

“Can You Rebut the Google Video ‘Zeitgeist’?”

Please have someone watch the Google video “Zeitgeist” (<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=5547481422995115331>) and provide an answer to this. If you have any energy to do this, you will be activating it from a deeper source. Please. Someone tell me why I should believe—or you for that matter!

I just finished watching the movie as you requested of someone at Probe Ministries.

I took several pages of notes but eventually stopped because the information and misstatements flowed much too rapidly. I stopped about 2/3 of the way through. But I watched till the bitter end.

Let’s start with the attack on Christianity. A quick Google search of Horus, the Egyptian Sun god whom Jesus and almost all other “savior” types are supposedly modeled after, is misrepresented in the film. He was the Falcon god and only later became known as the Sun god. [<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/horus.htm>] Nothing is said about being born on Dec 25th or having twelve disciples, or being born of a virgin, or dying and being raised three days later.

Sirius has never been known as the supposed star of Bethlehem, another astrological reference touted in the film. They also mention that somehow the Southern Cross constellation played a role in identifying the time of Jesus’ birth. That’s impossible since the Southern Cross is only visible in the Southern Hemisphere. Israel is simply not far enough south to ever have The Southern Cross visible. I have seen it once, from the Equator off the Galapagos Islands.

They summarily dismiss the testimony of Roman historians

Tacitus and Pliny the Younger who only speak of the Christ, not Jesus. They also show a quick list (where is that from?) of numerous 1st century historians who say nothing about him. Well, of course! Christianity was barely on anybody's radar screen in that first century. Nero just found them a convenient scapegoat for the burning of Rome precisely because there were so few and hardly anybody knew much about them. Josephus is a reliable historian in just about everything he writes about 1st century Judaism. The forgery spoken of is known, but it is a forgery of added phrases in a reliable entry about Jesus. What was added was Josephus' claims that this Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah. Other entries about Jesus say nothing about that. Also the film ignored the entries in the Jewish Talmud about Jesus from their perspective. Even critical historians today DO NOT dispute that there was a real man Jesus of Nazareth who his followers claimed was the Messiah.

The 9/11 conspiracy talk is also out of line. For online versions of a *Popular Mechanics* article debunking many of the conspiracy myths of 9/11 see:

[Debunking 9/11 Myths: About the Airplanes](#)

[Debunking the Myths About the 9/11 Attack on the Pentagon](#)

[Debunking the 9/11 Myths: Special Report – The World Trade Center](#)

These *Popular Mechanics* editors consulted scientists, engineers, and other experts. They are neutral. Their list of experts is impressive. You'll find evidence against conspiracy contentions about the collapse of the towers, what hit the Pentagon, and why fighters did not shoot them down.

You can also check this out:
www.minutemanreview.com/9-11-myths-debunked/.

I have no doubt there is a conspiracy, but it's a satanic

conspiracy that is millennia old. These types of films—"Loose Change" is another older 9/11 conspiracy film—prey on fear and paranoia. There is much more that could be said about all their claims but I just don't have the time right now.

Friend, the Gospels are reliable: Jesus is the incarnate God who died for our sins and rose on the third day. Astrology is forbidden in the Bible, it's not founded on it. If you have a copy, read Lee Strobel's *The Case for Christ*.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, Ph.D.
Probe Ministries

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9/11 and You

My sister had a 9:00 a.m. appointment at the World Trade Center.

On September 12.

Since September 11, 2001, I've often wondered what might have happened had her appointment been a day earlier or the terrorist attacks a day later. I could have been walking the streets of New York City with her picture.

What were your feelings that tragic day? Shock? Fear? Anger? Confusion? Sadness? How do you process those feelings now, as reminders of the attacks come in anniversary commemorations and media coverage? Nearly two-thirds of American Red Cross 9/11 adult counselees still grieve, according to a study of those directly affected by the attacks^{[1](#)}.

“I Hate You!”

In the immediate aftermath, my feelings of sadness blended with intense hostility. Once when Osama Bin Laden’s face appeared on television, I spontaneously shouted, “I hate you!”

I was and am a follower of Jesus. He taught his followers to “love your enemies.”^{2} Why was I yelling “I hate you!” to a picture on a TV screen?

