusory. Why is abortion acceptable in this country? Killing a child outside of the womb is considered murder, why is killing a child inside the womb different? To God, there is no difference; thou shalt not murder is thou shalt not murder.

To an atheist there is no prescription against murder, other than the idea that if one commits murder, then one might face the wrath of the victim's relatives, friends or servants. Besides, if you commit murder, then you might encourage someone to react against you, or perhaps someone that you care about in like kind. Therefore, it's generally best not to go around killing people that you disagree with. However, there is no "ultimate" reason not to commit murder. Therefore, if you can come up with a good enough excuse to kill, then killing is acceptable. So, if the well-being of the mother is at risk (well being, not life or limb) then eliminating the baby is fine. In fact, it becomes preferable to kill the baby, rather than inconvenience the mother.

Remember, unless there is a God who will ultimately judge injustices, there is no ultimate justice. When all you have to worry about is whether or not you'll get caught, you don't tend to think about not doing the crime, rather you tend to wonder about how not to get caught. See item 15 above.

21. "You can't see air, and you believe in that!" (aka Miscast Empiricism)

Atheist's Answer:

First I'll start with a physiology lesson: we have five senses, not one. Remarkably, these senses often tell me of things that I cannot see: I can feel air when it moves, and smell it (for better or worse).

Most important, "air" is a really bad example for someone to use, since air, unlike God, can be probed scientifically. (And it can be seen, but I won't get into that.)

People who say this to me are feebly trying to say that empiricism is a terrible way to determine whether something exists. On the contrary, it's the best way to determine if something exists! If a being or object has any bearing on the universe, that means that this entity's existence is capable of empirical measurement. Simple as that.

Real Answer:

First, our five senses can only hear wind because of the objects that it effects as it's moving. We can only smell wind because of the particles it carries. We can only see wind when it is carrying moisture, or some other visible material along with it. In other words, we cannot see, smell, hear, or taste wind; but, we can test the effects of wind based upon the things that we can see, smell, hear, or taste that are carried along with the wind.

We can, however, become immune to these effects of air. If you want an empirical example, step in to a room that has a foreign smell. Wait a few minutes. If the smell isn't too overwhelming, you'll notice that the smell seems to have gone away. This is because your brain has adjusted to the environment and no longer registers the smell as foreign. Introduce a new "smell" into the room and your brain will pick it up immediately. This is an excellent survival mechanism, but the point remains, you can harden yourself against your environment.

In the same way we can empirically study God. It is not God that we are studying, it is the effects of God. Some have simply chosen to harden themselves against his presence.