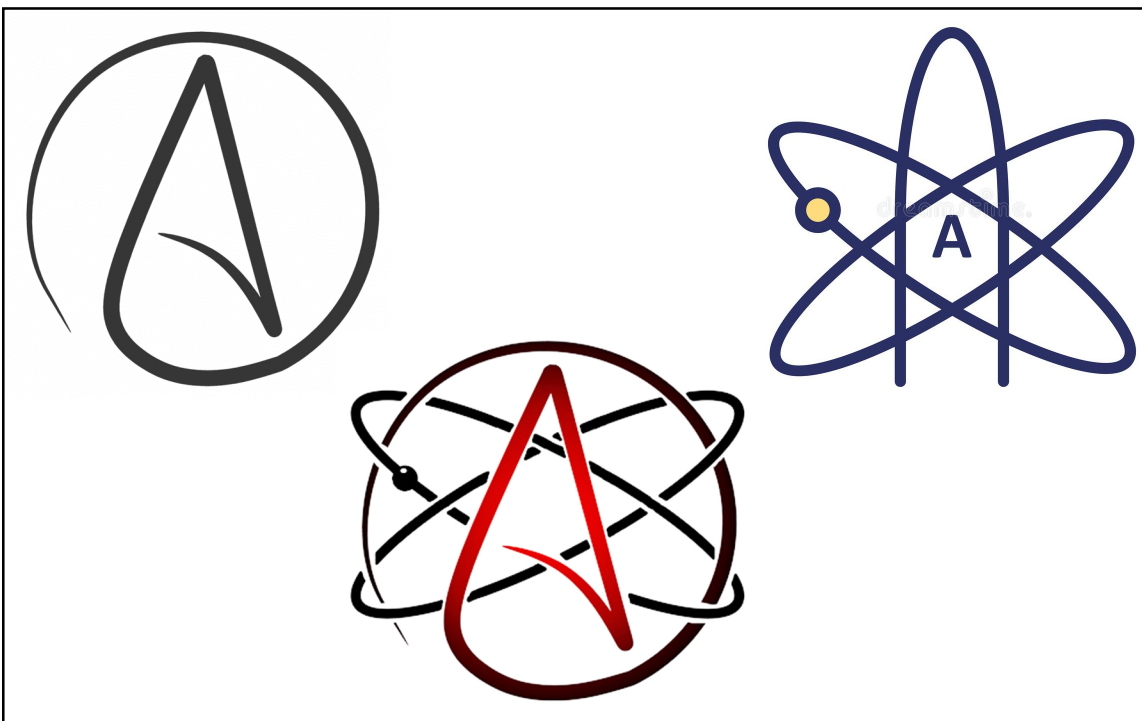
