

Purpose: To train the class on how to talk with atheists

How Would You Answer this Atheist?

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • January 20, In the year of our Lord, 2016

This atheist watched a video that Steve Lloyd and his son Jim put together on The Fall, and Satan's part in it. You can watch the video here: <http://www.turning-pointsofthebible.com/videolessons>

Scroll down to "Lesson 5: The Fall"

You can then click on the "Watch on YouTube," button and in the comments section, you will find what the atheist said.

How would you respond to this atheist?

I. "Being an atheist who is moderately interested in religion, I am curious about a few details in that story."

A. Why would an atheist show interest in religion?

II. "Firstly, if God is omniscient and is beyond time, how did he not foresee the serpent persuading Eve? He gave it the ability to talk and gave him the knowledge concerning the tree."

A. Where does the Bible say that God did not foresee the serpent's actions?

B. Truly, God did foresee what the serpent would do.

C. God prepared before the beginning:

1. Eph 1.4

2. 1Pe 1.20

3. Rev 13.8

D. What is this atheist attempting to do?

III. "Not to mention, why didn't God intervene or anything; he clearly would have seen it happening as he is omnipresent?"

A. Do atheists truly want God to intervene, or is this simply a matter of finding a reason to criticize God?

B. Will God ever intervene to stop evil?

1. Will He not do this very thing in the end?

2. God will give the atheist what he wants, intervention, but it will not be as the atheist wishes.

IV. "Also, seeing as God didn't give them knowledge of 'good and evil', Eve probably didn't understand consequences. Can God really blame her."

A. Were Adam and Eve completely devoid of knowing good and evil?

1. They did not know it by experience, but

2. they knew it from authority.

a) Can we know it by authority and that be enough?

b) Do we have to kill someone before we realize it is evil?

B. God created Eve as a fully functional adult,

1. capable of reasoning,

2. as Genesis 3 shows.

a) Therefore, she knew what death was, but

b) let us assume that she did not.

(1) Did she know it was something dreadful and to avoid?

(2) Yes, she knew that the consequences were severe.

C. Therefore, yes, God could really blame her, and He did, along with Adam.

V. "Fourthly, if God is meant to be perfect by definition, how could he lie to them? Lying is often seen as an immoral thing, right? He does it later in Genesis, when he tells Abram to kill his son and then claims it was a test."

A. What lie did God purportedly tell Adam and Eve?

B. Did God lie when He said they would die the day they ate of it? Gen 2.16–17

C. How do we explain death to an atheist?

D. Did God lie when He told Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, and then halted Abraham, saying, "But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' So he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me'" (Gen 22.11–12).

1. Can the one issuing a command not change it or stop it?
 2. What is wrong with it being a test?
 - a) Is part of training for anything,
 - b) going through tests to see how you do?
- VI. "Expanding that point, that sounds like a terrible thing for God to say. Imagine if someone was about to kill their child and said 'the voice in my head told me to do it'. He would be locked away and would be seen as crazy."
- A. This is no voice in the head.
 - B. Can the Creator do as He wishes?
 - C. Do parents and spouses ever send anyone to war, or to serve as police officers? Are they not sending them out to die?
- VII. "God has done and said worse things than Satan by far. God has committed genocide, taught intolerance towards homosexuals and kills innocent people everyday. All Satan did was convince people not to listen to the malevolent killer in the sky, nor did he really kill that many people."
- A. Now that our society has decided that homosexuality should be tolerated, they expect God to follow their lead.
 - B. What does man do, if something bad grows in his body?
 1. Does he not remove it before it can harm the rest of the body?
 2. Rom 9.14–24 shows the sovereignty of God that atheists do not understand, although they do in their own lives.
- VIII. "Also, if Satan was truly evil and was ruining the lives of many people, why wouldn't God just dispose of him instead of creating a new place for him?"
- A. What new place did God create for Satan?
 - B. God has prepared hell for the devil and his angels.
 1. The time when God throws Satan into hell,
 2. will come soon enough.
 - C. Why has God not done it yet?
 1. 2Pe 3.9 shows that He waits for all who will repent to repent.

2. When that time runs out or has been fulfilled, He will end all evil on the Earth, and He will take the righteous to live with Him, which is a place wherein righteousness dwells.

IX. "By the way, I do wish to have these questions answered; it may sway me."

A. Whether we can sway this atheist or not,

B. we still have to answer their questions, objections, and challenges.

1. Whether we see the value in it,

2. the Lord has told us to do it.

X. "Whilst I have you, I also would like to know why God has negative human traits. From what I read of Exodus, one of the ten commandments states no one should have any other god before him as he is 'a jealous god.' If God is perfect, how can he be jealous?"

A. Is jealousy necessarily negative?

B. Consider this so-called "human" trait:

1. Should a woman be jealous, if her friend has other friends?

2. Should a woman be jealous, if her husband has other women?

C. Therefore,

1. you see that in some contexts jealousy is appropriate, but

2. in others it is not.

- a) What about God?

- b) Does He have a right to jealousy, if we have other gods?

XI. "Not to mention, why did he need to rest on the seventh day of the Universe's creation; God really doesn't strike me as an entity that gets exhausted?"

A. Did God need to rest?

B. What does Genesis 2.2–3 say?

1. It says nothing of His needing to rest.

2. It only says

- a) He ended His work and

- b) rested from all the work that He had done.
 - (1) Can He not create and then
 - (2) sit back and admire what He has created?
- C. The creation of the heavens and the Earth, the entire universe,
 - 1. does not impress this atheist, but
 - 2. he thinks he finds a flaw in God because He rested! Amazing.
- XII. What we have done here is relatively easy, tearing down someone's argument, but can we either challenge this atheist or offer him something that would build him up?
 - A. We always have to show them the context of the things they object to in the Bible, for they often just repeat what they have heard others say, and they do not typically know the story of the Bible.
 - B. What is the story of the Bible that they need to hear?