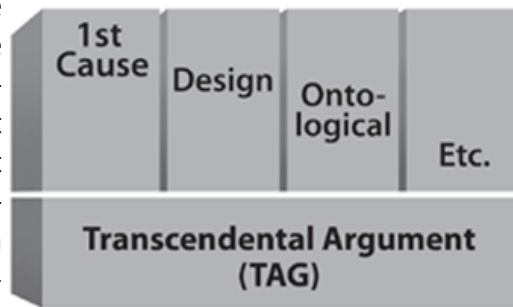


He is using God’s laws of logic, while denying the biblical God that makes such laws possible.

How could there be laws at all without a lawgiver? The atheist cannot account for (1) the existence of laws of logic, (2) why they are immaterial, (3) why they are universal, (4) why they do not change with time, and (5) how human beings can possibly know about them or their properties. But of course, all these things make perfect sense on the Christian system. Laws of logic owe their existence to the biblical God. Yet they are required to reason rationally, to prove things. So the biblical God must exist in order for reasoning to be possible. Therefore, *the best proof of God’s existence is that without Him we couldn’t prove anything at all!* The existence of the biblical God is the prerequisite for knowledge and rationality. This is called the “transcendental argument for God” or TAG for short. It is a devastating and conclusive argument, one that only a few people have even attempted to refute (and none of them successfully).<sup>5</sup>

### PROOF VERSUS PERSUASION

Though the transcendental argument for God is deductively sound, not all atheists will be convinced upon hearing it. It may take time for them to even understand the argument in the first place. As I write this chapter, I am in the midst of an electronic exchange with an atheist who has not yet fully grasped the argument. Real-life discussions on this issue take time. But even if the atheist fully understands the argument, he may not be convinced. We must remember that there is a difference between proof and persuasion. Proof is objective, but persuasion is subjective. The transcendental argument does indeed objectively prove that God exists.



However, that does not mean that the atheists will necessarily cry “uncle.” Atheists are strongly motivated to not believe in the biblical God—a God who is rightly angry at them for their treason against Him.

But the atheist’s denial of God is an emotional reaction, not a logical one. We might imagine a disobedient child who is about to be punished by his father. He might cover his eyes with his hands and say of his father, “You don’t exist!” but that would hardly be rational. Atheists deny (with their lips) the biblical God, not for logical reasons, but for psychological reasons. We must also keep in mind that the unbeliever’s problem is not simply an emotional issue, but a deep spiritual problem (*1 Corinthians 2:14*). It is the Holy Spirit that must give him the ability to repent (*1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Timothy 2:25*).

So we must keep in mind that it is not our job to convert people—nor can we. Our job is to give a defense of the faith in a way that is faithful to the Scriptures (*1 Peter 3:15*). It is the Holy Spirit that brings conversion. But God can use our arguments as part of the process by which He draws people to Himself.

1 Of course, sometimes people are persuaded by such arguments. But that doesn’t mean the argument is cogent. After all, people can be persuaded by very bad arguments. See all footnotes

2 This is called an “iterated belief”—a belief about a belief. See all footnotes

3 Self-deception is quite common. People frequently attempt to convince themselves of what they want to believe. The Bible tells us that those who hear God’s Word but do not act on it are self-deceived (*James 1:22*). See all footnotes

4 In some cases, we can use scientific evidence to expose such inconsistency. Consider the evolutionist who admits that the probability of a cell forming by chance is infinitesimal. He is going against the odds. Yet, he decides to carry an umbrella with him when there is a 90 percent chance of rain. See all footnotes

5 Perhaps most significantly, philosopher Michael Martin has attempted to rebut TAG indirectly by making a transcendental-style argument for the non-existence of God (TANG). Martin’s argument has been refuted by John Frame, and independently by Michael Butler.



# God Doesn’t Believe in Atheists

by Dr. Jason Lisle on September 9, 2014

The Bible teaches that atheists are not *really* atheists. That is, those who profess to be atheists do ultimately believe in God in their heart-of-hearts. The Bible teaches that everyone knows God, because God has revealed Himself to all (*Romans 1:19*). In fact, the Bible tells us that God’s existence is so obvious that anyone who suppresses this truth is “without excuse” (*Romans 1:20*). The atheist denies with his lips what he knows in his heart. But if they know God, then why do atheists claim that they do not believe in God?

