

“Why Do More Educated People Tend to Deny the Existence of God?”

Why do you suppose that the more highly educated a person becomes, the less likely they are to believe in a God?

What a great question!!

In my “wisdom journal,” I have recorded this insight from Dr. Peter Kreeft, professor at Boston College:

Intellectuals resist faith longer because they can: where ordinary people are helpless before the light, intellectuals are clever enough to spin webs of darkness around their minds and hide in them. That’s why only Ph.D.s believe any of the 100 most absurd ideas in the world (such as Absolute Relativism, or the Objective Truth of Subjectivism, of the Meaningfulness of Meaninglessness and the Meaninglessness of Meaning, which is the best definition of Deconstructionism I know).

I loved the timing of your question. My husband just returned from his fifth year of teaching Christian worldview to hundreds of school teachers in Liberia, West Africa. The vast majority of the teachers have no more than a middle school education. When explaining the three major worldviews—atheism/naturalism, pantheism and theism—he has discovered that most of these teachers are flabbergasted that anyone would deny that there is a God. They have lived their whole lives permeated by the spiritual, so when they learned that some people deny the existence of God, that didn’t make sense. Even in their traditional African religion (animism), embracing the spiritual was as natural as breathing.

So glad you wrote.

Sue Bohlin

P.S. I have observed this same phenomenon Dr. Kreeft notes—of higher intelligence, often reflected in higher education—appearing in those who embrace and celebrate homosexuality as normal and natural. It takes a higher degree of mental acumen to be able to do the mental gymnastics it takes to avoid the clear and simple truth that “the parts don’t fit.” Not physically, and not psychologically.

© 2008 Probe Ministries

“Conflicting Genealogies of Christ?”

How do you reconcile the difference in Christ’s genealogy given in Matthew and Luke?

Bible.org answers your question here: bible.org/question/why-do-matthew-and-lukes-genealogies-contradict-one-another:

“Matthew and Luke actually give two different genealogies. Matthew give the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph, the legal, though not the physical father of Jesus. Luke, on the other hand, gives the ancestry of Jesus through Mary from whom Jesus was descended physically as to his humanity. This is a beautiful fulfillment of prophecy and actually testifies to the accuracy of the Bible. Through Joseph, Jesus became the

legal heir to the throne while at the same time bypassed the curse of Coniah as prophesied in Jeremiah 22:24-30. Both, of course, were in the line of David so that Jesus had a legal right to the throne as the adopted son of Joseph and was at the same time a physical descendent of David through Mary.

“The Ryrie Study Bible gives an excellent summary of the issues here:

Although Coniah had seven sons (perhaps adopted; cf. 1 Chron. 3:17), none occupied the throne. So, as far as a continuing dynasty was concerned, Coniah was to be considered “childless.” Although his line of descendants retained the legal throne rights, no physical descendant (no man of his descendants) would ever prosperously reign on the Davidic throne. The genealogy of Matthew traces the descent of Jesus through Solomon and Jeconiah (Heb., Coniah; Matt. 1:12); this is the genealogy of Jesus’ legal father, Joseph. Luke traces Jesus’ physical descent back through Mary and Nathan to David, bypassing Jeconiah’s line and showing accurately the fulfillment of this prophecy of Jeremiah. If Jesus had been born only in the line of Joseph (and thus of Jeconiah), He would not have been qualified to reign on the throne of David in the Millennium. See note on Matt. 1:11.”

Blessings,

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries Webmistress

+ + + + +

I have noticed that there is an error in your article concerning the genealogies of Christ. You say that the line goes through Mary in Luke, but this is not so, I have looked this up in the NIV, ESV and the Bible in my own language. Luke chapter 3:21-38 does not even mention Mary, it says Joseph. This still creates a conflict in the genealogy. Maybe I am

reading this wrong. In the Matthew account it says: “. . . Mary, of whom is born the Christ. . .” one can argue for Mary in the Matthew account, but this feels like a stretch.

