

We Walk By Faith, Not By Sight: God is Not Found With Science

Atheism is Contradiction, Part 1

By Jeff Grupp

DebunkingAtheism.net

PraiseandLove.net

April 3, 2019

Key Verses

2 Corinthians 5:7 English Standard Version (ESV)

for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Hebrews 11:1 King James Version (KJV)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 Corinthians 4:18 New International Version (NIV)

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Introduction

In this paper I will argue that the Bible on the one hand, and contemporary atheists on the other, are actually in *complete agreement* about the how much scientific, mathematical, or logical evidence there is for God—*which is precisely zero*—since God is found in *faith* in Jesus Christ (“We walk by faith, not by sight”, 2 Cor. 5:7), and *not* found in empirical information (such as sight) or the intellectual systems and methods of humans. Christian faith is about *experiential evidence of the unseen* (Heb. 11:1 KJV), rather than about scientific and intellectual discovery.

But from what I can tell, it seems as if every atheist misses this point, surprisingly, and equally surprising it seems Christian theists often do also—where *each* side typically puts tremendous importance on whether or not there is scientific or logical evidence for God, but in doing this, they do not argue in the playing field of the Bible, *which specifically tells us we will not find God through science or intellectual analysis, but rather through direct revelation of God-Christ-Spirit.*

John 6:44 New International Version (NIV)

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.

Often lacking direct experience of God, and sufficient meditation on the Word of God, Christians in the present-age often have their house built on sand, their roots not firmly in the soil, and develop interest in conforming to the patterns of this world, where they misguidedly yearn for Christianity to be *scientific*, but where science is based on sensation (such as sight), and

where Christians consequently do not fully grasp that they are to walk by *faith, not by sight*.¹

Atheists are typically concerned with three things:

- Purported logical inconsistency of the Bible
- Hypocritical conduct of Christians
- That there is no scientific or intellectual evidence for God

In this paper, I will discuss how the third point—*that there is no scientific or intellectual evidence for a Christian God*—is absolutely correct, is 100 percent in agreement with the Bible, and since atheists are not in disagreement with the Bible on that point, then claiming that lack of scientific or intellectual evidence for God is problematical for the Bible and Christianity is a red herring, and also a strawman analysis. This is an important point, and atheists have missed the logical contradiction in their analysis of, and attack on, Christianity². Regarding this issue, consider the following points:

1. Atheists claim scientific and intellectual evidence is required to know that the God of the Bible is real.
2. But the God of the Bible is specifically defined in terms of being knowable only by faith-experience, and the Bible specifically says He

¹ I am not suggesting that Christians cease doing apologetics, but rather, I am suggesting that they:

- Restrict apologetics to exposing the holes in atheist attackers’ blitzes on Christianity and the Bible
- Not get too wound-up trying to *prove* God exists scientifically or logically, which is impossible, since God is known by faith, not by sensation or reasoning
- Keep perspective that the Bible is concerned with *faith* (evidence in the unseen), not with its opposite, which is *science* (evidence of the seen)

One revelation of faith-experience and direct experience of God is more powerful than all apologetics information combined. Atheists are usually not swayed by apologetics, but revelation of Christ can sway for those who are open to Truth.

² To be fair, much of why atheists have made this error is because they are following what many Christians say “faith” is, but where what Christians are saying is not in accord with what the Bible says faith is. This is an incredibly important issue, and it will be explored below.

is *not* known by scientific and intellectual evidence (“we walk by faith, not by sight”).

3. Atheists are *not* discussing the God of the Bible according to how it is defined (known by faith, Phil 3:8-9, Heb. 11:6, and other verses quoted in this article).
4. This erroneous analysis atheists invent is used to tear down Christianity.
5. *Therefore*, atheist use strawman analysis in discussing the God of the Bible.

And the specific strawman critical thinking fallacy that atheists routinely carry-out looks like this:

1. The Christian God, by definition, is only knowable by faith-revelation experience (“we walk by faith, not by sight”).
2. Atheist claim #1: God must be knowable by scientific and human reasoning processes (which excludes faith-revelation experience).
3. Atheist claim #2: there is no scientific and/or intellectual evidence for the God of the Christian faith.
4. Therefore, the God of the Christian faith should not be believed in, and/or probabilistically speaking almost certainly does not exist.
(FALLACY)

This is a textbook critical thinking fallacy, called the strawman, and it exists in virtually every big-name atheists’ tool-chest in the contemporary world. Even stranger is it that Christians before this article have not pointed this obvious critical thinking fallacy out. This is the topic of this article.

