

# ATHEISM

## A General Introduction

# Atheism

Disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of God or gods.

# TYPES OF ATHEISM

- ❖ Humanism - **Man** is god.
- ❖ Naturalism - **Nature** is god.
- ❖ Materialism - **Money** is god.
- ❖ Intellectualism - **Reason** is god.
- ❖ Relativism - **Personal viewpoint** is god.
- ❖ Socialism - **Society** is god.
- ❖ Pluralism - **Diversity** is god.
- ❖ Hedonism - **Pleasure** is god.

# ATHEIST VS. AGNOSTIC

## Atheist

anyone who does not believe in any gods.

## Agnostic

anyone who does not claim to know whether any gods exist or not.

# ATHEIST VS. PANTHEIST

## Atheist

anyone who does not believe in any gods.

## Pantheist

anyone who tolerates all gods, or who thinks the Universe is God.

# Facts About Atheists

(2016 Pew Research)

# FACT #1: THEY ARE GROWING

- ❖ Americans who identify as **atheists have doubled** in the past 10 years.
- ❖ Up from 1.6% in 2007 to 3.1% in 2016
- ❖ Agnostics up from 2.4% to 4.0%

# FACT #2: DEMOGRAPHICS

- ❖ 68% of American atheists are **men**
- ❖ Median age is **34** (avg age of male adult is 46)
- ❖ 78% **Caucasian** (vs. 66% of general public)
- ❖ Highly **educated**
- ❖ 43% have a **college degree** (vs. 27% of general public)
- ❖ 14% of **2nd gen Americans** lack belief in God (vs. 9% of immigrants, 3rd gen, or avg Americans)



# FACT #3: MOSTLY LEFT-LEANING

- ❖ 69% **identify** as Democrats (vs. 10% as Republicans)
- ❖ 92% **favor** same-sex marriage
- ❖ 87% **support** abortions
- ❖ 74% **want** big government

# FACT #4: UNDERCOUNTED

- ❖ Although 3% of Americans call themselves atheist, 9% say they don't believe in God

# FACT #5: SPIRITUAL ATHEISTS

- ❖ 97% of atheists never pray
- ❖ 31% say they feel a deep sense of spiritual peace
- ❖ 35% often think about the meaning of life
- ❖ 54% feel a deep sense of wonder about the universe (up from 37% in 2007)

# FACT #6: DON'T TALK ABOUT GOD

- ❖ 9% talk about religion on a weekly basis (compared to 26% of religious people)
- ❖ 65% never talk to religious people about God (compared to 43% of religious people)

# FACT #7: SCIENCE = GOD

- ❖ 1% look to religion for guidance of right and wrong
- ❖ 32% look to science (up from 20% in 2007)

# FACT #8: VIEWED BY OTHERS

- ❖ On a scale of 1 (negative) to 100 (positive), average Americans gave the following scores to these groups:
  - Atheists: **41**
  - Muslims: **40**
  - Jews: **63**
  - Catholics: **62**
  - Evangelical Christians: **61**

# FACT #9: SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT

- ❖ 51% say they would not support an atheist candidate for president (down from 63% in 2007)

# FACT #10: MORAL AUTHORITY

- ❖ 53% of all Americans say you don't have to believe in God to be moral
- ❖ 45% say you must believe in God to have good values (vs. 15% in France)
- ❖ In Indonesia, Ghana, and Pakistan, nearly 100% say you must believe in God to be moral.



# FACT #11: CORRELATION WITH MARRIAGE

Generation	% of lack of belief in God	% self-described atheists
Never Married	15%	5.0%
Living with a Partner	14%	5.0%
American	9%	3.1%
Married	7%	2.0%
Divorced/Separated	6%	2.0%
Widowed	3%	1.0%

# Rejecting God

# REASONS TO REJECT GOD

- ❖ Emotional
- ❖ Psychological
- ❖ Intellectual
- ❖ Strong Will

# THE INSOLUBLE TRILEMMA

- ❖ **God is all-powerful:** He can do anything He wills.
- ❖ **God is all-loving:** He cares with an intense value for His creation.
- ❖ **Evil is a reality:** Suffering is an all-pervading part of this world.
- ❖ **Atheist:** "Why would God create such a world when in His omniscience He could foresee the extent of evil and the depths to which the innocent would suffer?"

# GOD IS ALL-POWERFUL

## ❖ He can do anything He pleases

- Can He make a circle and call it a square?
- Can He lie and call it the truth?
- Can He allow evil and call it good?
- Can God be irrational without justification?

# GOD IS ALL-LOVING

- ❖ **He cares with an intense value for His creation**
  - Is eliminating pain always the loving thing to do?
  - Does love mean to let someone do whatever they want?
  - Is it love to remove boundaries?

# THE INSOLUBLE ~~TRILEMMA~~

## QUINTILEMMA

- ❖ **God is all-powerful:** He can do anything He wills.
- ❖ **God is all-loving:** He cares with an intense value for His creation.
- ❖ **Evil is a reality:** <sup>in time</sup> Suffering is an all-pervading part of this world.
- ❖ **God is all-wise:** His understanding is above ours.
- ❖ **God is eternal:** There was never a time when He was not, and He will be forever.