I wondered why this guy hated my sister. If Deborah Wright had been among the victims, her death would have been included among those he applauded. If I had been a victim, he would have applauded mine. I wrote a radio series on “[Why Radical Muslims Hate You](#)” to discover historical, socio-cultural, political, religious, and psychological roots of such anger. It helped me to connect with Muslims who shared similar concerns but disavowed the radical methods.

Dust of Death

Deborah’s experience as a corporate chaplain took her back to New York to help WTC-based companies and their employees who suffered loss on 9/11 cope with the emotional and spiritual whirlwinds their worlds had become. Many suffered from survivor guilt. Failure to process grief could lead to serious consequences. Some firemen, for instance, were assigned to look after widows of fallen comrades. “There can be enormous intimacy and bonding in shared grief,” Deborah notes. “Some of the firemen and widows ended up in bed together.”

Some competitive, driven businesspersons re-examined their rat race—making big bucks and accumulating the most toys—and asked, “Is that all there is?”. Long looks at corporate culture prompted many to consider spiritual realities.

Part of helping survivors process their experiences involved taking them to Ground Zero. Deborah comments, “As I stood at

Ground Zero and picked up the dust, I could not help but think that we were standing in a giant crematorium. The ground seemed hallowed to me.”

Personal Lessons from 9/11

What personal 9/11 lessons persist? Perhaps you can relate to these that seem poignant to me:

We live in a contingent universe. Human decisions and actions have consequences, often for good or evil.

Life is temporary. One early spiritual leader wrote of our lives’ fleeting nature, “You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.”[\[3\]](#)

Link with the eternal. Jesus of Nazareth, whom people of diverse spiritual persuasions respect as a great teacher, told a friend grieving her brother’s death, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again. They are given eternal life for believing in me and will never perish.”[\[4\]](#)

Cherish your friends. In the aftermath of 9/11, many friendships were deepened as people linked with each other for encouragement, solace and support.

Understand and love your enemies and intellectual adversaries. Support national defense, but learning about state enemies can help communication with moderates who share some of their convictions. Getting to know neighbors or associates with whom you differ politically, philosophically or spiritually can help build bridges that foster civility in public discourse.

Notes

1. Amy Westfeldt, “Study: Sept. 11 Survivors Still Grieving,” Associated Press, May 26, 2006, on AOL News. Also see full Red Cross report,

2. Matthew 5:44 NASB.

3. James 4:14 NASB.

4. John 11:25 NLT.

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Why Radical Muslims Hate You (Short op-ed piece)

If you are a Westerner, an American, a non-Muslim, or a Muslim of a different stripe than they, then some radical Muslims hate you.

Why? The complex answer involves history, culture, politics, religion and psychology. Of course, many—some would say most—Muslims are peace loving and deplore terrorism. Islam is quite diverse. Extremist Muslims do not represent all Muslims any more than white supremacists represent all Christians. Not all “radical” Muslims are violent or hateful. But understanding extremist Muslim hatred is essential to interpreting our post-9/11 world.

Osama Bin Ladin calls on Muslims to “obey God’s command to kill the Americans and plunder their possessions...to kill Americans and their allies, both civil and military...” He and his sympathizers want to eliminate Western influence and restore their version of Islam to the world.

Would you believe that dancing in American churches helped fuel some radical Muslim anger today? Princeton Near East

scholar Bernard Lewis illustrates.

In 1948, Sayyid Qutb visited the United States for Egypt's Ministry of Education. His stay left him shocked with what he perceived as moral degeneracy and sexual promiscuity.

He wrote that even American religion was tainted by materialism and consumerism. Churches marketed their services to the public like merchants and entertainers. Success, big numbers, "fun" and having "a good time" seemed crucial to American churches.

He especially deplored clergy-sanctioned dances at church recreation halls. When the ministers lowered the lights, the dances became hot. Qutb's PG description: "The dance is inflamed by the notes of the gramophone...the dance-hall becomes a whirl of heels and thighs, arms enfold hips, lips and breasts meet, and the air is full of lust." He cited the famous Kinsey Reports as evidence of American sexual debauchery.