Glad you asked! It's not an error; this has been a point of discussion among Bible scholars for many years. Here's insight from the GotQuestions.org website, answering the question, “Why are Jesus' genealogies in Matthew and Luke so different?”

“[M]ost conservative Bible scholars assume Luke is recording Mary's genealogy and Matthew is recording Joseph's. Matthew is following the line of Joseph (Jesus' legal father), through David's son Solomon, while Luke is following the line of Mary (Jesus' blood relative), through David's son Nathan. There was no Greek word for “son-in-law,” and Joseph would have been considered a son of Heli through marrying Heli's daughter Mary. Through either line, Jesus is a descendant of David and therefore eligible to be the Messiah. Tracing a genealogy through the mother's side is unusual, but so was the virgin birth. Luke's explanation is that Jesus was the son of Joseph, “so it was thought” (Luke 3:23).

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

© 2008 Probe Ministries, updated Sept. 15, 2011

“Shouldn't the Statistical Improbability of Evolution

Convince Evolutionists?"

Open-Minded

Dear Dr. Bohlin,

Thank you for your excellent article ["The Five Crises in Evolutionary Development"](#) which I just completed reading. Very, very well done.

Here is a comment/question for you: The statistical improbability (impossibility) of macroevolution, whether Darwinian or sudden leaps, is so overwhelming that no other evidence should really be needed to discredit the theory. However, I've never seen the type of discussion of the statistical/probability aspect that I'd like to see. My feeling is if the statistical aspect were carefully developed and presented it would be sufficient to convince any reasonably open-minded evolutionist (an oxymoron?).

Thanks again for your excellent article. If you know of any good statistical analyses of the probability of evolution please tell me where to look.

I'm glad you found the article helpful.

Regarding probability, most biologists don't really fully comprehend the argument from probability. To them, evolution happened, therefore the statistical studies must be missing something to come up with such impossible odds. Their eyes tend to glaze over with the many numbers and conditions. In my graduate work at the University of North Texas in the late 70s, the one probability and statistics course we all took was largely seen as necessary evil and we all probably remember being told that statistics can be easily misused and you can prove anything with statistics. So while they all need some probability and statistics to get their population genetics articles published, they largely distrust the figures of

others. Therefore anything trying to use probability to debunk evolution must be suspect.

A good book covering the general argument from probability against evolution can be found in Lee Spetner's *Not By Chance*. You can probably still find it at Amazon or at the ID website at www.arn.org.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, PhD

© 2008 Probe Ministries

“Did Abraham Speak Hebrew?”

What language did Abraham speak? What I really want to know is, did Abraham speak Hebrew?

I honestly don't know for sure what language Abraham spoke. It would have surely been one of the ancient Semitic languages and thus would have been quite similar to ancient Hebrew in many respects. Easton's Bible Dictionary has this to say about the Hebrew language and the language of Abraham:

“It is one of the class of languages called Semitic, because they were chiefly spoken among the descendants of Shem.

When Abraham entered Canaan it is obvious that he found the language of its inhabitants closely allied to his own. Isaiah (19:18) calls it “the language of Canaan.” Whether this language, as seen in the earliest books of the Old Testament, was the very dialect which Abraham brought with him into Canaan, or whether it was the common tongue of the

Canaanitish nations which he only adopted, is uncertain; probably the latter opinion is the correct one...

The Hebrew is one of the oldest languages of which we have any knowledge. It is essentially identical with the Phoenician language... The Semitic languages, to which class the Hebrew and Phoenician belonged, were spoken over a very wide area: in Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Arabia, in all the countries from the Mediterranean to the borders of Assyria, and from the mountains of Armenia to the Indian Ocean. The rounded form of the letters, as seen in the Moabite stone, was probably that in which the ancient Hebrew was written down to the time of the Exile, when the present square or Chaldean form was adopted."

If you've never heard of the Biblical Studies Foundation website, I would strongly encourage you to check it out at www.netbible.com. They have hundreds of articles on biblical and theological issues.