1. God is Found Via Faith, Not Via Science or Reason

God is not discoverable in the physical realm, or in the products of human reasoning. This is a critical basic tenet of Christianity, which has not always been overlooked, as it is in the present age. For example, the widely esteemed medieval Byzantine monk and theologian, Maximus the Confessor, “states that the Godhead has left no traces of itself within creation” (Bingaman 2014, 18).

Isaiah 45:15 King James Version (KJV)

15 Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.

Scientific work of any sort has no impact on if the God of the Bible exists or not. For example, if the theory of evolution happened to be *correct*, that would not furthermore lead to the conclusion that the Christian God *does not* exist, or that He *does* exist, since one could claim that the Bible is in-line with the theory of evolution, or that it is not in-line with the theory of evolution, but where nobody can be really sure either way. The Christian God could exist regardless of if the theory of evolution were true or not, since the theory of evolution is about matters of science, not matters of faith, and the two theories have nothing to do with each other. The same is true for any scientific position. Whether the Big Bang theory is true or not likewise does not determine whether or not theism is correct, for example. The same can be said of any scientific position, and any intellectual or logical position of any sort. Science and the Bible are simply in different realms of discourse: Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself.

Many Christians are unaware that the Bible specifically states that *humans will not find evidence for God outside of faith and revelation experience*, and they often erroneously believe there is a problem when an atheist or scoffer confronts them saying, “there is no evidence for your Christian God, so I am most rational to believe it does not exist.” Typically, Christians respond saying, “oh no, there *is some scientific or intellectual evidence* for God,” and often consequently give awkward, uninformed, and even absurd opinions in a desperate attempt to show there *is* scientific or intellectual evidence for God, other than faith-revelation. But the proper response the Christian should have given is this,

“Correct, *the only way to know God is through the revelation of faith experience*, which is not scientific or intellectual in any way, we therefore expect science, logic, and mathematics *not* to discover God,”

wherein the Christian can then move-on to the next topic (such as discussing the breakthrough-joy of supernatural faith experience).

2. Atheism Reduces to Contradiction

Speaking for a moment just about science (empirical investigation), it is self-evidently true that it simply makes no sense, and perhaps is even contradictory, to try to discover a non-empirical (and supernatural) entity through empirical means.

And likewise, one cannot utilize empirical means in attempting to claim either that

- There is a lack of empirical evidence for a non-empirical entity

- The lack of empirical evidence shows the non-empirical entity does not exist

These claims would each reduce to contradiction. The top bullet point is used by more sophisticated atheists, in order to avoid an informal fallacy of ignorance, but the statement still appears to involve contradiction, since it is a means of trying to discuss and discover the *non-empirical* only in terms of the *empirical*, which is like trying to discover and discuss the non-mathematical, and that which *cannot* be mathematical, by using *only* using mathematics. And the second/bottom bullet point is used by more uncouth atheists, who are not aware that the bottom bullet involves the informal fallacy of ignorance, in addition to the aforementioned contradiction of analyzing the purely non-empirical by solely empirical means.

But these methods appear to be, nevertheless, a standard means of investigation among atheists, when atheists attempt to utilize science in showing that God does not exist, or that there is no evidence for God.

3. Revelation and Non-revelation Evidence

As stated in the introduction, the claim of this paper is that much of the atheism-theism debate that has existed for a long time is about an imaginary / not-real issue, and that imaginary issue is this: *whether or not there is, or is not, scientific and/or intellectual evidence for existence of the Christian God.* (Hereafter I will only refer to the *Christian* God, the God of the Bible, in what follows.) This topic is essentially like debating how many unicorns exist, or like debating how many people live on Mars.

Stating this issue in better detail, consider the following two points:

- A. Atheism involves the position that there is a lack of scientific, logical, or mathematical evidence needed to confidently believe in a Christian God.
- B. The Bible *a/so* clearly indicates that there is no scientific, logical, or mathematical evidence available that will show any person that they should believe in the Christian God.³

A and B perfectly agree, since as many Christians know, “we walk by faith not by sight,” which atheists would be unaware of since they have no capacity to know that faith experience is real.

The salvific Christian knows God not by science and human-based information, but rather by *being pulled to God directly* (John 6:44), and by being chosen by God (John 15:16)—*not* by trying to understand Him according to human ways of understanding (science and reason). God is infinite (Psalm 147:5 KJV) and God is Mystery that is not fully knowable (Col. 2:2-4, Eph. 3), so human-based ways of understanding God fall into heresy—such as by claiming that God is knowable by science (which includes and is dominated by *sight* information), but where we are told in the Word that:

2 Corinthians 5:6-7 New International Version (NIV)

6 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 For we live by faith, not by sight.