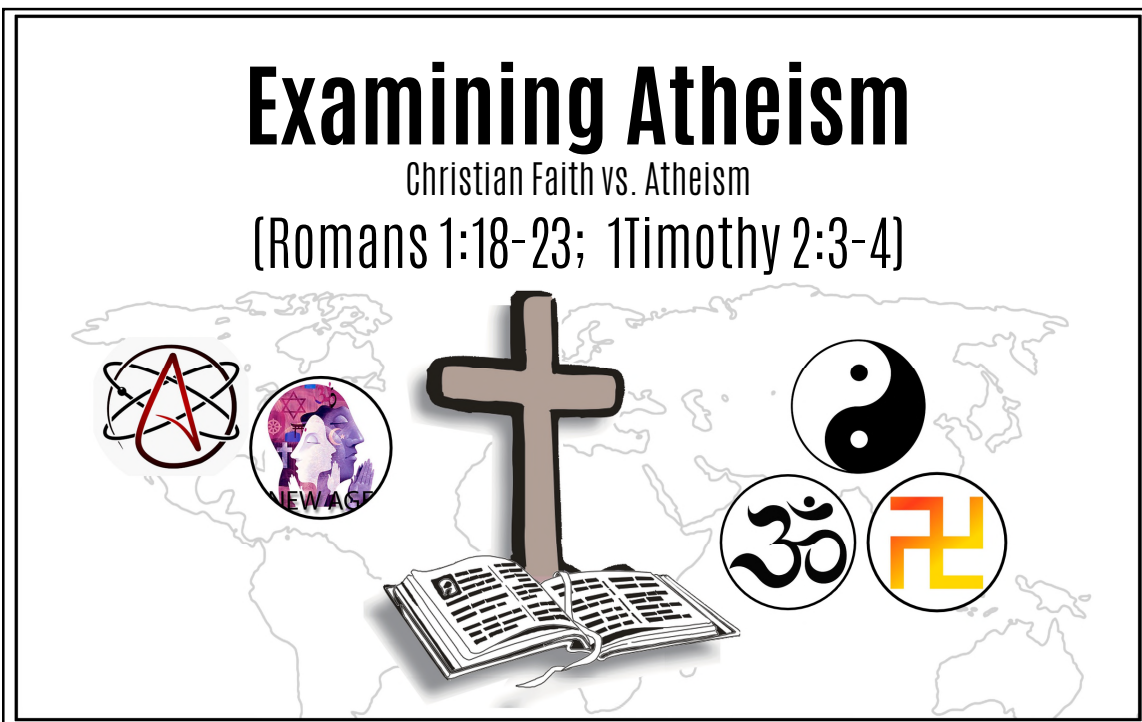
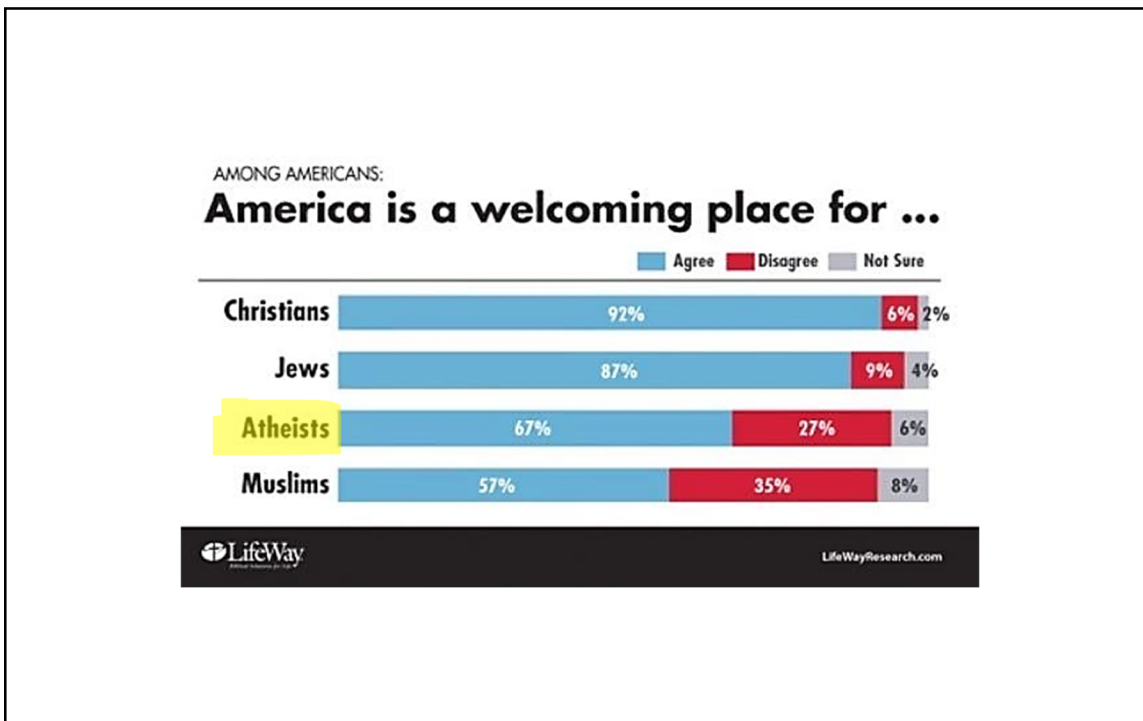