Qutb, who was dark skinned, also experienced racism in America. Back in Egypt, Qutb joined the Muslim Brothers organization. Imprisonment and torture made his writings more militant. Qutb became what Georgetown University religion and international affairs professor John Esposito calls "the architect of radical Islam."

Some Muslim Brotherhood groups, offshoots, and alumni are mainstream and nonviolent. Others have a violent legacy. A militant offshoot, Islamic Jihad, assassinated Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. Esposito notes that Abdullah Azzam, a radicalized former Muslim Brother, significantly influenced Osama bin Ladin. Former CIA Middle East case officer Robert Baer observes that a Kuwaiti Muslim Brother, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, became a bin Ladin terror chief.

Princeton's Lewis notes that Sayyid Qutb's denunciation of American moral character became incorporated into radical

Islamic ideology. For instance, he says Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, in calling the U.S. the "Great Satan," was being consistent with the Koranic depiction of Satan not as an "imperialist" or "exploiter" but as a seducer, "the insidious tempter who whispers in the hearts of men."

The founder of the faith I follow, Jesus of Nazareth, told people to "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." It is not emotionally easy for me to love Osama bin Ladin or to pray for him. I have to ask God for strength for that.

Certainly bin Ladin's hatred of me and my compatriots—flawed though we may be—does not justify his campaign of terror. His campaign rightly prompts national vigilance, a proverbial cost of freedom. But as we keep the powder dry, might it also be appropriate to individually reflect on the character that seems so offensive to him and his colleagues?

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Where Was God on Sept. 11? The Problem of Evil

Dr. Ray Bohlin explores the problem of evil in light of the terrorist attacks on the U.S. on Sept. 11, 2001.

Why Didn't God Prevent the Terrible Attacks?

The events of September 11th are indelibly etched in our hearts and minds. The horrible memories of personal tragedy and suffering will never really go away. As well they

shouldn't. As Christians we were all gratified to see so many of our national, state, and local leaders openly participate in prayer services and calling upon people of faith to pray for victims' families and injured survivors.

What was lost underneath the appearance of a religious revival was the clear cry of many that wondered if our prayers were justified. After all, if we pray to God in the aftermath and expect God to answer, where was He as countless individuals cried out to Him from the planes, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon? The skeptical voices were drowned out because of the fervent religious outcry seeking comfort and relief. But make no mistake; the question was there all the time. Where was God on September 11th? Surely He could have diverted those planes from their appointed destinations. Why couldn't the hijackers have been intercepted at the airports or their plots discovered long before their designed execution?

Why so many innocent people? Why should so many suffer so much? It all seems so senseless. How could a loving God allow it?

It is important to realize also that the suffering of those initial weeks is only the tip of the iceberg. There will be military deaths and casualties. The war on terrorism will be a long one with mounting personal and economic costs. The clean up will also continue to take its ever-mounting toll in dollars, lives, and emotional breakdowns.

Former pastor Gordon MacDonald spent time with the Salvation Army in caring for people and removing debris and bodies from the rubble of the World Trade Center. He relates this encounter from his journal of September 21 in *Christianity Today*: [\[1\]](#)

“Later in the night, I wandered over to the first-line medical tent, which is staffed by military personnel who are schooled in battlefield casualties. The head of the team, a

physician, and I got into a conversation.

“He was scared for the men in the pit, he said, because he knew what was coming ‘downstream.’ He predicted an unusual spike in the suicide rate and a serious outbreak of manic depression. . . . Many of the men will be unable to live with these losses at the WTC. It’s going to take an unspeakable toll on them.”

So why would God allow so much suffering? This is an ancient question. The problem of reconciling an all-powerful, all-loving God with evil is the number one reason that people reject God. I will try to clarify the question, provide some understanding, and make some comparisons of other explanations.