In this article, I will consider evidence in terms of four categories:

³ As introduced above, the Bible only points to experiential, first person, evidence for God (faith), which is, by definition, is not scientific, logical, or mathematical.

1. *Scientific evidence*: information of the senses (physical evidence). There is zero evidence of this sort for the existence of the Christian God.⁴
2. *Logical evidence*: intellectual information to do with human reason and systems of logic. This category would include mathematics, philosophical logic, conceptual arguments, and so on. There is zero evidence of this sort for the existence of the Christian God.
3. *Metaphysical evidence*: information about reality that does not fit into 1 and 2: time, minds and mental content, causation, space, etc. The information in this category that coincides with 1 or 2 above would not serve as evidence for a God of the Bible, but any evidence in this category that coincides with 4 below could serve as *personal* (first-person) evidence for the existence of the Christian God, depending on the circumstances (such as that the first-person experience is not mere hallucination, for example).
4. *Supernatural experiential evidence (faith-revelation)*: information about reality that is *experiential* supernatural content experienced by one mind/consciousness, or perhaps experienced by a small collection of minds/consciousnesses. This information is not of categories 1 and 2 above, and may or may not be of category 3 above. Examples of supernatural experiential evidence (faith-revelation) could be: a powerful conversion experience, a vision of

⁴ To my knowledge, many Christians, perplexingly, believe that Romans 1:20 indicates that humans are expected to witness, or see, the evidence of God *in nature*. But Romans 1:20 specifically says nothing even remotely close to that. God making Himself known to people can occur in many ways other than through “nature revelation,” if there is such a thing, such as via confirmations and signs, visions, miracles, answered prayer, and the list is large. In fact, Romans 1:20 even makes it clear that vision is apparently not being what is referred to in that verse, since that verse refers to God’s “invisible qualities” (NIV) and thus this would indicate that Romans 1:20 is not about vision experience and so-called (and somewhat pagan-sounding) “nature revelation.”

the Christian God, or a moment of faith during prayer to Christ, wherein a person experiences the supernatural spiritual realm, where one is in bodily form on earth, but in mind and spirit may not be fully in the physical dimension: “Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.” It is here and only here that one can have evidence for the existence of the God of the Bible, and therefore, evidence for God is never scientific or intellectual, and evidence for the Christian God will only be found in personal faith-based revelation. The Bible is very specific on these matters: *we talk by faith, not by sight*.

Let’s narrow the categories of evidence just given into two camps:

- i. *Non-revelation evidence*, and
- ii. Evidence in 4, *faith-revelation evidence/experience*.

ii gives evidence of the God of the bible, i does not.

If I have missed any evidence of any sort (such as dream information, or parapsychological information, if any exists, and so on) that others believe should be included in the evidence list, or if some disagree with how the list is arranged above, I confidently believe that changes to the above evidence categories could be made rather freely and still fit into either i or ii. That is my only concern: that there is a demarcation between (ii) supernatural revelation evidence/experience (“faith is... evidence of the unseen,” Heb. 11:1 KJV), and (i) non-revelation evidence and/or experience. Restating these categories of evidence once more, in different words:

- i. *Non-revelation information and evidence* does not involve information about a supernatural reality, and

- ii. *Revelation information and evidence* does involve direct (perhaps even non-representational) information about a supernatural reality (“faith-based revelation”).

The Bible does *not* contain any statements that say anything like this:

- a. In the Last Days (between Christ’s ascension and Eschaton) you will have the ability to experience God with your senses, such as with your sense of sight.⁵
- b. You can successfully develop mathematical and/or intellectual sure-thing proofs for the existence of God.
- c. The metaphysics and scientific theories developed by men can “reach into” Heaven and show with certainty that God exists.

The Bible says none of this—nothing even comparable. It arguably claims the opposite, and it only claims that humans can have *experiential* evidence for Him: first person revelation experience/evidence for the existence of God, which is not 1 - 3, nor anything like a – c.

4. Christianity Involves Fixing Our Eyes On What is Supernatural (God)

As stated above, the Bible and atheism are in complete agreement with how much non-revelation evidence (scientific, logical, mathematical evidence) there is for the existence of the Christian God: precisely *zero*.