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

© 2008 Probe Ministries

“Why Did Jesus Have to be Baptized?”

If Jesus is truly God, then why did he have to be baptized?

You ask a very good question. Indeed, John the Baptist also wondered about baptizing Jesus (Matthew 3:14). John's baptism

was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3). But Jesus had no need for repentance or forgiveness (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5). Why, then, did Jesus seek to be baptized by John?

There may be a clue in how Jesus responds in Matthew 3:15: "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Baptism is a form of identification. Although Jesus had no sin to repent of, He seems to have wanted to be identified with John's message of the need for repentance. This seems to be supported by Jesus' own message (Matthew 4:17; Mark 2:15; etc.). Also, Jesus probably wanted to be identified with those receiving John's baptism, namely, sinners. After all, Jesus came to be identified with us, and to die as a substitute for our sins (see 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Interestingly, Jesus' death and resurrection, which is the basis for our forgiveness, is linked with baptism in passages like Romans 6:3-4.

At any rate, these are some of the reasons why I think Jesus sought to be baptized by John. I hope this information helps a bit.

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

© 2008 Probe Ministries

"Does God Really Know All?"

Ex 16:4"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them,

whether or not they will walk in My instruction.'"

Deut 13:3 "You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

I have a problem responding to those verses; at first glance, they seem to make his point because they seem to imply that God tests people so that He "might know" if they love Him. Deut. 13:3 is especially difficult for me. This does not seem to change in the different versions of the Bible I have referred to. Is there something about the definition of the terms or something else that I might be missing in the text?

There are two primary ways of responding to this issue. First, we must point out that other passages of Scripture speak of God's omniscience, including His knowledge of the future (see Psalm 139:1-4, 16; Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 46:9-10; Acts 1:24; Romans 8:29-30; Hebrews 4:13; etc.). If Scripture does not contradict itself, then there must be some way to reconcile these apparent discrepancies.

Second, as Geisler and Howe point out in *When Critics Ask*, "What God knows by cognition, and what is known by demonstration, are different." The Bible often speaks from a human perspective. Consider Geisler and Howe's analogy: "A math teacher might say, 'Let's see if we can find the square root of 49,' and then, after demonstrating it, declare, 'Now we know that it is 7,' even though she knew from the beginning what the answer was" (p. 52). I think it's the same way with God.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

© 2008 Probe Ministries

“Your Comments About Eating Animals Are Unintelligent and Illogical”

I read your response to the question [“Why Did God Allow Animals to be Eaten and Sacrificed?”](#) and found it to be one of the most unintelligent arguments on any subject that I have ever read. Your “logic” draws conclusions in very convoluted ways. Recognizing an animal’s right to life does not drag man down to the level of a beast. If ALL life is valued then human life is valued more. There would be no “‘open season’ on man to cure overpopulation problems...” as you suggest. There is no ultimate NEED for humans to get their diet from animals. Even Daniel recognized that he could be as healthy as [email ends here]

Thanks for writing. Jimmy isn’t able to respond to your email, so I’ll take a shot at it.

I’m really surprised you found this “the most unintelligent arguments on any subject [you] have ever read.” You should read some of the letters we get!

Upon what do you base an animal’s right to life? The answer to that will depend in a significant way upon your worldview. We are Christians, so our authority is the Bible where we learn about the places of humankind and other living beings in God’s order.

Because we’re to be good stewards of God’s creation, we are not to destroy life willy nilly. As Jimmy wrote in his article, there is a hierarchy. I think you’d probably agree that we needn’t shed tears over pulling up plants when they

are being a problem. Killing animals should be for good reasons, not just for killing's sake. You said we don't need to eat animals. Maybe not, but I don't see why we need to eat animals in order to do so. If God gave us that freedom, we can engage in it (Gen. 9:1-3).

Jimmy's concern about man being pulled down has historical precedent. The loss of a belief in the sacredness of human life has given us abortion and euthanasia. Can you imagine a hundred years ago having to pass a law to prevent doctors from sticking sharp objects into the skulls of partially-delivered babies to suck their brains out and kill them? That would have been unthinkable. But people think they should be able to do that. What does that say about the value of human life? And if Darwinism is correct, then there is no qualitative difference between humans and animals, just a difference of degree.