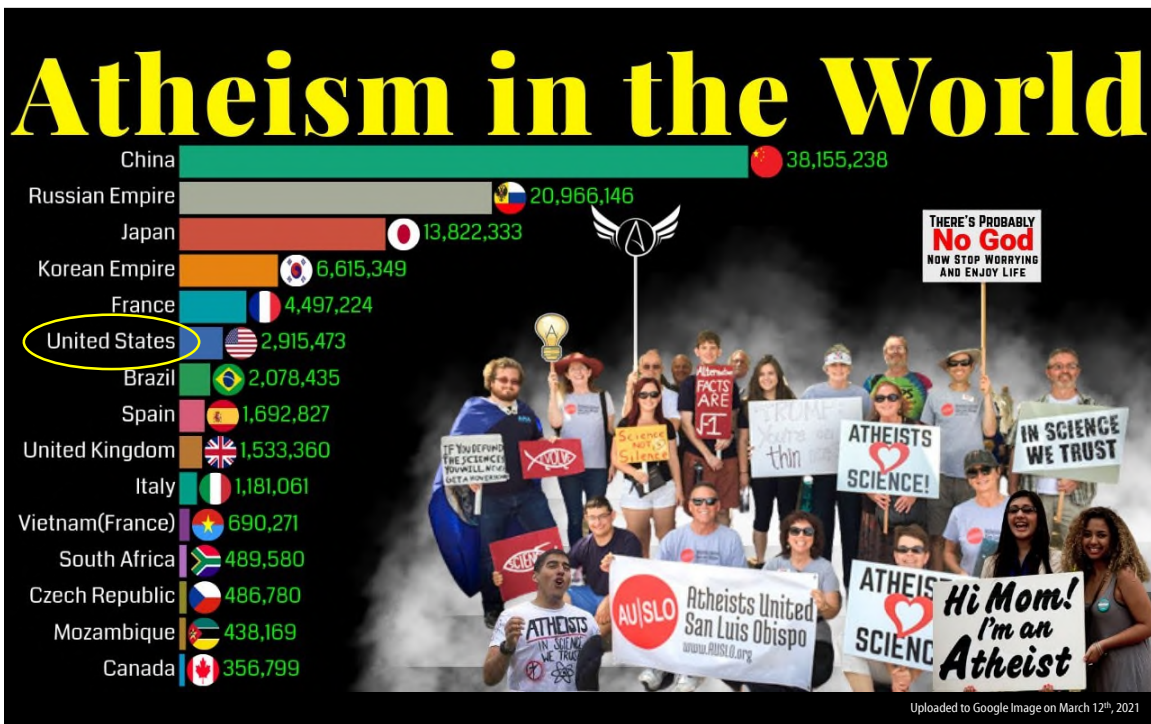


