

What Would Count as Evidence *for* Theism or Biblical Inerrancy?

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In my previous article, I discussed examples of what should count as strong evidence against theism or biblical inerrancy. Now I will take a look at what would count as strong evidence to back up the extraordinary claims that God exists and that the Bible is inerrant.

Hearsay evidence simply will not cut it when people are claiming that God exists. That is especially true in the case of *ancient* hearsay evidence. However, genuine miracles of a religious nature would certainly work. For example, if someone were to pray that God grows a new limb for an amputee, or new head and new life for someone that has been decapitated, and these prayers were answered with a new limb or a new head and life, that would count as extraordinary evidence in favor of the existence of God.

Notice that it is necessary to say *how* these prayers must be answered. That is because theists try to rationalize obvious failures by saying that God always answers prayers, but it might not be the answer you're looking for. Yeah, right! Of course, if it *is* the answer you are looking for, then God is not working in mysterious ways. That raises the question: if a murderer, rapist or brutal kidnapper asks God to help him commit a crime, and he commits it, is that an example of God moving in mysterious ways? What if someone prays that God kills his enemy, and his enemy is strangled the next day? If God is not responsible for the strangulation, why does he always get credit for every good action? (Conversely, theists certainly consider it a mystery when good people die young, and so forth.) Moreover, if God moves in such mysterious ways, what makes him any different than mere chance? He might as well not even exist, as far as his human petitioners are concerned. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to his actions.

Some people believe that God blesses other animals, such as dogs and cats. Yet, he creates entire species to be devoured by predators. Why would he give so much attention to individual animals yet allow entire species to be ripped apart by tooth and claw, or to in other ways go extinct?

The various “proofs” also do not count as strong evidence for the existence of God. The ontological argument, for example, is just that. Arguments, no matter how cleverly constructed, do not constitute evidence. Genuine evidence could be scientific or circumstantial. However, we cannot allow our entire body of reliable knowledge to be overturned by slick arguments.

A genuine, indisputable prophecy would count as strong evidence for the existence of God. For example, if a prophet foretold exactly how the next NFL season will unfold – statistics for every player, winners of each division, number of reported injuries, and so on, that would be strong evidence for the existence of God. However, merely retrofitting information to go with biblical prophecies, or speaking in ridiculously vague, confusing and symbolic language open to numerous “interpretations” simply will not count as strong evidence for the existence of God.

Many Christians are impressed by glossolalia, or so-called speaking in tongues. However, this phenomenon is little understood. These believers are only making sounds, and essentially, speaking gibberish. What would count as strong evidence for the existence of God is xenoglossy. That is the ability (through the spirit of God) to speak or write a language that one has no experience of, which is what many people think happens when people speak in tongues. Xenoglossy, however, never occurs.

Probably since the dawn of sports, athletes and sports fans have believed that God (or the gods) aids and abets athletes. However, there are never any athletic feats in which athletes literally defy the laws of physics or do anything that could be deemed supernatural.

It would be strong evidence for the existence of God if a deeply pious athlete made bold predictions and delivered on them. For example, an NFL quarterback could say that God told him that he would throw for 10,000 yards in a season, 200 touchdowns, and no incompletions or interceptions (all without getting injured), leading his team to an undefeated season and a Super Bowl championship. He could beforehand accurately spit out the exact numbers and percentages for each category in which he is to be ranked. If all of this were to happen, that would be strong evidence for the existence of God.

However, the best that religious sports fans have been able to do is point to the mediocre play of the former quarterback Tim Tebow. His career did not last long, and he was very unpopular (as an athlete) among most NFL players and coaches.

The deeply pious former boxing champion, the late, great Cassius Clay/Muhammad Ali, used to sometimes accurately predict the rounds in which he would defeat his opponents. It would have been strong evidence for the existence of God if Ali would have accurately predicted the exact time and round that he defeated his opponents in *every* match, and if he had gone undefeated with a record of 200-0. It would have been even more astounding if he were able to knock out every opponent with a single punch (without suffering head trauma that would affect him for the rest of his life). How come such feats never occur in sports in which so many religious athletes participate?

These are just some examples that would constitute strong evidence for the existence of God. If and when such events ever occur, most atheists will embrace theism with the quickness. On the other hand, the complete lack of such evidence, especially after so many millennia of theism, is absolutely inexcusable.