Psalm 73 and Asaph’s Answer

The Bible answers the question of where God was on September 11 in many passages, but I would like to begin with the answer from Asaph in Psalm 73. My discussion will flow from the excellent discussion of the problem of evil found in Dr Robert Pyne’s 1999 book, *Humanity and Sin: The Creation, Fall and Redemption of Humanity*.[\[2\]](#)

In Psalm 73, Asaph begins by declaring that God is good. Without that assumption, nothing more need be said. He goes on in verses 2-12 to lament the excess and success of the wicked. In verses six and seven he says, “Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits.” (Psalm 73:6-7). From this point Asaph lets his feelings be known by crying out that this isn’t fair when he says in verse 13, “Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence.”

The wicked seem to snub their noses at God with no apparent judgment, while Asaph strives to follow the Lord to no

benefit. We have all experienced this in one form or another. Some things in this world simply aren't fair. In the last ten verses of the psalm, Asaph recognizes that the wicked will indeed realize their punishment in the future. God's judgment will come. He also realizes that God is always with him and that is sufficient.

18th century philosopher David Hume stated the classical problem of evil by saying that if God were indeed all powerful He would do something about evil, and that if He were all-loving He would want to do something about evil. Since evil exists, God must either not be able or not want to do anything about it. This makes God either malevolent or impotent or both. But Hume chooses to leave out the option, as Asaph resolves, that God is patient. Hume, like many before him and after him, grows weary with a God who is patient towards evil.

We long for immediate justice. But before we pray too earnestly for immediate justice, we'd better reflect on what that would be like. What would instant justice look like? Immediate justice would have to be applied across the board. That means that every sin would be proportionately and immediately punished. We soon realize that immediate justice is fine if applied to everybody else. Dr. Pyne quotes D. A. Carson as saying, "The world would become a searing pain; the world would become hell. Do you really want nothing but totally effective, instantaneous justice? Then go to hell."[3](#) I think we're all quite comfortable with a God that does not apply immediate justice.

Evil and the Sovereignty of God

Next, I want to focus on God's sovereignty. We understand that God knew what He was doing in creating people with the ability to choose to love Him or hate Him. In order for our love for Him to be real, our choice needed to be real and that means creating creatures that could turn from Him as well as love Him. In order to have creatures with moral freedom, God risked

evil choices.

Some would go so far as to say that God couldn't intervene in our evil choices. But in Psalm 155:3, Psalm 135:6, and in Nebuchadnezzar's words of praise in Daniel 4:34-37 we're told it is God who does whatever He pleases. However, God does perform acts of deliverance and sometimes He chooses not to. We are still left with the question "Why?" In the book of Job, Job basically proclaims his innocence and essentially asks why? God doesn't really give Job an answer, but simply reminds him who is in charge. (Job 38:2-4) "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" the Lord asks Job.

The parameters are clearly set. God in His power is always capable of intervening in human affairs, but sometimes He doesn't and we aren't always given a reason why. There is tension here that we must learn to accept, because the alternative is to blaspheme by assigning to God evil or malevolent actions. As Asaph declared, God is good!

This brings us to the hidden purposes of God. For although we can't always see God's purpose, we believe He has one in everything that occurs, even seemingly senseless acts of cruelty and evil. Here is where Jesus' sufferings serve as a model. The writer of Hebrews tells us that Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him. (Hebrews 12:1-3) So then, we should bear our cross for the eternal joy set before us. (Hebrews 12:11, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18) But knowing this doesn't always make us feel better.

When Jesus was dying on the cross all His disciples but John deserted Him. From their perspective, all that they had learned and prepared for over the last three years was over, finished. How could Jesus let them crucify Him? It didn't make any sense at all. Yet as we well know now, the most important work in history was being accomplished and the disciples thought God was absent. How shortsighted our perspective can be.

The Danger of a Nice Explanation

But with this truth comes the danger of a nice explanation. Even though we know and trust that there is a purpose to God's discipline and His patience towards ultimate judgment, that doesn't mean we should somehow regard evil as an expression of God's goodness. In addition, we can be tempted to think that if God has a purpose to evil and suffering, then my own sin can be assigned not to me but to someone else, namely God Himself because He had a purpose in it.

Dr. Robert Pyne puts it this way.

