31 SURPRISING REASONS TO BELIEVE IN GOD
A STORY

• In February 2013, a family in northern California noticed the top of an old, rusted can protruding from the ground.

• They wondered if someone had buried old garbage in tin cans and other objects.

• When they tried to unearth the can, it turned out to be heavier than expected.
A STORY

• When they were able to open it, they discovered that it was full of gold coins.
After searching the area, they found eight cans containing 1427 gold coins, that were worth an estimated $11 million.
A STORY

• Asked if they had any clue before the find, they did remember noticing years before a tin can tied to the tree. The tree had grown around part of the can.

• It was an obvious marker placed by the person who buried the treasure.

• The clue to the treasure was there, but they were unaware that it was a clue.
THE ECSTASY AND AGONY OF BEAUTY
SUPERHEROES
Superheroes and fantasy movies aren’t just for kids, therefore God exists.

Would anyone have predicted fifty years ago that grownups would flock to see movies about a Jedi knight or a teenager with spider abilities?

One would think that as a society became more secular, the popular interest in supernatural heroes would have diminished.
SUPERHEROES

• Belief in the supernatural is supposedly on the decline, yet we flock to see movies about heroes and villains with superhuman or magical powers.

• E. Michael Jones in *Monsters from the Id* argues that as society has become more and more materialistic and has pushed the supernatural world further from the conscious mind, our subconscious need to acknowledge the existence of the supernatural realm is being satisfied through sci-fi and fantasy genres.
HORROR MOVIES
HORROR MOVIES

- Horror movies and books are shockingly popular, therefore God exists.

- Since our society is so increasingly secular, how is it that novelist Stephen King has become one of the most bestselling authors of all time?

- E. Michael Jones argues that as society has repressed belief in the supernatural, those beliefs inevitably resurface in other arenas.
HORROR MOVIES

• Superheroes - this is the process of sublimation - attachment of our denied emotions and beliefs onto a positive substitute (comic books, fantasy heroes).

• Horror - this is known as displacement - attaching one’s repression to negative substitutes.

• Horror products also produce another hint of God, but they add a huge twist: the destructive consequences that result when we try to deny belief in God’s existence.
This is why horror genres are so filled with monsters.

Monsters are the result of rebellion against the moral order, which in essence is rebellion against God.

Jones explains, “The calamities described in horror fiction are really repressed moral truths. Horror is morality written backwards.”

As we remove God, we have birthed our own Frankensteins.
MUSIC
• Music moves my soul, like nothing else, therefore God exists.

• Victor Hugo - “Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and cannot remain silent.”

• What is it about music that is so special, so comforting and delightful to the soul? Why is music such a huge part of contemporary life and such a transcultural phenomenon?
MUSIC

• Sergei Rachmaninoff - “No prophet, no warrior bold. No leaned mantle wearing. But as I go my harp I hold. The grace of God declaring.”

• From a theistic perspective, the structure inherent in music is reflective of the structured, law-abiding universe that was created *ex nihilo*.

• It is also about tension and resolution (meter, rhythm, timbre, volume, harmonics).
• I love beauty and art, therefore God exists.

• Atheists and theists have a love of music, art, and beauty even if they have different reasons for it.

• If there is no God, and all reality is the result of accidental, purposeless evolution, then what is the experience of beauty?

• Is it merely an electrical-organic moment within our brains and nothing more?
BEAUTY

• We have heard the riddle: if a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?

• If a tree grows in a forest and no one is there to see it, is it beautiful?

• From a materialist worldview, it is difficult to explain the existence of beauty and transcultural aesthetic.

• They can and do enjoy beauty, but don’t have much of an explanation for why.
BEAUTY

• Holly Ordway - “Beauty is fundamentally useless; it is its own end and its own reward, and eludes attempts to explain it in utilitarian terms. Materialists often argue that responses to beauty are evolutionarily adaptive, helping to attract mates or improve empathy, and thus increasing the likelihood of passing on one’s genes. This is bunk. It is reductive to an extreme, and these explanations don’t hold up to the actual experience of great art, music, literature, or natural beauty.”
HAPPINESS

• Happiness is a moral responsibility, therefore God exists.

• Declaration - pursuit of happiness, an elusive goal.

• Why is happiness a fleeting experience? Our pets seem content, even happy as they wag their tails.

• C.S. Lewis - happiness is not just a chemical interaction in one’s brain but heavenly reality grounded in the reality of God, who is a God of joy.
YEARNINGS FOR A BETTER WORLD
TRAFFICKING

• Human trafficking is a vile evil that must be stopped, therefore God exists.

• Atheists and theists both agree that human trafficking is evil and both volunteer to fight it.

• But how can we say it is wrong?

• Anatole France wrote, “Nature, in her indifference, makes no distinction between good and evil.”
TRAFFICKING

• If morals are temporary, cultural inventions begat by evolution, then they are binding only within the society in which they evolved.

• You can impose them on individuals within our society, but you cannot impose them on those in other societies.

• In other words, Westerners cannot go to Cambodia or India and rescue children from sexual slavery.
CRUELTY

• Cruelty to animals is detestable, therefore God exists.

• Francis of Assisi - “If you have men who will exclude any of God’s creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men.”

• Dennis Prager - interviewing president of PETA, car down narrow alley, little girl and a dog, you cannot avoid both, which would you choose to hit?
CRUELTY

• If there is no God, human are just members of the animal kingdom and we should be diligent in protecting every living creature.