Yes, Daniel and his friends did well on a vegetarian diet. But there's no hint in the text that he did that because he thought it wrong to eat meat. The Babylonians' meat could very well have been obtained as a part of idol worship.

The bottom line is that we have been given permission to eat any living (non-human) thing. Animals don't have the same "rights" we have. To make a case that animals shouldn't be used for food because they have a right not to, requires a reason for such a right. On what do you base such a right?

Rick Wade

© 2008 Probe Ministries

“Is Reiki Occultic?”

I recently pulled up your website when a friend of mine told me she has a counseling center that practices Reiki. Wondering what Reiki was, I began to search it out. Despite all the Christian voices that support it, I refuse to buy into it, and I feel it is the Holy Spirit working in me. I emailed my friend and told her of my concerns. One of her responses was, “In my mind healing is ultimately the result of God’s love, whether it is a doctor doing a heart transplant or a Reiki master transmitting love through themselves.” She feels it is “God’s action occurring in and through people.”

Is it the work of God to transport some energy through our hands to someone else? Doesn’t sound right. What it all sounds like to me is an occult type practice that people have tried to squeeze into a Christian box and it’s not quite fitting!

Thanks for your letter. I’m assuming you’ve already read my article on Reiki, but if not, here is a link to it: www.probe.org/reiki/.

I begin the article by briefly considering what Reiki is. I then look at whether or not there is scientific support for Reiki. I consider the success claims of Reiki, ask whether Christians should be concerned about it, and also whether all healing comes from God. If you haven’t yet read the article, I would encourage you to do so.

Like you, I think there are reasons for Christians to be concerned about Reiki. For one thing, as it’s often represented, it has a very different understanding of “God” than biblical Christianity. Thus, when it claims that healing comes from “God,” it is asserting something different from what a Christian would mean when he/she claims to have been healed by God. Second, the emphasis on spirit guides should cause us concern. The Bible never tells us to seek a spirit

guide, but often warns us of deceptive and demonic spirits. Third, the Bible doesn't talk about a universal life force energy which we can learn to manipulate for health and healing. This sort of language is very foreign to a biblical worldview and is only at home (really) in an Eastern worldview, or one influenced by Eastern thought.

For these reasons and others (spelled out in my article), I think it's a mistake to get involved with Reiki. My perspective would really be the same as yours. Reiki sounds like "an occult type practice that people have tried to squeeze into a Christian box and it's not quite fitting."

I would gently challenge your friend to consider the many ways in which Reiki beliefs and practices seem so foreign (and even contrary) to the teachings of the Bible. For a bible-believing Christian, Reiki seems like a difficult practice to justify.

I hope this helps a bit. Please see my article for a bit more information.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

© 2008 Probe Ministries

"Your Comments About Eating Animals Are Unintelligent and

Illogical”

I read your response to the question [“Why Did God Allow Animals to be Eaten and Sacrificed?”](#) and found it to be one of the most unintelligent arguments on any subject that I have ever read. Your “logic” draws conclusions in very convoluted ways. Recognizing an animal’s right to life does not drag man down to the level of a beast. If ALL life is valued then human life is valued more. There would be no “‘open season’ on man to cure overpopulation problems...” as you suggest. There is no ultimate NEED for humans to get their diet from animals. Even Daniel recognized that he could be as healthy as [email ends here]

Thanks for writing. Jimmy isn’t able to respond to your email, so I’ll take a shot at it.

I’m really surprised you found this “the most unintelligent arguments on any subject [you] have ever read.” You should read some of the letters we get!

Upon what do you base an animal’s right to life? The answer to that will depend in a significant way upon your worldview. We are Christians, so our authority is the Bible where we learn about the places of humankind and other living beings in God’s order.