# WHAT IS EVIL?



"As an atheist, my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?"

- C.S. Lewis



# REAL MORALITY



“The moment you say one set of moral ideals can be better than another, you are, in fact, measuring them both by a standard, saying that one of them conforms to that standard more nearly than the other...You are, in fact, comparing them both to some Real Morality, admitting that there is such a thing as a real right, independent of what people think, and that some people’s ideals get nearer to that right than others.”

- C.S. Lewis

# FREE WILL

- ❖ God made everything perfect, including free-willed creatures
- ❖ Free will gave rise to evil, indirectly
  - **God** created the law of freedom; **humanity** performed the act of freedom
  - **God** allowed evil to exist; **humanity** brought it into existence

# OTHER COMMON ATHEIST ARGUMENTS

- ❖ No evidence for God's existence
- ❖ If God created the universe, who created God?
- ❖ God cannot lie → He is not all-powerful
- ❖ Christianity was invented by ignorant people 2000 years ago
- ❖ You're Christian because you grew up in a Christian culture
- ❖ History is full of mother-child cults, trinities.
- ❖ Evolution has answered everything

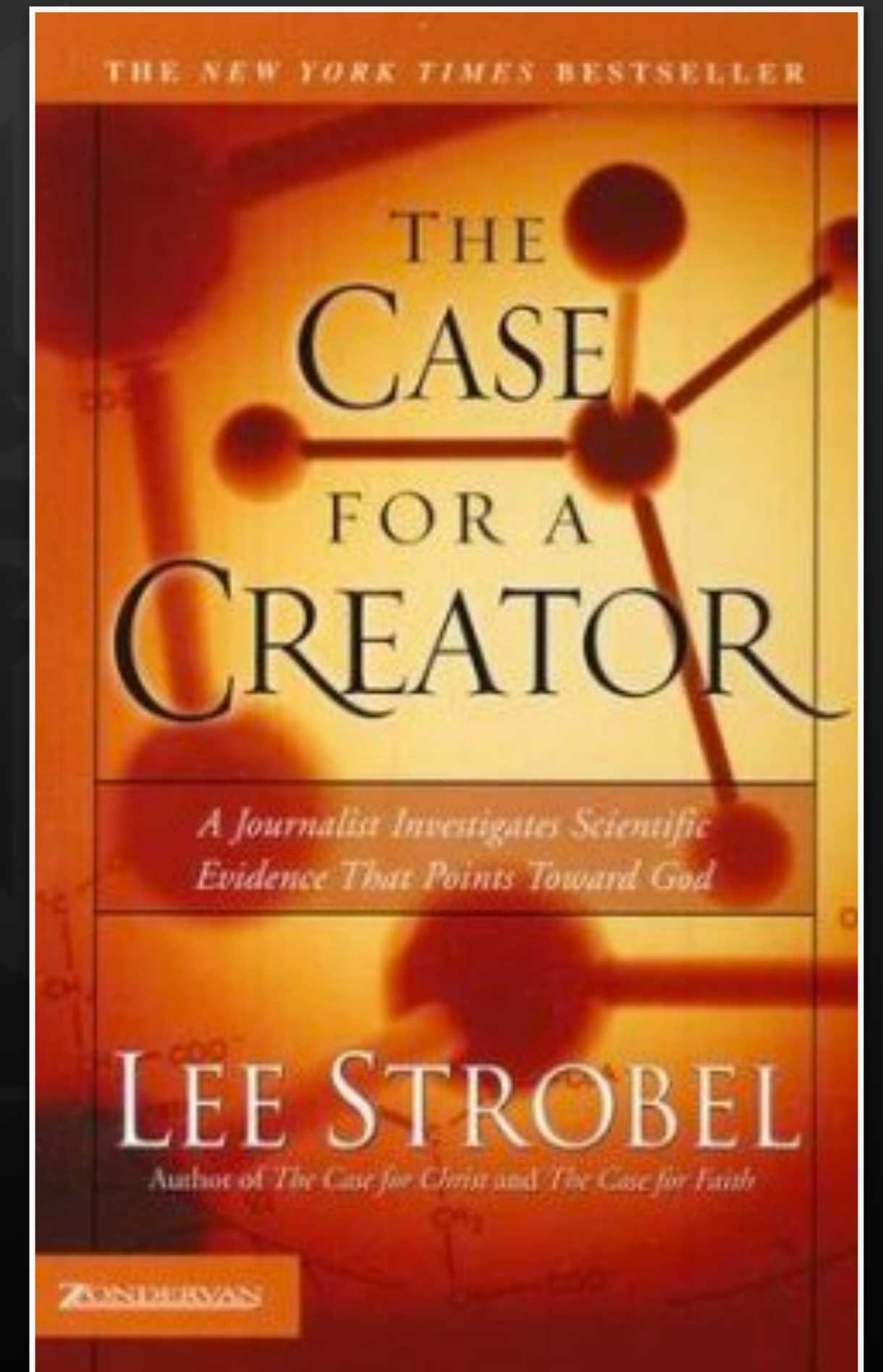
# Recommended Research

# CREATION VS EVOLUTION

## ❖ The Case for a Creator, by Lee Strobel

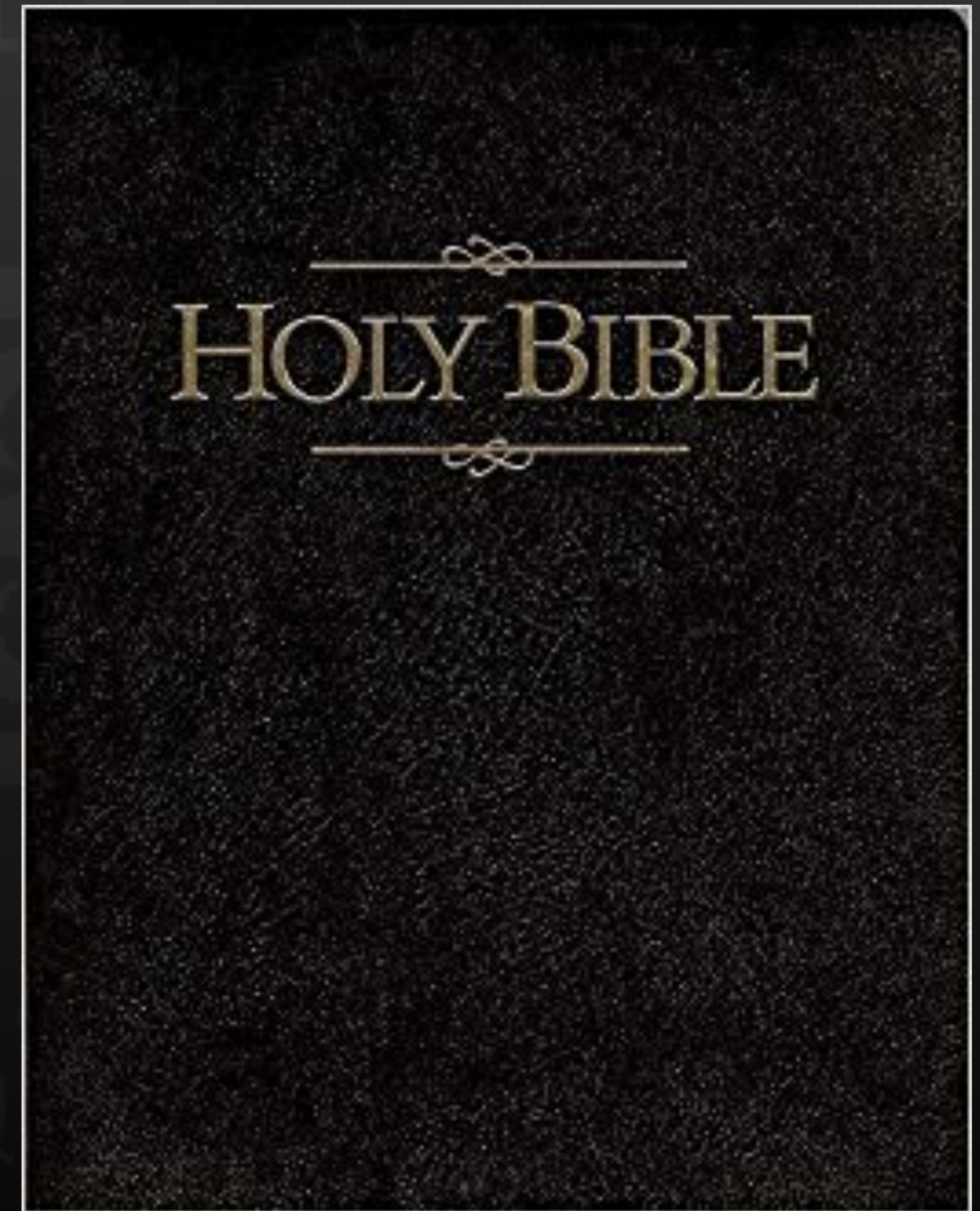
### ❖ Summary

- Evolution refuted
- Religion and science don't have to be enemies
- First Cause Argument
- Perfectly calibrated universe
- Irreducible complexity
- Consciousness