This may come as a surprise to many, but that’s only due to the dramatic misunderstanding and lack of understanding over what the Bible is saying,

⁵ The Bible, of course, does tell us how there was a time, when Jesus was on earth, wherein humans *could* directly see God with their physical eyes, but that is not the case now, as Paul informed us (“we talk by faith, not by sight”), while we wait for the Second Coming.

and over how sophisticated the Bible is (supernaturally speaking). People, including *many* Christians, humorously typically consider the Bible to be an antiquated book that requires the help of scholars for interpretation and understanding. Humans usually consider *the Bible* to have problems if it appears confusing, rather than *the human mind* as having problems and the Bible being too great to be fully understood by a human. A book written by God can be nothing other than the ultimate engineering textbook of existence, and the ultimate blueprint of Reality. And for those reasons, the Bible discusses an advanced state of being, of seeing, of experiencing, missed by most humans on earth, that is simply a different sort of information, of knowledge, as compared to scientific, logical, and intellectual information (non-revelation evidence). Consider these two points:

- I. Scientific evidence is empirical evidence, that which is obtained by the senses, one of which is *sight*.
- II. Consider the well-known verse, 2 Cor. 5:7, which states, “We walk by faith, *not by sight*.”

If we combine I and II, we can formulate the following informative point:

- III. The scientific / empirical sort of non-revelation evidence depends on vision with the physical eyes (sight), Christian faith specifically *does not* depend on vision with the physical eyes (sight), (or any sensation), and therefore, *science cannot discover, discuss, or include the Christian God as a referent, and Christian faith is in a different universe of discourse than any scientific / empirical analysis can involve.*

Non-revelation experience on the one hand, and the God of the Bible on the other, are separated, alienated by a non-intersecting divide. So it is mysterious as to why atheists and theists are endlessly debating the existence of the Christian God in terms of science and the non-revelation forms of evidence. The Bible on the one hand, and the intellectual pursuits of science and logic on the other, are simply not talking about the same aspects of reality: they are not on the same side of the street, so to speak. Science is focused on physical reality via the senses, and the Bible is focused on the opposite: on supernatural reality *not through the senses*. Consider the following Scriptural evidence:

Colossians 3:1 King James Version (KJV)

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Philippians 3:20 New International Version (NIV)

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Hebrews 3:1 New International Version (NIV)

Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.

Psalms 123:2 New International Version (NIV)

As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a female slave look to the hand of her mistress, so *our eyes look to the Lord* our God till he shows us his mercy [Itals added].

Romans 12:12 English Standard Version (ESV)

12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Look at the last verse (and there are many like this filling the pages of the Bible), which tells us to be *ceaselessly* focused on Christ: ceaselessly focused on the *supernatural*, not the natural/scientific. Ceaseless awareness of God is one of the dominant themes of the Bible, a message seemingly found in one form or another on most pages of the Bible. In its most pure form, Christianity is an around-the-clock communion with, and meditation on, the indwelling Logos. But that leads to an important question:

How can one find God through sense information if the Bible is instructing humans to, specifically, not to find Him through the senses, but to find Him via supernatural faith-revelation?

Answer: one cannot, and God is not found via sensation, He is found by faith. God, in His omnipresence, coincides with this world, but He is not part of this world: He is *in all things* (Eph. 4:6, 4:10, Isa 6:3) but not of the world. Christian faith is about direct, inner⁶ connection to God (faith), believing in God, and therefore about *experience* of God:

Hebrews 11:1 King James Version (KJV)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

⁶ Ephesians 3:16 New International Version (NIV): “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being...”

The Bible specifically tells us not to focus on the works of humans, such as non-revelation evidence (science, human intellectualism), but to focus beyond that, to the supernatural via the connection, the channel, to God who is everywhere, which is called *faith*:

1 Corinthians 2:5 English Standard Version (ESV)

5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

5. Faith is Nonscientific / Trans-Scientific Experience of the Supernatural

Notice that in the King James Bible, Hebrews 11:1 indicates that faith is a type of *evidence*. Faith is merely evidence of a Reality not available to non-revelation types of evidence. In simpler terms, faith involves awareness and experience of the supernatural realms, unseen by the physical eyes (but not unseen by the spiritual eyes and the eyes of the mind), and transcendent of known logic and human reasoning—but experienceable nevertheless by the inner mind and heart of the human, where human language, logic, and science cannot articulate or fathom.

Faith involves human energy, but the connection, the relationship of faith, is an instrument, a gift, *from God, coming from Heaven*, not from the world (culture or nature):

Hebrews 12:2 New International Version (NIV)

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Note how this verse ties together “fixing our eyes on Jesus” with Him being the author of faith. This gives us a hint as to what faith actually is—which is an awareness of, and connection to, God. This is important, because below we will briefly explore what the Bible actually says faith is, and we will conclude that billions of people on earth are not paying enough attention to the specifics of what the Bible says faith is, and therefore they are confused about what this all-important Christian concept involves.