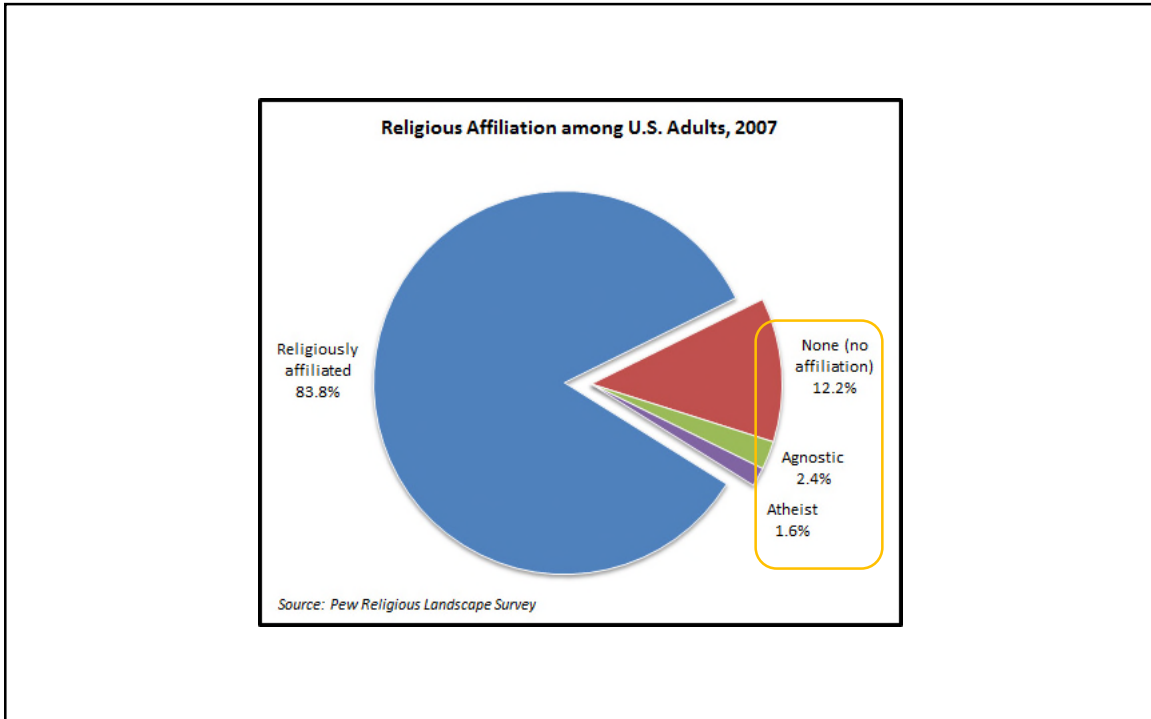
# Examining Atheism

Christian Faith vs. Atheism

(Romans 1:18-23; 1Timothy 2:3-4)







"When you were growing up, what was your religion, if any? What is your present religion, if any?"<sup>8</sup>

	Religion growing up	Present religion	Change
Protestant <sup>9</sup>	42%	30%	-12%
Roman Catholic	25	15	-10
Jewish	2%	1%	-1%
Mormon	1	1	
Orthodox (Christian)	1	1	
Muslim (Islam)	1	1	
Hindu	<1	<1	
Unitarian	<1	1	+ <1%
Buddhist	<1	1	+ <1
Something else	3	5	+2
Atheist	1	5	+4
Agnostic	1	5	+4
Christian (Unspecified)	14	19	+5
Nothing in particular	6	14	+8

Source: 2020 Study of Spirituality in the U.S., survey conducted Jan. 16 - Feb. 3, 2020. Fetzer Institute.

## Definition

**Atheism.** A system of belief that asserts categorically that there is no God. Atheism usually affirms as well that the only form of existence is the material universe and that the universe is merely the product of chance or fate.

Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 17.

Scripturally, the Greek word *atheos*, meaning “without God,” is found only once in the NT (Ephesians 2:12). There, it is used to designate the human condition of being without the true God.

## Four General Types of Atheism

- **Classical Atheism** ... is not a general denial of God’s existence but the rejection of the god of a particular nation.
  - e.g. Christians were called “atheists” because they rejected heathen gods.
- **Philosophical Atheism** ... gives reasons for believing that no God exists in or beyond the world.
- **Dogmatic Atheism** ... absolutely denies the existence of God; never was, is, or will be a God.
- **Practical Atheism**
  - Practical atheists may confess that God exists, but they live as if there is no God.



## Arguments for Atheism

1. The burden of proof is on the theist, since atheism is, at first sight, a more reasonable position.
2. Theism is harmful to society, as it leads to intolerance and persecution.
3. With advances in modern science, there is no need for God as an explanatory hypothesis.
4. Belief in God is psychologically explainable.
5. The existence of evil.

Partially from Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*: Second Edition, 113.

***Cosmological argument (nature of the universe):***

1. God is a self-caused being.
2. But it is impossible to cause one's own being for a cause is prior to its effect, and one cannot exist prior to one's existence.
3. Therefore, God cannot exist.

Norman L. Geisler, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2nd ed., 57.

***Teleological argument (relating to design or purpose):***

1. The universe either was designed or happened by chance.
2. Chance is an adequate cause of the universe.
3. Therefore, the universe need not have been designed.

Norman L. Geisler, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2nd ed., 57.

## Arguments against Atheism

1. It is against reason; the existence of something rather than nothing requires God. (see "cosmological argument" below)
2. It is contrary to human experience, where some knowledge of God, no matter how suppressed and distorted, has universally existed.
3. Atheism cannot account for design, order, and regularity in the universe.
4. It cannot explain the existence of humans and mind.

(Also, it cannot explain why love and relationship is so important to human beings. For example, parents would sacrifice their lives in order to save their child because of love. Or, when family members' feelings are not cared for, then family relationship may eventually break down; many psychological issues may also be resulted. There are universal principles for healthy relationship that must be followed. I think this wonderful need was created in us by our God who is love. Sometimes, love and relationship also plays an important role among some animals.)

Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology: Second Edition*, 113.

All atheism founders on the rock of purposeless existence. A universe produced as the result of mindless randomness has no meaning, no destiny, and ultimately no real worth. And it furnishes no basis for moral behaviour. Atheistic moral codes are at best the norms that a society evolves for the ease of most of its members. Nothing is intrinsically moral or immoral.

Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 44.

## Arguments for the Existence of God

### *Cosmological argument (nature of universe):*

1. Every effect has a cause.

(Or, "every effect must have a cause." This is an "analytical truth," meaning it is true by definition.  
~ see "Defending Your Faith," R.C. Sproul)

2. The universe is an effect.

3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

Norman L. Geisler, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2nd ed., 54–55.

(The argument follows: when we keep tracing backward by asking, "what caused the cause that caused this effect," we will eventually arrive at the uncaused first cause. Since the physical universe is an effect, then the ultimate uncaused first cause cannot be a part of this physical universe. That means, this uncaused first cause must be transcendent and exist apart from this universe. In addition, He must be all powerful, all intelligent and have absolute freewill and authority to cause the universe into existence. He calls Himself the LORD God, our Creator.)

Arguments for the Existence of God

### *Teleological argument (design & purpose):*

1. Every design has a designer.

2. The universe manifests design.

3. Therefore, the universe has a designer.

Norman L. Geisler, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2nd ed., 54–55.



***Ontological argument #1 (nature of being):***

1. God is by definition an absolutely perfect being.
2. An absolutely perfect being cannot lack anything.
3. But a being that exists has something that a being that does not exist lacks—namely, existence.
4. Therefore, an absolutely perfect being must exist.

Norman L. Geisler, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2nd ed., 54–55.

***Ontological argument #2 (nature of being):***

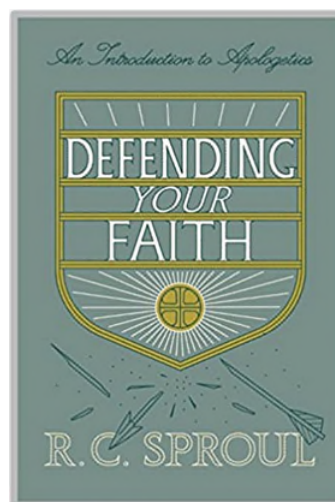
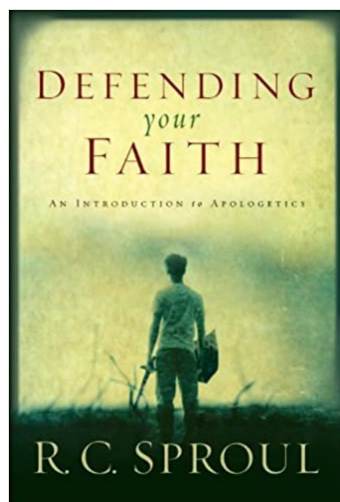
1. God is by definition a necessary being.
2. But a necessary being cannot not exist (otherwise, it would not be a necessary being).
3. Therefore, a necessary being necessarily exists.

Norman L. Geisler, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2nd ed., 54–55.

***Moral argument:***

1. There are objective moral laws.
2. Moral laws come from a moral lawgiver.
3. Therefore, a moral lawgiver exists.

Norman L. Geisler, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2nd ed., 54–55.

***“Defending Your Faith” by R. C. Sproul***

What does the Bible say about knowing the existence of God & God Himself?

\* God has revealed Himself to us,  
and He wants us to know Him.

**Romans 1:18-23(CSB)**

<sup>18</sup> For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, <sup>19</sup> since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles.

**1. Atheism is a learned discipline — “suppressing the truth.”  
(Rom 1:18,21-23)**

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1 Timothy 2:3-4 (CSB)

<sup>3</sup> This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

John 17:3 (CSB)

<sup>3</sup> This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent—Jesus Christ.

(Part of the nature of our eternal life in Christ is the ability to know God, not only in head-knowledge, but also know Him personally by experience.)



Atheism never composed a symphony.  
Never painted a masterpiece.  
Never dispelled a fear.  
Never healed a disease.  
Never gave peace of mind.  
Never dried a tear.  
Never established a philanthropy.  
Never gave an intelligent answer to the vast mystery of the universe.  
Never give meaning to man's life on earth.  
Never built a just and peaceful world.  
Never built a great and enduring civilization.

~ Charles M. Houser

Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations: Signs of the Times.

God exists.  
He is knowable.  
He has revealed Himself to us.  
He wants us to know Him & know Him well.

\*\* It's all about **relationship**  
— undeniable, indispensable, powerful!