• However, if God exists, then we are able to affirm that cruelty to animals is wrong and that human and animal life are not of equal value.

• Ask the atheist: Why do you care so much about the ethical treatment of animals?
BAD BEHAVIOR

• I’m embarrassed by the bad behavior of believers, therefore God exists.

• Richard Le Galliene - “Organized Christianity has probably done more to retard the ideals that were its founder’s than any other agency in the world.”

• Katherine Whitehorn - “Why do born-again people so often make you wish they’d never been born the first time?”
BAD BEHAVIOR

- If godless behavior of believers bothers us, why is that the case?
- In a godless universe, people are free to set their own moral bars wherever they please?
- Perhaps all of this reveals a moral standard within our psyches.
- We are bothered by a signpost pointing away from materialism and toward theism.
• Protecting our environment is a moral issue, therefore God exists.

• John Muir - “God has cared for these trees, saved them from droughts, disease, avalanches, and a thousand tempests and flood. But he cannot save them from fools.”

• If all living creatures are equally valid, how can one species take the life of another?
• I deeply value free speech and self-expression, therefore God exists.

• Voltaire - “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”

• But from a naturalistic worldview, it would seem that the strong have the right to silence the weak.

• Lenin took away the freedom of speech and freedom of the press.
SHAFTS OF GLORY
EXISTENCE

• I’m amazed at the existence of existence, therefore God exists.

• Martin Heidegger - “Why does the universe exist?”

• Stephen Hawking - “Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going.”
EXISTENCE

- Descartes - *ex nihilism nihil fit* - nothing comes from nothing.

- Does it make any more sense to claim the laws of physics have always existed than it does to claims God exists?

- The universe’s existence and the laws of the universe are awe-inspiring, but they are not an adequate cause for the existence of all matter.
GLORY OF UNIVERSE
• I’m staggered by the glory of our universe, therefore God exists.

• Paul Davies - *God and the New Physics* and *The Goldilocks Enigma* detail the universe’s fine tuning.

• Ratio of the proton to the electron is adjusted to one part in $10^{37}$.

• Ratio of the electromagnetic force to gravity is adjusted to one part in $10^{40}$. 
• Edward Harrison - “Here is the cosmological proof of the existence of God—the design argument of Paley—updated and refurbished. The fine tuning of the universe provides prima facie evidence of deistic design.”

• George Greenstein - “As we survey all the evidence, the thought insistently arises that some supernatural agency—or rather, Agency—must be involved. Is it possible we have stumbled upon scientific proof of the existence of a supreme being?”
Mathematics
MATHEMATICS

- Mathematics and numbers are no mere games, therefore God exists.

- “Mathematics is just one big game. That’s all it is. I am here simply to teach you the rules of the game so you can play it if you want to.”

- James Bradley and Russell Howe - “For Augustine, numbers were already present in God’s mind at the time of creation.”
• Truth is more real and important than preference, therefore God exists.

• “That may be true for you, but it’s not true for me.”

• Postmodernists become modernists on the freeway, in the dentist’s chair, and in the home.

• There are such things as “true truths” - truths that endure, truths that are supracultural.
THE MIRACLE
THAT IS ME
• I wonder about the wonder of the self, therefore God exists.

• *Spartacus, Elephant Man, Buffy the Vampire Slayer* - each character said: “I am not an animal.”

• John Seale - “How can we square this self-conception of ourselves as mindful, meaning-creating, free, rational, etc. agents with a universe that consists of mindless, meaningless unfree, non rational brute physical particles?”
Doubts

• I wonder about the wonder of doubts, therefore God exists.

• Thoreau - “Faith keeps many doubts in her pay. If I could not doubt, I should not believe.”

• Doubts are common to all humans. Only robots have no doubts. Computers don’t doubt.

• We think, we question, we doubt.
HUMAN DIGNITY

- I wonder about the wonder of human dignity, therefore God exists.

- Peter Singer - “When the death of a disabled infant will lead to the birth of another infant with better prospects of a happy life, the total amount of happiness will be greater if the disabled infant is killed.”

- Humans are created in the image of God, and even the loss of good health does not negate that fact.
FEELING HOMESICK
AT HOME
PAIN AND SUFFERING

• I long for a world without pain and suffering, therefore God exists.

• For many atheists, this is the big roadblock to believing in God.

• Nicholas Wolterstorff - we all experience grief and sorrow, suffering destroys us and yet has the power to remake us.

• Jesus is the suffering servant (Psalm 22, Isaiah 53).
LOVE AND COMMUNITY

• I long for lasting love and community, therefore God exists.

• We seem to be hardwired for love and created for community, but each of us is imperfect.

• Community is so hard to maintain because of human sinfulness and the fall.

• Contrary to what atheists believe, love is eternal.
I long for immortality and eternity, therefore God exists.

If there is no God, why have so many humans throughout history believed in an afterlife?

If there is no God, if life is just an accidental event, and if human life is no more valuable ultimately than animal or insect life, is it rational to grieve so deeply?
ETERNITY

• Why does death hurt so much when we have known for a lifetime that it was coming?

• The Bible teaches that we are not mortal but immortal beings. We will live forever.

• Grief is the deep and sensible notion that death should not be, that it is not right that we be separated from our lived ones.

• We look forward to an afterlife better than this one.
RESOURCE

31 Surprising Reasons to Believe in God

How superheroes, art, environmentalism, and science point toward faith

Rick Stedman