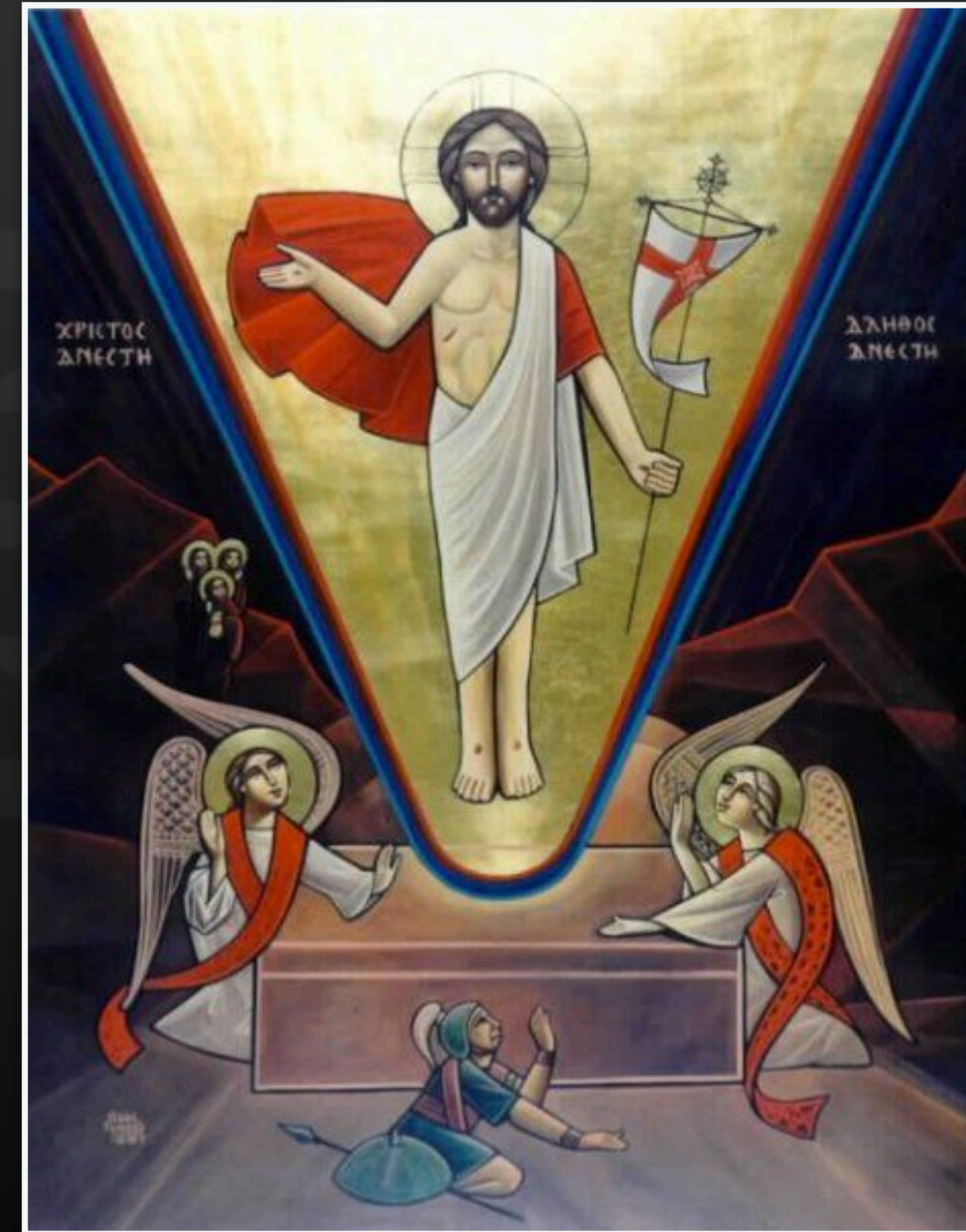
# RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

- ❖ Fulfilled prophecies
- ❖ Archaeological evidence
- ❖ Eye-witness testimonies
- ❖ Self-deprecating authors
- ❖ Ability to transform lives
- ❖ Survivability of the Scriptures
- ❖ Supplementation ≠ Contradiction
- ❖ Phenomenal language



# PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION

- ❖ Torture before the cross
- ❖ Agony of the cross
- ❖ Cause of death
- ❖ Burial in the tomb
- ❖ Empty tomb
- ❖ The Appearances



# Talking to an Athiest



# THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- ❖ What is your motive?
- ❖ What are the consequences?
- ❖ Don't judge
- ❖ Emotional vs logical
- ❖ Appropriate time to talk?
- ❖ Ask permission
- ❖ Don't threaten
- ❖ Don't be defensive
- ❖ Act like a Christian
- ❖ Pray for them (privately)
- ❖ Maybe let them go

# Quotes

# LOVE



“Free will is the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having. A world of creatures that worked like machines would hardly be worth creating. The happiness which God designs for His higher creatures is the happiness of being freely and voluntarily united to Him and to each other.”

- C.S. Lewis

# WHAT'S THE POINT?



“The point of life is not happiness, but the knowledge of God, which, in the end, will produce ultimate human flourishing. There are certain instances of suffering that are impossible to produce happiness, but are not useless in producing the knowledge of God. Hence, to argue against the existence of God on the grounds of the existence of evil and suffering is to fundamentally misunderstand the point of life.”