We may not be able to fully resolve the problem of evil, and we may not be able to explain the origin of sin, but we can see the boundaries that must be maintained when addressing these issues. We share in Adam's guilt, but we cannot blame Him for our sin. God is sovereign, and He exercises His providential control over all things, but we cannot blame Him either. God permits injustice to continue, but He neither causes it nor delights in it.[{4}](#)

Another danger lies in becoming too comfortable with evil. When we trust in God's ultimate purpose and patience with evil we shouldn't think that we have somehow solved the problem and therefore grow comfortable in its presence. We should never be at peace with sin, suffering, and evil.

The prophet Habakkuk sparred with God in the first few verses of chapter 1 of the book bearing his name by recounting all the evil in Israel. The Lord responds in verses 6-11 that indeed the Babylonians are coming and sin will be judged. Habakkuk further complains about God's choice of the godless Babylonians, to which God reminds him that they too will receive judgment. Yet the coming judgment still left Habakkuk with fear and dread. "I heard and my inward parts trembled: at the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, and in my place I tremble. . . . Yet, I will exult in the Lord."

(Habakkuk 3:16-19.) Habakkuk believes that God knows what He is doing. That does not bring a smile to his face. But he can face the day.

“We are not supposed to live at peace with evil and sin, but we are supposed to live at peace with God. We continue to trust in His goodness, His sovereignty, His mercy, and we continue to confess our own responsibility for sin.”[{5}](#)

He Was There!

Though we have come to a better understanding of the problem of evil, we are still left with our original question. Where was God on September 11th?

While the Christian answer may not seem a perfect answer, it is the only one which offers truth, hope, and comfort. Naturalism or deism offers no real answers. Things just happen. There is no good and no evil. Make the best of it! Pantheism says the physical world is irrelevant or an illusion. It doesn't really matter. Good and evil are the same.

To answer the question we need to understand that God does, in fact, notice when every sparrow falls and grieve over every evil and every suffering. Jesus is with us in all of our suffering, feeling all of our pain. That's what compassion means, to suffer with another. So the suffering that Christ endured on the cross is literally unimaginable.

“The answer is, how could you not love this being who went the extra mile, who practiced more than He preached, who entered into our world, who suffered our pains, who offers Himself to us in the midst of our sorrows?”[{6}](#)

We must remember that Jesus' entire time on earth was a time of sacrifice and suffering, not just His trial and crucifixion. Jesus was tempted in the manner of all men and He bore upon Himself all our sin and suffering. So the answer is

quite simple. He was there!

He was on the 110th floor as one called home. He was at the other end of the line as his wife realized her husband was not coming home. He was on the planes, at the Pentagon, in the stairwells answering those who called out to Him and calling to those who didn't.

He saw every face, knew every name, even though some did not know Him. Some met Him for the first time, some ignored Him for the last time. He is there now.

Let me share with you one more story from Gordon MacDonald's experience with the Salvation Army during the initial clean up at the World Trade Center.

"There is a man whose job it is to record the trucks as they leave the pit with their load of rubble. He is from Jamaica, and he has one of the most radiant smiles I've ever seen. He brings a kind of spiritual sunshine to the entire intersection. "I watch him—with his red, white, and blue hard hat—talking to each truck driver as they wait their turn to go in and get a load. He brightens men up. In the midst of those smells, the dust, the clashing sounds, he brings a civilizing influence to the moment.

"Occasionally I go out to where he stands and bring him some water. At other times, he comes over and chats with us. We always laugh when we engage. "I said to him last night, 'You're a follower of the Lord, aren't you?' He gave me an enthusiastic 'Yes! Jesus is with me all the time!' "Somehow this guy represents to me the quintessential picture of the ideal follower of Christ: out in the middle of the chaos, doing his job, pressing a bit of joy into a wild situation."

[\[7\]](#)

Notes

1. "Blood Sweat and Prayers," *Christianity Today*, Nov.

12,2001, p. 76.

2. Robert Pyne, *Humanity and Sin: The Creation, Fall and Redemption of Humanity*, pp. 193-209.

3. Pyne, p. 197.

4. Pyne, p. 204.

5. Pyne, p. 206.

6. Peter Kreeft, quoted in *The Case for Faith* by Lee Strobel, 2000, p. 45-46.

7. "Blood Sweat and Prayers," *Christianity Today*, p. 76.

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