Notice that II and III, above indicate that Christian faith, which is the instrument of one’s relationship with, and connection to, the Christian God, is non-scientific, for the following reasons:

God is telling humans through 2 Cor. 5:7 that faith (in Christ) is to be sought *without* sensation (such as sight), and thus specifically *not* with science, wherein information through the eyes (and senses) is therein literally not a trusted source of information, with respect to knowing *ultimate knowledge*.

Consider Galatians 5:25:

Galatians 5:25 King James Version (KJV)

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

The NIV says “let us keep in step *with the Spirit*.” Again, we are told to walk not by what is scientific/empirical, but rather by what is specifically *not* scientific: *Spirit* (i.e., God).

The Bible is telling people of earth that if they want to know God, not to pointlessly try to find him with sensation (science) or with theories and reasoning that is far from being 100 percent certain, but *rather* to find Him directly, with their minds, their spiritual eyes, and their hearts:

Psalm 105:4 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

4 Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face continually.

The claim of this verse is strong: seek God (who is not scientifically/empirically discoverable) always, and comparably the information of the senses is not of importance:

2 Corinthians 4:18 New International Version (NIV)

18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Matthew 18:9 King James Version (KJV)

9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

6. The Biblical Definition of Faith (Is Not the One that People Use)

There is a great rift between what atheists and contemporary Christians claim faith is during their atheist-theist debates, on the one hand, and what the Bible specifically says faith is, on the other. So, what I am saying is that *both* Christians and atheists are making an error of not defining faith in terms of what the Bible says it is. There is what atheists and Christians claim faith is, on the one hand, and then there is what the Bible says it in fact is on the other (the Bible says it is experience-evidence, but not scientific evidence and logical reasoning known to humans: non-revelation evidence). Consider the erroneous way faith is defined versus the Bible’s way:

Popular non-Biblical definition of “faith” used in atheism versus theism debates, ubiquitously used by atheists:

“Belief without evidence” (this is from Peter Boghossian).⁷

Since the Bible says faith is a type of *evidence* (Heb. 11:1 KJV, NLT, etc.), this description of faith used by atheists is a strawman.

Christians commonly, popularly, and loosely, toss around the following incomplete definitions of “faith” (it is partial, and therefore not fully Biblical, as to what “faith” actually denotes):

“Trust in God” (common Christian usage of definition of faith).

“Believe in God” (common Christian usage of definition of faith).

Then there is the *Biblical definition of “faith”* according to the Bible verses given in this article that specifically use the word “faith” in them:

Faith is being directly connected to, fully aware of, directly experiencing God, at all times,⁸ and by that, in a state of

⁷ Peter Boghossian, the author of *A Manual For Creating Atheists* (Pitchstone 2013), says this in a debate with Dr. Tim McGrew, Sept. 24, 2014, <https://www.premierchristianradio.com/Shows/Saturday/Unbelievable/Episodes/Peter-Boghossian-vs-Tim-McGrew-A-manual-for-creating-atheists>. Boghossian says in this interview that billions of Christians use the definition of faith in this way, and I would agree with him on this. Unfortunately Boghossian's view, while it agrees with billions of contemporary Christians, it is in stark disagreement with the Bible, such as Heb. 11:1 (especially the KJV translation: “faith is the *evidence* of things unseen”). Of course this is not the only thing discussed about faith in common parlance, and faith is also commonly described as total trust in God, as Tim McGrew says in this same debate with Boghossian, which is, of course, Biblically correct, but this is a point rarely discussed by atheists, who greatly emphasize faith just as Boghossian does here. What Boghossian means is faith is experience without non-revelation evidence, but his definition is not complete, since the Bible is utterly packed with those who had experiential evidence (revelation evidence) of God, such as Damascus Road, and so on. For some strange reason, Christians utterly ignore other dimensions and more prominent Scripture about faith, that describe it in the way we have described theurgical evidence above.

⁸ Romans 14:23 says, that which is not of faith is sin.

constant (ceaseless) *believing* (present-tense) in, and communion with, Trinity at all times.

Call the first definition the *popular non-Biblical definition of faith*, and call the last definition the *Biblical definition of faith*. The Biblical definition of faith above comes from only the passages in the Bible that have been given in this article, and which specifically have the word “faith” in them. Others define faith in terms of verses that don’t use the word “faith”, and use other words they believe are synonymous, such as “believe”. I will however find this problematical below, and I will derive the definition of faith only from verses that are translated to use the word “faith” in them.