- **William Lane Craig**

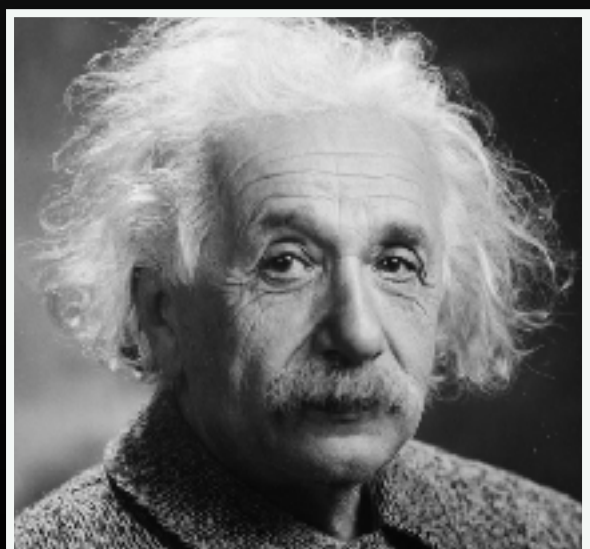
# GOD AND SCIENCE



- ❖ “Little science takes you away from God but more of it takes you to Him” -**Louis Pasteur**, founder of microbiology



- ❖ “The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will make you an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass, God is waiting for you.” -**Werner Heisenberg**, father of quantum physics



- ❖ “Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.” - **Albert Einstein**, theoretical physicist

# MORE QUOTES

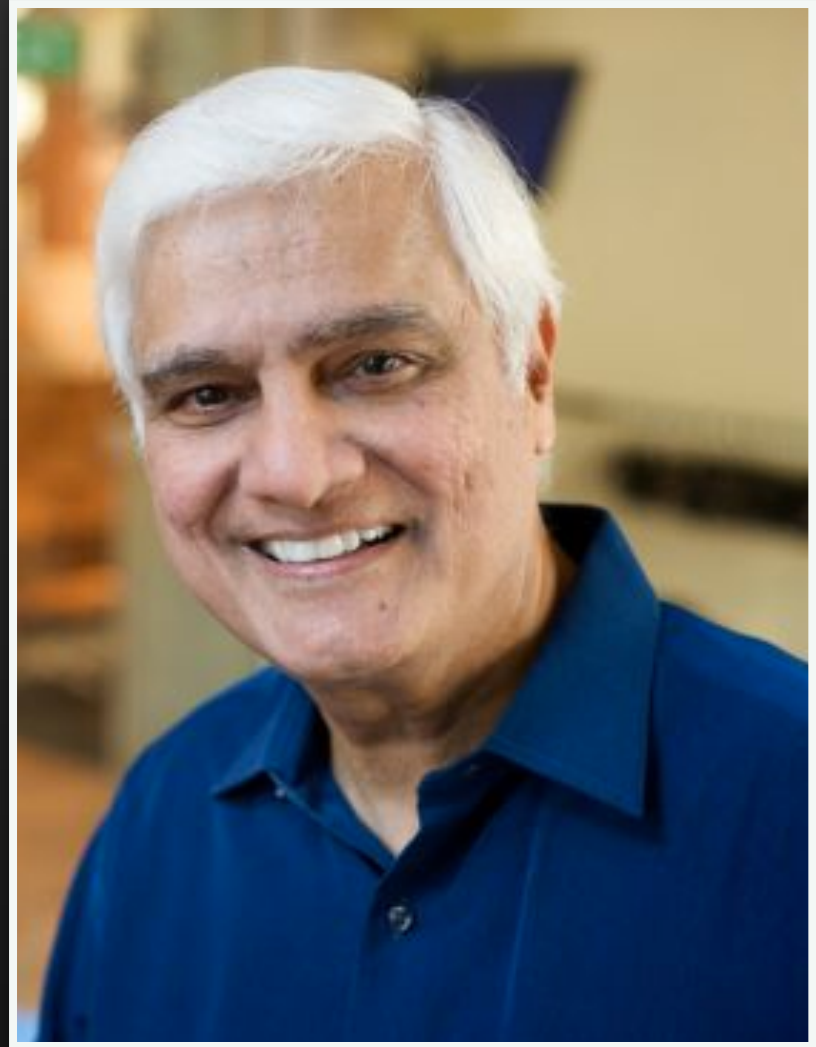


❖ “The worst moment for the atheist is when he is really thankful, and has nobody to thank.” -**Dante Gabriel Rossetti**



- ❖ “Atheists express their rage against God although in their view He does not exist.” -**C.S. Lewis**
- ❖ “A creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers—including his power to revolt. It is like the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower.” -**C.S. Lewis**