Because we’re to be good stewards of God’s creation, we are not to destroy life willy nilly. As Jimmy wrote in his article, there is a hierarchy. I think you’d probably agree that we needn’t shed tears over pulling up plants when they are being a problem. Killing animals should be for good reasons, not just for killing’s sake. You said we don’t need to eat animals. Maybe not, but I don’t see why we need to eat animals in order to do so. If God gave us that freedom, we can

engage in it (Gen. 9:1-3).

Jimmy's concern about man being pulled down has historical precedent. The loss of a belief in the sacredness of human life has given us abortion and euthanasia. Can you imagine a hundred years ago having to pass a law to prevent doctors from sticking sharp objects into the skulls of partially-delivered babies to suck their brains out and kill them? That would have been unthinkable. But people think they should be able to do that. What does that say about the value of human life? And if Darwinism is correct, then there is no qualitative difference between humans and animals, just a difference of degree.

Yes, Daniel and his friends did well on a vegetarian diet. But there's no hint in the text that he did that because he thought it wrong to eat meat. The Babylonians' meat could very well have been obtained as a part of idol worship.

The bottom line is that we have been given permission to eat any living (non-human) thing. Animals don't have the same "rights" we have. To make a case that animals shouldn't be used for food because they have a right not to, requires a reason for such a right. On what do you base such a right?

Rick Wade

© 2008 Probe Ministries

“What is the Role of the Church in Women Battering?”

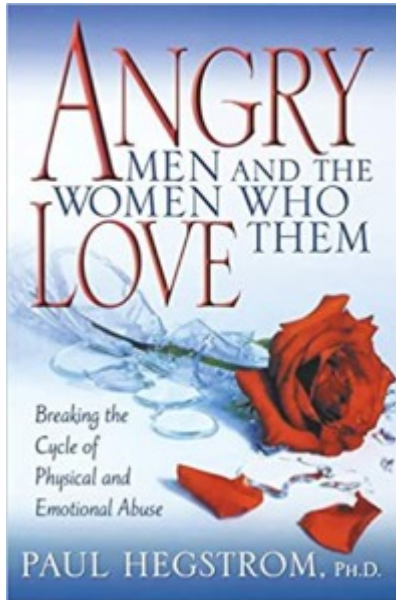
What is the role of the church in women battering?

First, let me recommend my colleague Kerby Anderson's article

[Abuse and Domestic Violence](#). The final section has a segment called "What the Church Can Do."

Also, I would respectfully suggest that the role of the church is to challenge battering husbands that their actions are sin and hold them accountable for their behavior, and to provide emotional and physical support to the woman until the home is safe again. The woman and those in church leadership would know it is safe when the offender evidences a changed heart resulting in changed behavior. And a changed heart usually only happens in the context of community, in this case male community, where a small group of men will, in love and commitment, "get in his face" to challenge his wrong thinking, help identify the anger fueling his rage against his wife, and encourage him to move into a deeper relationship with God.

The best specific answer to this question I've heard is the policy of church leadership to meet with the husband and wife, to confront the husband in love: about his responsibility to love and cherish his wife as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25–29), about the importance of using his strength to serve his wife, not hurt or threaten her, and to live with her in an understanding way, honoring her as a weaker vessel (1 Peter 3:7). Then—and this is extremely important—the husband is warned that if he tries to retaliate in any way, whether by force or even threatening to hurt his wife, she is to call the elders and tell them. And they will take action, either removing her from the home to safety or moving his stuff out so she can stay in the home. And they promise that retaliation will not be tolerated: if she doesn't press charges for the domestic violence, they will. Assault and battery is not just a sin; it's a crime.



I know that in many (if not most) churches, those in leadership don't know what to do other than tell the wife "pray harder and submit." (If that had worked, she wouldn't need intervention!) An excellent resource for understanding the dynamics of an abusive husband is Paul Hegstrom's book *Angry Men and the Women Who Love Them*, which is written by a repentant, recovered abuser. And pastor, by the way!

I hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

© 2008 Probe Ministries