

What would Count as Evidence against Theism or Biblical Inerrancy?

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

This year (2017), for the first time, Bob Jones University closed in honor of the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. The University's long history of anti-Black racism is well-known, so this must be considered as at least a small step forward. (They did not even accept Blacks to the school until the 1970s and banned interracial dating until at least the year 2000.)

However, when religionists change their views, it never occurs to most of them that the changes they embrace mean that they – and their God – were wrong. Yet they profess to embrace a perfect, omniscient God that never makes mistakes. What's up with that?

The usual rationalization is that they “misinterpreted” Scripture, but finally got it right. Others maintain that God *finally* touched their hearts and changed them for the better. They never seem to notice that God does not change their hearts and minds until *after* the rest of society has moved ahead. This, of course, means that they are simply coming late to the party. It makes their God look like a slacker.

The fact that theists rightly change their biblically based views is strong evidence against an omniscient God in particular and God in general. To put it bluntly, when they claim that they have misinterpreted God's supposed word, they are usually lying, and ashamed of having been wrong.

There are numerous instances of theists shame-facedly rejecting erroneous and harmful ideas from their “sacred” texts. The best example would be slavery. It is now common knowledge that slavery is evil. However, the Bible routinely condones it (I Timothy, 6:1-4, for example.) The Bible also condones genocide (Numbers 31:17-18, for example.)

However, slick talking theists resort to historical relativism and special pleading to rationalize these biblically sanctioned ideas. For example, they will say that slavery and genocide were fine in biblical times. Yet at the same time, they maintain that God is immutable. Which is it? Moreover, how could they in good conscience believe it was *ever* good to slaughter infants, toddlers, elderly women,

and so forth? How could it have *ever* been right to destroy another human being through enslavement? Was it fine to enslave African Americans? Was it fine to decimate Native Americans? When did it *stop* being right to enslave and wipe out people? What was the cutoff date for these crimes against humanity?

What about the biblically based cruel and unusual punishment of stoning? In some parts of the world, reactionary Muslims *still* stone people to death. Perhaps it could be argued that the perfectly loving and all-merciful God condoned the brutal and heartless practice of stoning because, in biblical times, that was the best they could do. Of course, that would imply that the perfectly intelligent God could not have created and made available to his Chosen People a quick-acting poison that would have done the trick. (In any case, people in much of the world believe the death penalty is barbaric regardless of the method used.) It seems that most civilized people now reject stoning because it is certainly barbaric. In numerous ways, through reason, experience, observation and empathy, we have become better people than God's Chosen People.

The Nation of Islam (NOI) used to teach that White people are devils. They seem to have backed away from that claim, at least when they have been challenged in public. Obviously, they have found out that their absurd religious belief just does not stand up to critical examination. However, that means that their God was wrong. It is also not irrational to conclude that their God probably does not exist. If exposed religiously based errors do not count against the idea of a God that interacts with human beings, what could?

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ-Latter Day Saints (aka, Mormons) used to exclude Blacks from the priesthood, and deemed them inferior. However, they contend that God in his infinite goodness inspired their leader to lift the ban against Blacks entering the priesthood in 1975, long after Jim Crow was destroyed in the American South. The Lord surely must move in mysterious ways! What other explanation could there *possibly* be for such a wonderful (disgracefully belated) change?

There are many biblical claims that are demonstrably false. For example, it would have been *physically impossible* for all of the animals to have boarded Noah's Ark as described in the Bible. Moreover, there is no evidence that there has ever been a worldwide flood. Stars are not created by God. They are the result of natural

processes involving gravity and intense heat. Similarly, God does not create rainbows. They, too, are the result of natural processes.

Of course, since science has made all of this clear, many theists have quietly retreated into talk of allegory and symbolism. Why, then, do they believe in a *literal* God? Furthermore, if their God cannot literally perform miracles, what *can* he do?

The fact that civilized people have rejected bad biblical morals and unscientific biblical assumptions about the world constitutes strong evidence (though not irrefutable proof) against the existence of God. Indeed, what else could? Moreover, such changes completely demolish the absurd idea that the Bible was authored by a perfectly intelligent Being.