# MORE QUOTES

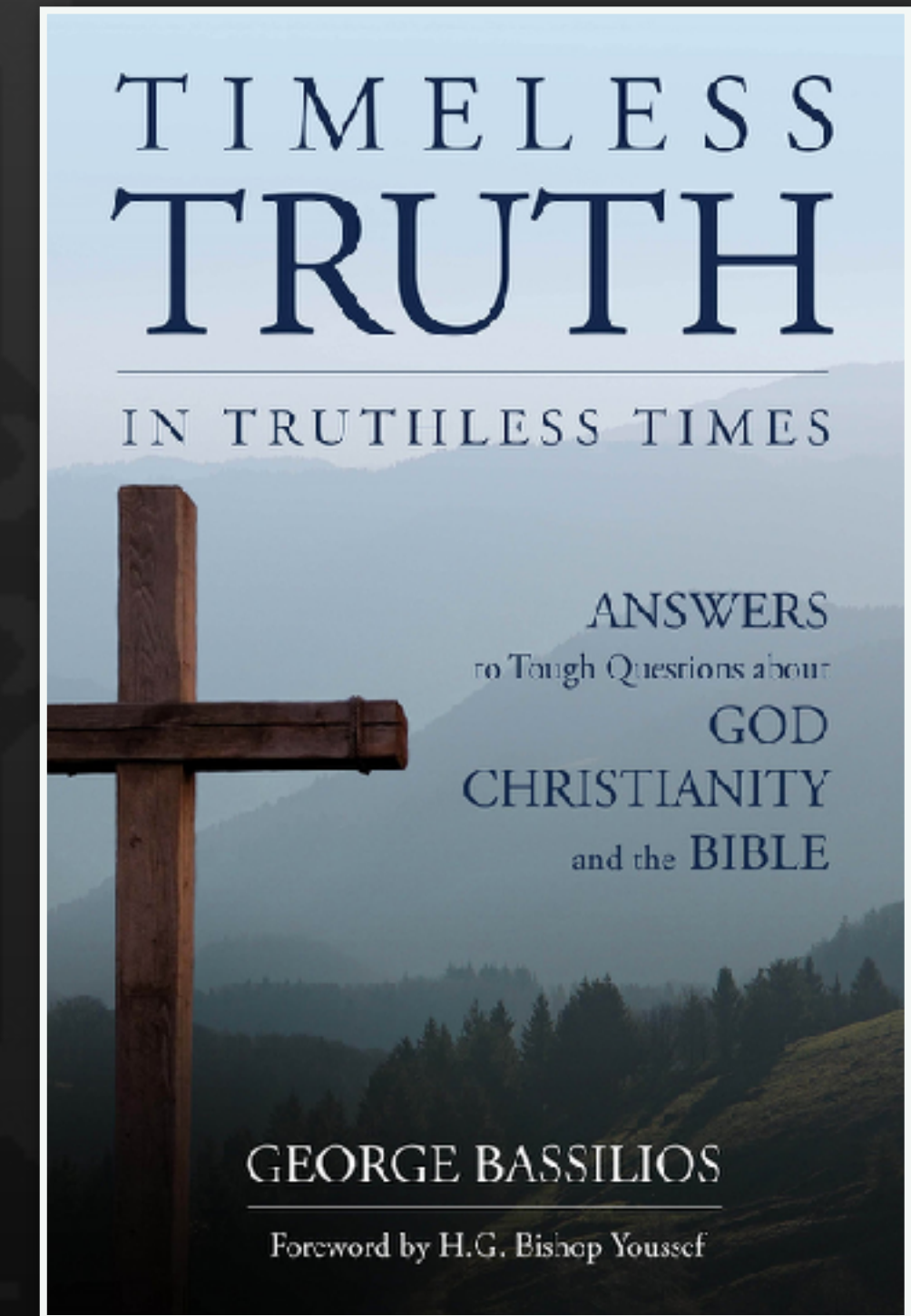
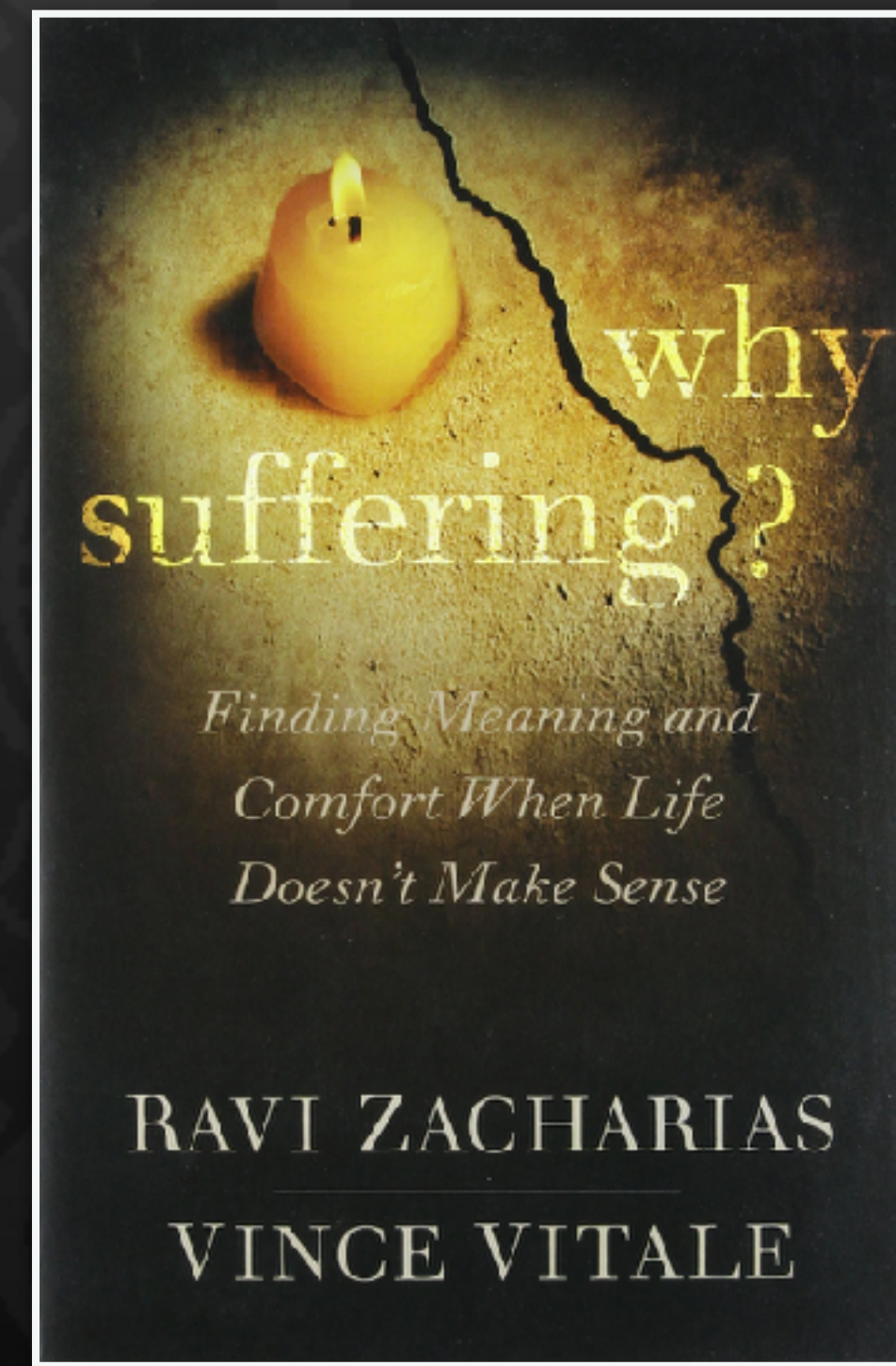
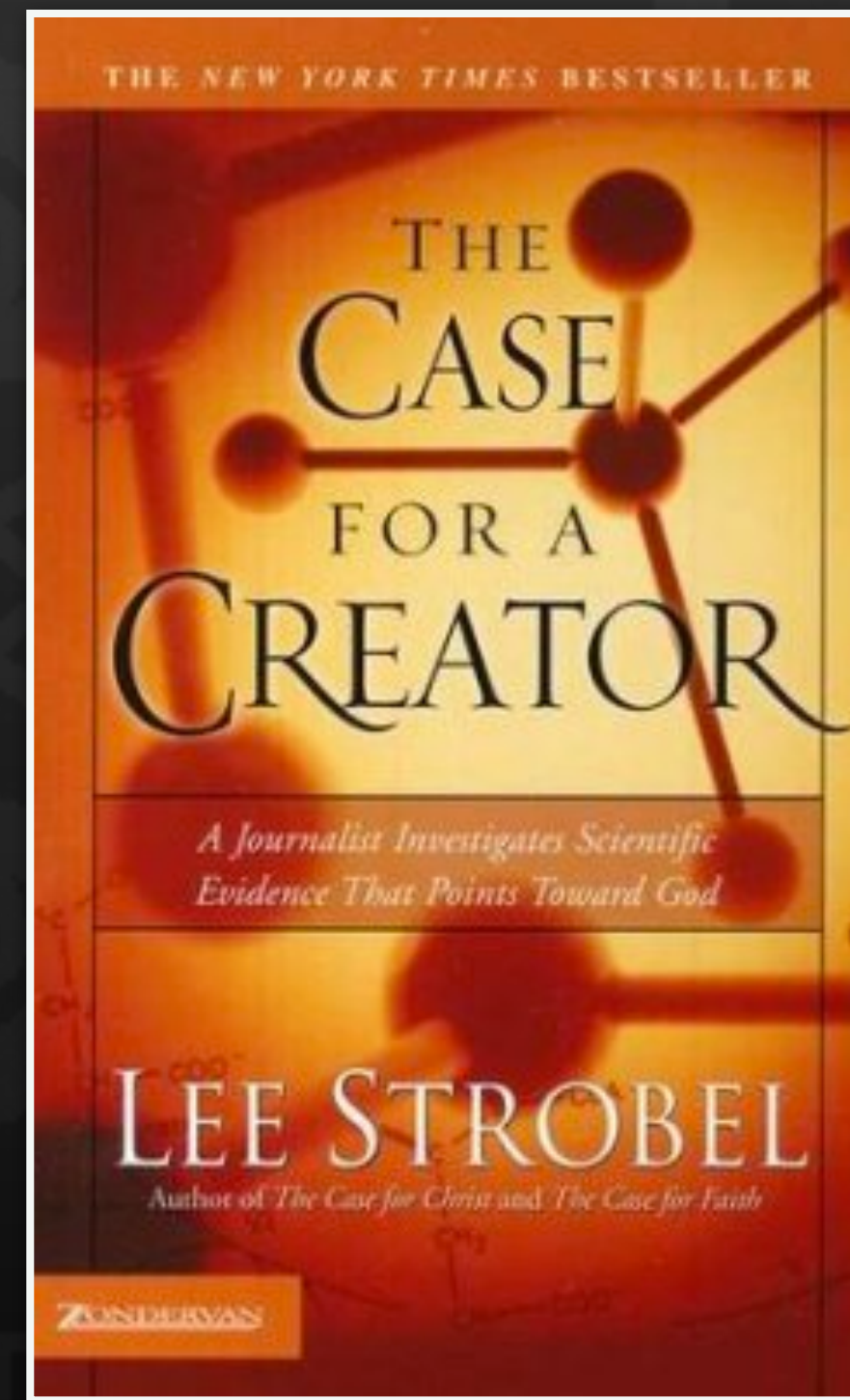
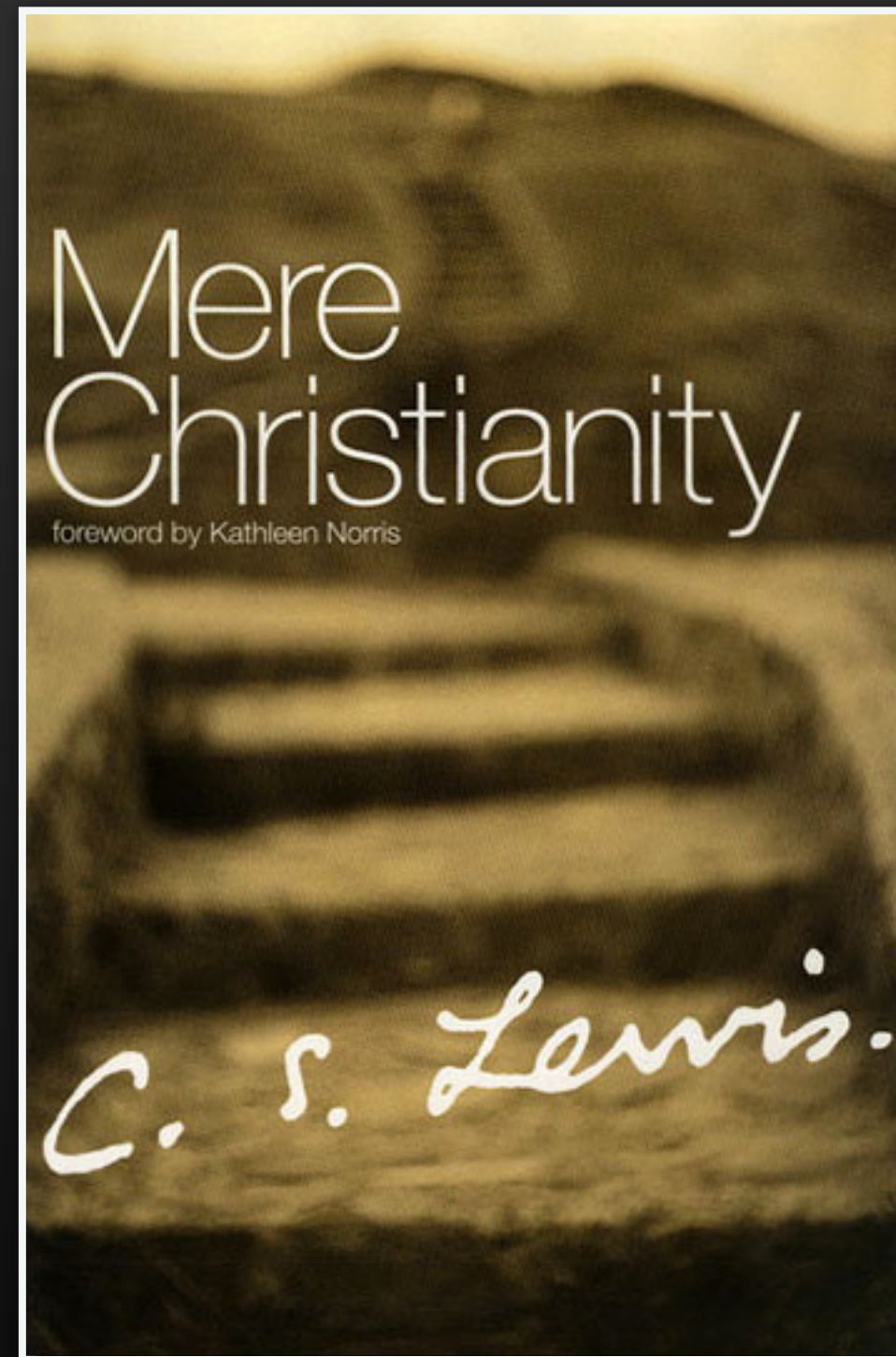


- ❖ “To sustain belief that there is no God, atheism has to demonstrate infinite knowledge, which is equivalent to saying, ‘I have infinite knowledge that there is no being in existence with infinite knowledge’” -**Ravi Zacharias**



- ❖ “I believe in God as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else” -**C.S. Lewis**

# RECOMMENDED READING





**Glory to God forever. Amen.**