If one merely combines the verses given in this article, one will immediately see they will arrive at something like the Biblical definition of faith just given above. I realize that the Biblical definition of faith just given is a little different than most Christians were expecting, but that would be more of a product of

- Christians being unfamiliar with how the Bible defines “faith”
- The fact that Christians erroneously reduce faith down to mere truth and belief, and therein violate what the Bible says faith specifically is.

I have no explanation for why theologians and Christians on the one hand, and atheists on the other, *both* so relentlessly mis-define and misunderstand “faith”, not merely taking the time to simply get the definition from the Bible.

The Bible specifically says that in the End Times that humans will forget God and not be interested in correct doctrine, and the distortion of what the Bible says faith is, that I am discussing in this section, and the next two

sections, is, I believe, evidence for this End Times weakening of Christians worldwide.

7. Faith is Not Reducible to Belief

But what *is* faith? How often is this really explored, in terms of deep analysis of the verses in the Bible that mention the word “faith”?

Belief is a subset of faith, not identical to faith. And by straying from using passages in the Bible that stick to the word “faith” in them to derive our definition of Biblical faith, human interpretation (which the Bible says are lies, Ps. 116:11, Rom. 3:4) creeps in. Consider the (rather inarticulate and verbose) definition of “faith” that John Piper gives in a YouTube video he put out, that is apparently the definition of “faith” Piper used in his book *Future Grace*, which from what I can tell, if one can decipher what Piper is in fact saying in the first place, strays *heavily* from the simple and straightforward Biblical definition of faith just given above.

Piper writes:

Faith is being satisfied with all that God is for us in Jesus, not just an assent to truths (past or future) but heartfelt valuing and treasuring of all that God promises to be for us in Jesus.⁹

Bringing up Piper’s human-based (non-Biblical) purported definition of faith brings us to an extremely important point:

Faith is not just reducible to belief, since the Bible says faith is a type of evidence, and thus is greater than mere belief, since one can

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tLUw9CrjIM>

believe without having evidence. Thus, making faith equal to belief would not be in accord with the Biblical definition of “faith”.

Piper makes the move, in his video, to focus on faith as being a synonym with the word “believe.” This move is utterly ubiquitous with Christians worldwide, it is utterly erroneous, and it is where, for example, Beghossian gets his definition of “faith.” In other words, Beghossian gets his definition of faith *not* from the Bible, but from Christians (who are not aware of what the Bible specifically says faith *is*). It is so ubiquitous that Christians (and atheists) define “faith” as being “belief” and no more than that, that Piper does not even bother to point out that he’s equating the two—he just makes the move as if everyone listening already “knows” that faith=belief. But we just pointed out that belief and faith *are not equal*, since belief is a subset of faith, and the one is greater than the other.

If faith = belief, then why in the Bible is there a need for two words, both “faith” and “belief”, why the extra word “faith”? Why not just always use “believe”? The answer is because faith is more specific than “believe,” and greater than the rarely defined, and hard-to-define, concept of simple human belief.

Given the verses we’ve explored in this article that refer to “faith”, there is no way possible we can merely define “faith” as merely being *belief*—to say that faith is just a type of belief. Now when Piper, for example, makes this move, three things happen:

- What the Bible says faith is, becomes distorted
- Verses in the Bible that *do not* refer to faith, but instead, for example, refer to *belief*, are used as if they are giving a full definition of “faith”

- Verses in the Bible that do not reference faith, but only reference belief, are believed to be about faith, and used to define “faith”. In other words, Acts 16:30-31 may be believed to be verses that define what faith is, and therefore verses that don’t even include the word “faith” are used to define *what faith is*.

And the result is that by making the move to consider faith as mere belief, and where “belief” remains largely undefined, the message about what faith is, from the Bible, becomes completely distorted at best, and totally lost at worst. In other words, the all-important concept of faith becomes lost in Piper’s words (“the words of men”), as the Biblical definition, which is totally different than Piper’s definition, is completely unknown in Piper’s influential work.

The true definition, merely taken from the Bible, is that faith means *evidence* of the unseen (Heb. 11:1), not just believing in the unseen, which can happen without evidence, just as I can believe in Santa Claus without evidence. But Christian faith is believing *with* (supernatural) *evidence*, *which is revelation experience*. The importance of this point cannot be underestimated, and this is the number one confusion, in my opinion, that exists among Christians in the world today. Faith is being *aware of Christ*, because we fix our eyes on Him (Heb. 12:2)—that is far more than mere “belief without evidence.”

