

Defending the Faith



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March 2017

Does God Exist? Part II Answering the Agnostic

For thousands of years, human beings have created their own gods out of the imaginations of their own minds. In the past, this was their way of explaining the universe around them. Often, myths of gods explained natural phenomenon, such as the rising and setting of the sun, fair weather and storms, and the existence of everything. These gods were powerful, arrogant, jealous, adulterous, and often angry. People would make offerings to the gods to appease them and win their good favor. Ancient civilizations worshipped many gods, who would protect their followers. Many of these gods were portrayed as capricious and malicious toward mankind, bestowing favor or curses at their own whims or for their own pleasure. In some cases these gods raped and murdered, such as the Greek god Hades, who raped Persephone, or the Egyptian god Set, who murdered his brother Osiris. Today, many people still view gods in this way, including our Christian God. They believe that God is capricious in causing suffering and malevolent in allowing evil to exist. Some even believe that God created evil. Therefore, they refuse to believe in God.

Is it a coincidence that these descriptions of gods sound very much like Satan? According to 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."* The god of this world is Satan. He is the author of evil, the deceiver, who *"seeks to steal, and to kill, and to destroy."* He is arrogant, jealous of God, and hates mankind. However, Christ continues, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep"* (John 10:10-11). Many people do not believe in our Christian God because they do not know Him. He is not real to them.

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Today, our world seeks to explain everything through science and reasoning, through those things, which are observable or “real” to our physical senses. Therefore, they refuse to believe without “proof.” However, from a Christian point of view, this is a fallacy. Christ, our God, entered our reality and healed the sick, raised the dead and even raised Himself from the dead, yet many still refused to believe. Why?

The agnostics who seek evidence realize that scientific evidence can neither prove nor disprove the existence of God. Consequently, they sit on the fence, making no decision at all. They put off making a decision, until they are provided with proof. Some agnostics are simply not interested in making a decision. They claim there is no way to prove there is a God, so they refuse to commit, neither do they seek for answers. They are busy living life as they please and trying to cope with the adversities of life as they go.

In either case, making a decision may mean rejecting a God that *does* exist. They do not really want to commit to that possibility, yet they also cannot commit to believing in God because if God was real, they may have to change their lifestyles. They enjoy doing as the please. Essentially, they refuse to humble themselves to anyone, especially to a God they do not know. They would rather set their own rules for their lives. It is pride or ego, which keeps some people from believing in God or even seeking answers about God. Their minds are limited by their physical senses, by the here and now. They cannot conceive of another reality. Isn't it interesting that, today, there are scientific theories which suggest there are other dimensions of reality? Perhaps, the heavenly dimension is one of them.

These agnostics need to learn about Christ. They need to know that Christ, that nice prophet, who preached about love, claimed to be God. They need to understand that Christ is God. Many people, even many Christians, do not truly know God. They do not know that we love a God who is the source of love. They judge God through the dark glasses of their own minds, their own experiences. They do not know that God is humble and meek, compassionate and kind, gentle and patient, that He graced us with the gift of free will because He loves us, and He wants us to love Him in return, of our own free will. They do not know that God loves us, unconditionally, no matter what we do, but He will not force us to love Him. Most people do not fully comprehend Christ's sacrifice. Christ, our God, loved us so much that He came down from the glory of heaven to willingly die for us. He suffered rejection, mocking, beatings and crucifixion, so that we could enter into a loving relationship with Him. They cannot fathom an all-powerful God, humbling Himself for us and dying for us. It truly is unbelievable! Yet, as Christians, we believe.

Other non-believers are simply angry at God. They are angry with the suffering we experience. They cannot believe there is a God because there is so much evil, pain, and death in this world. They look at other people and wonder how can there be a God who allows such evil to exist. Some may even have attended church at some point and become disappointed by the treatment they experienced. The paradox here is that this group of non-believers is angry at a God that allegedly does not exist.

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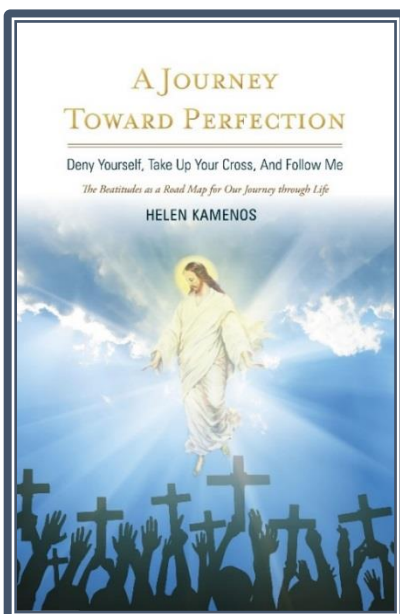
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How can we respond to the questions about evil? We will deal with this more fully in the next issue of **Defending the Faith**, but the only proper response is with love. Most people do not understand perfect, divine love. As hard as it is to believe, our God came into this reality and visited us. He came in person to offer us an incomprehensible love and nothing more! It is up to each and every one of us to make the decision to accept His love or reject it. And what does He ask of us in return? He only asks us to love Him and to love our neighbors. The only way we can respond to those who do not believe is to show them the love of God through our own lives, through our own actions. We can pray for them. We can share our own personal experiences with God and explain why we believe. We can also encourage them to seek answers. If we do not know the answers to their questions ourselves, we can ask a priest or you can keep reading this newsletter each month. I will try to address the most common questions. However, let them know that if they ask God to prove Himself to them, He will respond. God knows the needs of every single one of us. *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened”* (Matthew 7:7-8). God answers seeking hearts.

Helen Kamenos
Readers Favorite Author



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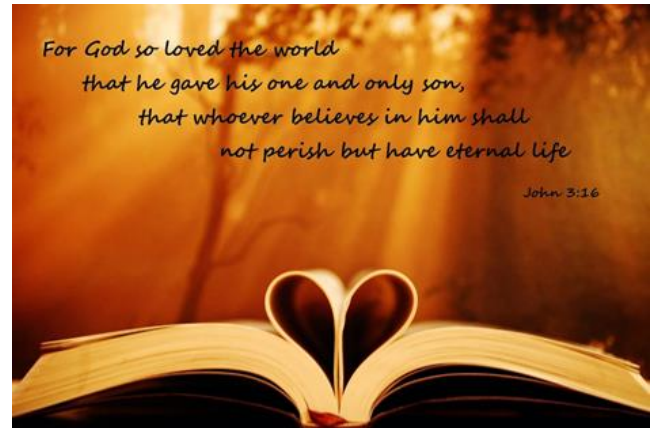
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Dear Family and Friends,

St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church of Camarillo, California is sponsoring a book signing of “A Journey Toward Perfection.” I will be signing copies of my newly published book after church during coffee hour. The church service will begin at 10:00 am. Books will be available for purchase. **JOIN US!**

For details, go to:

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