The answer may be found in *Romans 1:18*. God is angry at unbelievers for their wickedness. And an all-powerful, all-knowing God who is angry at you is a terrifying prospect. So even though many atheists might claim that they are neutral, objective observers, and that their disbelief in God is purely rational, in reality, they are strongly motivated to reject the biblical God who is rightly angry with them. So they suppress that truth in unrighteousness. They convince themselves that they do not believe in God.<sup>2</sup> The atheist is intellectually schizophrenic—believing in God, but believing that he does not believe in God.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, we do not really need to give the atheist any more specific evidences for God’s existence. He already knows in his heart-of-hearts that God exists, but he doesn’t want to believe it. Our goal is to expose the athe-

ist's suppressed knowledge of God.<sup>4</sup> With gentleness and respect, we can show the atheist that he already knows about God, but is suppressing what he knows to be true.

### EXPOSING THE INCONSISTENCY

Because an atheist does believe in God, but does not believe that he believes in God, he is simply a walking bundle of inconsistencies. One type to watch for is a *behavioral inconsistency*; this is where a person's behavior does not comport with what he claims to believe. For example, consider the atheist university professor who teaches that human beings are simply chemical accidents—the end result of a long and purposeless chain of biological evolution. But then he goes home and kisses his wife and hugs his children, as if they were not simply chemical accidents, but valuable, irreplaceable persons deserving of respect and worthy of love.

Consider the atheist who is outraged at seeing a violent murder on the ten o'clock news. He is very upset and hopes that the murderer will be punished for his wicked actions. But in his view of the world, why should he be angry? In an atheistic, evolutionary universe where people are just animals, murder is no different than a lion killing an antelope. But we don't punish the lion! If people are just chemical accidents, then why punish one for killing another? We wouldn't get upset at baking soda for reacting with vinegar; that's just what chemicals do. The concepts that human beings are valuable, are not simply animals, are not simply chemicals, have genuine freedom to make choices, are responsible for their actions, and are bound by a universal objective moral code all stem from a Christian worldview. Such things simply do not make sense in an atheistic view of life.

Many atheists behave morally and expect others to behave morally as well. But absolute morality simply does not comport with atheism. Why should there be an absolute, objective standard of behavior that all people should obey if the universe and the people within it are simply

accidents of nature? Of course, people can assert that there is a moral code. But who is to say what that moral code should be? Some people think it is okay to be racist; others think it is okay to kill babies, and others think we should kill people of other religions or ethnicities, etc. Who is to say which position should be followed? Any standard of our own creation would necessarily be subjective and arbitrary.

Now, some atheists might respond, "That's right! Morality is subjective. We each have the right to create our own moral code. And therefore, you cannot impose your personal morality on other people!" But of course, this statement is self-refuting, because when they say, "you cannot impose your personal morality on other people" they are imposing their personal moral code on other people. When push comes to shove, no one really believes that morality is merely a subjective, personal choice.

### LOGICAL INCONSISTENCY

Another inconsistency occurs when atheists attempt to be rational. Rationality involves the use of laws of logic. Laws of logic prescribe the correct chain of reasoning between truth claims. For example, consider the argument: "If it is snowing outside, then it must be cold out. It is snowing. Therefore, it is cold out." This argument is correct because it uses a law of logic called *modus ponens*. Laws of logic, like *modus ponens*, are immaterial, universal, invariant, abstract entities. They are immaterial because you can't touch them or stub your toe on one. They are universal and invariant because they apply in all places and at all times (*modus ponens* works just as well in Africa as it does in the United States, and just as well on Friday as it does on Monday). And they are abstract because they deal with concepts.

Laws of logic stem from God's sovereign nature; they are a reflection of the way He thinks. They are immaterial, universal, invariant, abstract entities, because God is an immaterial (Spirit), omnipresent, unchanging God who has

all knowledge (*Colossians 2:3*). Thus, all true statements will be governed by God's thinking—they will be logical. The law of non-contradiction, for example, stems from the fact that God does not deny Himself (*2 Timothy 2:13*). The Christian can account for laws of logic; they are the correct standard for reasoning because God is sovereign over all truth. We can know some of God's thoughts because God has revealed Himself to us through the words of Scripture and the person of Jesus Christ.

However, the atheist cannot account for laws of logic. He cannot make sense of them within his own worldview. How could there be immaterial, universal, invariant, abstract laws in a chance universe formed by a big bang? Why should there be an absolute standard of reasoning if everything is simply "molecules in motion"? Most atheists have a materialistic outlook—meaning they believe that everything that exists is material, or explained by material processes. But laws of logic are not material! You cannot pull a law of logic out of the refrigerator! If atheistic materialism is true, then there could be no laws of logic, since they are immaterial. Thus, logical reasoning would be impossible!

No one is denying that atheists are able to reason and use laws of logic. The point is that if atheism were true, the atheist would not be able to reason or use laws of logic because such things would not be meaningful. The fact that the atheist is able to reason demonstrates that he is wrong. By using that which makes no sense given his worldview, the atheist is being horribly inconsistent.