Atheists typically define faith as Piper does, as a synonym for believe, which is not in-line with the Bible, and allows one to fall into the popular *non-Biblical* definition of faith that Boghossian elaborated on above, believing without evidence, which is standard for Christians to do (as it is *also* for atheists) and since so many Christians purport that God exists but

don’ have any faith-experience (revelation, evidence of the unseen). The NLT translation also uses the word “evidence” to define faith in Hebrews 11:1, and other translations use “certainty,” “conviction,” or “assurance” of things unseen. The HCSB uses “proof”. And look at the AMP:

Hebrews 11:1 Amplified Bible (AMP)

11 Now faith is the assurance (title deed, confirmation) of things hoped for (divinely guaranteed), and the evidence of things not seen [the conviction of their reality—faith comprehends as fact what cannot be experienced by the physical senses].

(That is precisely how the AMP reads, I have not inserted any changes.)

Atheists seemingly continually believe that 2 Cor. 5:7 means something like what Boghossian says, when he says that the popular non-Biblical definition of “faith” is, *believing without evidence*. This error in understanding the definition of “faith” is an error Christians also make almost as ubiquitously as atheists do, and the error stems from failing to understand that faith is a type of supernatural *experience, of “something,”* not a mere worldview data-point that is without referent (such as believing in Santa Claus). We know this not only due to the quoted verses that refer to faith and use the word “faith” that have been given in this article, but also because the Bible is littered with examples of supernatural revelation experience as the tool God uses to make Himself known. Atheists usually claim that faith is merely a baseless choice Christians have made, with no substance behind it (Christians *very* often use this same definition), in order to comfortably believe there is a God rather than face the abyss of nothingness in not believing in a God.

8. Faith is Revelation Experience

The most important point is that, sadly,

Most Christians, in today’s world, do not understand that the Biblical definition of faith must involve constant experience of God (revelation), if it did not, then the Bible would not say “in your presence there is fullness of joy” (Ps. 16:11), “pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17), seek His face continually (Ps. 105:4 NIV), and the basis of knowing God is via faith (Phil. 3:8-9).

This one missed point—*the Biblical definition of faith*—leads to unfathomable confusion and misguidedness about Christianity worldwide!

*The Bible is talking about Christianity as an experiential conviction, and not as an intellectual decision: as a life of communion and revelation in Christ, not a worldview position. The visions, revelations, God-presence, etc., that glut the Bible, and which *precede* people dedicating their lives to Christ (e.g., Damascus Road, etc.), show that faith must involve experience of God (“evidence of the unseen”), not a choice to include Him in our worldview.*

Faith is a *different* sort of information, of evidence, than science, logic, and reason, a *different* sort of information than atheists can fathom, than they have available to them, and given their lack of experience of faith, they appear to have merely misinterpreted what faith is described as in the Bible. And if they deny what I just said, they may fall into the fallacy of ignorance, which would go as follows:

1. By definition, Christian faith-revelation-experience evidence would be evidence *not available* to atheists.
2. The atheist claims they have no evidence to believe this “different sort of information, of evidence,” called that faith-revelation exists,
3. *Therefore*, faith-revelation-experience evidence does not exist (FALLACY).

That is a textbook fallacy of ignorance informal critical thinking fallacy, that would be just like this one: I have never seen your mind, I have no evidence that your mind exists, therefore, your mind does not exist.

9. Miracles

In Christianity, miracles present a special case for understanding how important faith is to Christianity.

The four Gospels and the writings of Paul show us two things:

- The Christian should be experiencing miracles regularly in their Christian life
- For those without the non-empirical evidence of faith-revelation experience, miracles will not be observable (regardless if the person is an atheist to a churchgoer)

Consider the following situation. I pray with two men, man1 and man2, according to the following setup:

- Man1 has faith-revelation (he is salvific), and man2 is faithless (he is perishing)
- One of the men has a seriously sick father, and asks me to pray for immediate healing

- I pray, the presence of God is lived and experienced during the prayer, and thus that faith-experience drives the prayer
- An hour after I leave, a phone-call is received by the man with the sick father that the father is undergoing an inexplicable, shocking improvement
- Man1 witnesses the miracle and his inner-being is deeply affected
- Man2 does not see a miracle and his inner-being is unmoved by the event

It will not be possible for man2 to understand situation or the connection. And this will be true no matter how many times this sort of scenario takes place. One simply cannot see a miracle of God, even if the Red Sea is parted, or a man with a withered hand healed (Mt. 12), unless one first has faith—unless one’s self is fully given to God, so it can fully reside in its true state of existence: *in Christ*. Without faith—without belief in God, to the point of directly experiencing Him—the presence of God cannot exist in a person and their faith cannot heal, and their eyes cannot see.

Jeremiah 5:21 New King James Version (NKJV)

21 ‘Hear this now, O foolish people,

Without understanding,

Who have eyes and see not,

And who have ears and hear not...

Matthew 13:15 New King James Version (NKJV)

15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull.

Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.’

For the purposes of this article, we can use the simple definition of miracles that philosophers often use: a miracle is a violation or interruption of the laws of nature. As others before me have also noted, that to be a Biblically-oriented miracle has to be ascribed to God, caused by Him and leading to revelation of God: *God is the supernatural cause of the interrupting and violating of nature.*

So, then, the faithless (such as man², or such as some of the Pharisees in Matthew 12, whose hearts were hardened by witnessing Jesus’s miracles) can witness miracles, but outside of faith, they do not experience them as miracles, and only experience their selfish, fear-filled, and desire-filled nature, which blinds the mind, and blocks revelation of God. If one doubts how much desires, fears, and selfishness blocks awareness of reality, all one has to do is think if an extreme situation in their life, such as a situation of fear, and how afterwards one thought, “wow, I can’t believe how unclearly I was thinking.” Note how much the fear in fact distorted awareness of reality, and then note how often this happens at lower levels in a person’s life, and therefore how pervasively this sort of blinding to reality life involves. Truth is hidden from a person unless perfect love casts out all fear, and unless desire and selfishness are crucified with Christ. A

person not fully surrendered to Christ cannot see, and is blinded to the miracles of Christ going on all around, intervening in nature.

Man1 and man2 can both witness the same arrangements of atoms in physical reality, but only one will see *past* physical reality, to have direct revelation of the Source of the atomic arrangements, and by faith-revelation experience God’s power in the miracle.

For these reasons, a miracle can only be defined as what we can call a *Christological miracle*, since any miracle that is caused by the Christian God can simultaneously only be a miracle where God is *known* through it, and in it, and, *ipso facto*, is a faith experience. So, we can define a Christological miracle as:

Christological miracle: A perceived interruption and violation in the physical stream of events in nature that contains the awareness that the Christian God is the cause and source for the interruption and violation, and where the specific point of the interruption is to directly reveal God to human consciousness (faith-revelation experience).

This is the Biblical view of a miracle, and it only provides evidence for the existence of God via faith-evidence. That is why, in the Bible, some could see a miracle, and others could not, while looking at the same physical events, the same arrangements of atoms in physical reality, such as in how some Pharisees were aware of the miracle in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, but while others were only filled with anger and hatred over this event. For this reason, a miracle of God can never be scientific, as that would violate the definition of what faith is. Hence, God hides himself, is not revealed in nature, and when breaking through into physical reality to show Himself by disrupting physics, the disruptions only are seen via faith (and

the disruptions are seen regularly by those of ceaseless faith). And likewise, the truth of who the Christian God is, and His realness, could never be known through intellectual accounts either. For example, if a person formulated the perfect argument that proved God existed beyond a shadow of a doubt, with the simplest of logic, it would function like a miracle, since it will contain revelation of God—but the argumentation could only be recognized if faith was in place in the observer of the argumentation.

10. Conclusion

It is perhaps mysterious as to why the points of this article have been missed by so many on both sides of the theism-atheism debate. That Christians and atheists, past and present, wound-up in atheism vs. theism issues, have not noticed that the Bible and atheism are in agreement on the fact that science and non-revelation experience do not reveal God, is surprising, and seems to even reveal a mass blindness among men in the world. The Bible is logically coherent in claiming that there is no non-revelation evidence for God, but atheism reduces to contradiction when and if atheists make this same claim, as discussed in Section 2 above, and as I will be discussing in much more detail in an upcoming article.

But on that note, the Bible does predict such blindness would happen in the Last Days (i.e., after Pentecost, to the present time), where Christians will lose sight (pun intended) of God, and would not carefully follow the supernatural book that was written for us by God (the Bible):

2 Timothy 4:3-4 New International Version (NIV)

3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

-Jeff Grupp, Kalamazoo, MI, April 3, 2019

www.praiseandlove.net, www.debunkingatheism.net

Work Cited

Bingaman, Brock, 2013, *All Things New: The Trinitarian Nature of the Human Calling in Maximus the Confessor and Jürgen Moltman*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series, Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications.