

The Fullness of Time (Gal 4:4)

During the 2010 Christmas season, the American Atheists organization paid \$20,000 for a billboard near the Lincoln Tunnel in North Bergen, New Jersey. The sign along Route 495 had a silhouette of Three Wise Men approaching a simple nativity. Against the depicted starry sky were the bold printed words, “You KNOW it’s a Myth. This Season, Celebrate REASON!” The group’s website stated the billboard was meant to encourage atheists to quit participating in the celebration of Christmas, and to “attack the myth that Christianity owns the solstice season.” The bottom of the sign declares, “American Atheists, reasonable since 1963.” Ironically, the citation of “1963” reiterates the truth that Jesus’ birth literally changed history. So in reality, Christians are celebrating reason because it’s far more reasonable to embrace the fact of Christmas than to thoughtlessly pawn it off as a myth. *FoxNews.com, 11/28/10; God Issues, 12/6/10*

Why or how be “reasonable” if no order or design? If our bodies and brains are just a randomly formed set of nerve impulses etc. then why should we believe atheists have any “reasonable” beliefs at all? Why then would Atheists seek to stop others with random brain synapses which cause them joy for celebrating – even Christmas?

- I. Communicatively:
 - a. Linguistically: Greeks added vowels to the established and greatly used Phoenician alphabet thus refining communication clarity e.g. distinguishing words such as (in today’s equivalents e.g. “*sad, said, and sod*).
 - b. They also employed what is known as Koine Greek for a common universal language for the connected cultures to share. This is what the NT writers used to pin the Scriptures.
- II. Imperially:
 - a. Augustus – son of God (divine Julius), “worthy of adoration,” regarded as ‘savior,’ new calendar around his birth.
 - b. He also enabled tolerance via the enacted Pax Romana. Though Augustus began perpetuating the Roman imperial Caesar cult, he allowed cultures to maintain their religions as long as they paid homage to the Roman gods. However, he found it prudent to make an exception for the Jews as they were fiercely monotheistic and proved their dedication under Judas the Hammer. Incidentally, the revolt and reacquiring and rededication of the Temple led to the Hanukah celebration with which Christmas coincides. Therefore, Augustus allowed Jews not to worship the Roman gods but, of course, they had to pay their taxes.
- III. Municipally (Roman Road):
 - i. Improvements and expansions to the primitive roads included paving, embanking, drainage, and sidewalks in cities
 - ii. The completed system, in Jesus day, connected the world (Europe, N. Africa, Greece, and Middle East).
 - iii. It was much safer as well as faster because stations were erected along with the road. Along with the traffic and such, travelers found it safer and quicker to travel. It was said that the “Royal Road” refurbished by Darius the Great, which connected Susa to Sardis, reduced travel time from ninety days on foot to nine on horseback.
 - iv. It allowed military to efficiently cover massive ground quickly.

- v. Though primarily paved and prepared for military communication/travel, such roads allowed for mail delivery, and the spread of the Gospel Word.
 - vi. Had Jesus arrived 30 yrs. earlier, such means of travel, and communication would have been unavailable.
- IV. Geographically: Judea at that time displayed a loyalty to the God of Scripture's revelation exclusively for those of all nations to note as they traveled through. Such was the main route of the road to get to the surrounding continents.
- V. Prophetically: Daniel 9, Micah, the star, Tribe of Judah could be verified, but not after AD 70
- VI. Spiritually: Caesar Augustus became known as Pontifex Maximus (highest priest) for his restoring of 82 temples in Rome alone. He wanted to bring worship of the gods back to renew morality. He promoted population growth by rewarding three child fathers and penalized bachelors by banning inheritance and no good seats at events. This is likely the reason for his census.
- VII. Philosophically/Socially: The deeply philosophical Greeks pondered much to harmonize the great realities of math, cosmology, religion, etc. And along came *the* Logos. John and Paul were able to harmonize all reality's source, means, and end; to Jesus (see Jn. 1 and Acts 17). **Logos Theory.** The Greek word *logos* comes from *legom* ("I say"). *Logos* means "word, speech, explanation, principle, or reason." In Greek philosophy the concept of *logos* had varying meanings. Heraclitus considered it the rational law governing the universe. Anaxagoras saw it as the principle of intelligence in the universe, though he called it *nous* ("mind"), as did Plato. For the stoics the *logos* was the principle of all rationality in the universe. But shortly before the New Testament was written, the Jewish Philosopher Philo (30 b.c.–a.d. 45) described the *logos* as the image of God which was distinct from God and an intermediate between God and the world (Edwards, "*Logos*"). Later, in the third century, Plotinus made the *logos* or *nous* a lower-level emanation from the One (God).¹
- VIII. Religiously: pious Jews forsook idolatry during Babylonian captivity, synagogues were established throughout the empire. At the time there was a profuse variety of regions and syncretistic worship. Also, for the Jews there was much anticipation and understanding of the advent of Messiah.
- IX. Universally:
- a. Ancient Pagans
 - i. Though it is true that there are similarities re: Jesus and ancient gods. However, what is similar is broad and what most would naturally/logically deduce as expected traits of deities and the prerogatives of the divine.
 - ii. Ancients expected that *the* Creator or creators would communicate and visit creation and thus such an advent would be preceded by prophesy.
 - iii. The deity(ies) would possess a royal heritage and be born or appear in some unnatural way but be protected as a vulnerable child.
 - iv. This divine one would face and overcome temptation.
 - v. Though supernaturally gifted (in some way), he would be able to empathize with humans.

¹Geisler, Norman L.: *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : Baker Books, 1999 (Baker Reference Library), S. 430

- vi. This deity would demand sacrifice and yet offer to sup with humans in communion of sorts.
- vii. This deity would overcome death.
- viii. This deity would (in some way) offer afterlife.
- ix. This deity would be final arbiter of judgment.
- x. It would seem quite insufficient if the true Messiah of God did not (in some fashion) fulfill these commonly acknowledged prerogatives, plans, and power. See C. S. Lewis p. 39 of Wallace. But only the historical Jesus of Scripture is revealed – and predicted – to possess His dual nature, unique advent, paradoxical priesthood, kingship, and prophetic roles; His atonement for sins, resurrection, coronation, and nature of Kingdom ministry →

b. Ancient Judaism

- i. Before and during the time of expectations of the divinities of the ancients, Scripture's authors recorded specific prophesies which did involve many attributes of a divine consensus culminating in Jesus' day. However, only Scripture's canon offers verifiable evidence and specificity which far exceeds general consensus.
- ii. It is simply divine how accurately the ancient Scriptures prophesy one man in so many details, in so many means of communication, and over a period of two millennia.
- iii. The motifs, events, people, Law, covenants, Prophets, objects, priesthood, Temple, writings, and prophesy point on One and no other. Such realities are known as types and shadows – which are cast by the light of the true Antitype and Substance (e.g. Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5: 10:1).
- iv. Without getting into all of the mentioned, I want to read a few lists to see if you can identify who these lists describe in the Old Testament times.
 - v. Read Wallace (pp. 40-45) and my Joseph lists.
 - vi. See also considered objection p. 46 Wallace.
 - vii. Therefore, Jesus came at a time when those of all religions had some expectation and reasonable anticipations of a coming One.

X. BC to AD aka BCE to CE

- a. It was the compassion of Christ followers who led them to develop hospitals, missions, and para-church organizations e.g. World Vision, Red Cross, VOM, CSI, Salvation Army, Cross International, Compassion International, and many more. See *John* 14:12.
- b. It was the need to distribute Bibles not record the histories of emperors that the printing press was invented. Such also providentially accompanied Luther's spurring of the Great Reformation. It was the passion of Christ followers which led to the pursuit and formation of ideals and institutions such as these:
 - i. Literacy and education for entire families and communities
 - ii. Free, safe, and fair enterprise
 - iii. Representative government
 - iv. Civil liberties (not Social Justice)
 - v. The abolition of slave trade and slavery
- c. Others ideals, organizations, institutions, and such were formed as a result of the Word who dwelt among us and the Word of truth written in Scripture. A few

- resources to consider re: the transcendent conglomeration of benevolent world changing realities are e.g. “What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?,” “What If The Bible Had Never Been Written?,” (both books by D. James Kennedy & Jerry Newcombe) and “Person of Interest” (Jay Warner Wallace). Also I recently purchases “Debunking Howard Zinn (Exposing the Fake History That Turned a Generation against America)”
- d. It was the impetus of pursuing God with all the “mind” which caused Christians to found the first and prestigious universities so as to get a higher rounded education of God and His creation. The Bible was the main criterion and the mottos summed up such. Harvard’s motto for over four centuries was “Truth for Christ and the Church.” Yale’s was “Light and Truth.” Wheaton is or was “For Christ and His Kingdom.”
 - e. However, evil/sin is a cancer and corrupts goodness. Most of the mentioned institutions have grown to be perverted and even instruments of the beast of the sea and beast of the land (perverted government and religion). Sin can only pervert and corrupt – it cannot create! Evil did not promote education, compassion, love, grace, truth, joy, courage, or any godly virtue or virtuous acts, events, institutions, or missions. In fact, evil is the impetus for the condemnation of America’s Christian history of religious liberty, reforms, abolition of slavery, etc. →
 - f. Universities are now dens of Atheistic promulgation, licentious perversions, and anti-intellectual indoctrination. Yes, colleges have become anti-logic, anti-truth, and anti-intellectual. *So too have grade schools! When administrations can say with a straight face that there are more than two genders or that biology can’t identify gender, or when they shut down debate and shame, vilify, and cancel others with a counter perspective – the universities have become counterproductive. Rather than iron sharpening iron, we have echo chambers simply affirming the spirit of the age. For the benefit of good health’s sake e.g. a doctor needs to know one’s true gender. If your faith system is too fragile to endure criticism, it isn’t worth believing!
 - g. Jesus had an obscure upbringing with humble means and in an ‘insignificant’ town. Kings and Emperors had a much more reasonable advantage to be famous. They had more worldly influence, power, position, renown, means of promotion, established means of communication, etc. Read Wallace 249.
 - h. Nevertheless, Jesus – not the emperors of the days – is acknowledged to an embarrassingly higher degree. I think that if it were not for Jesus, we’d know barely anything about His contemporary officials, kings, governors, priests, and emperors. It’s no coincidence that we are familiar with those rulers who were Jesus’ contemporaries. Even most of the ancient religions are now extinct when they had a head start on Christianity. Furthermore, the surviving religions adjusted to details of Jesus’ person and work. And Islam some 600 yrs. after Jesus’ departure, incorporates Him into much of their religion. Strangely in Islam, Mohammad is superior to Jesus though only Jesus is the anointed, virgin born, sinless, miracle working, One who will come at the final judgment. While Mohammad sinned, committed adultery, murdered, self-contradicted, and thought he was possessed or tormented by demons until one of his wives convinced him it was Allah who was communicating with him.
 - i. And those few religions who had a head start on Jesus – including the top current religions today – have incorporated Jesus’ person and work into their respective teachings. The Pew Research Center has been keeping a tally on the 7.7 billion

- people who currently populate the planet and here are the totals of those who have been exposed and/or influenced by Jesus:
- i. 1.16 billion Hindus
 - ii. 1 million Hare Krishna's
 - iii. 506 million Buddhists
 - iv. 1.9 billion Muslims
 - v. 5 million Baha'is
 - vi. 20 million Ahmadi Muslims
 - vii. 2.3 billion global Christians
 - viii. All calculating up to 5.89 billion people currently.
- j. Jesus so much effected history that even if all New Testament (NT) manuscripts and Bibles were burned, we would have enough writings about Him to convey the entire Gospel with much detail. The same goes if those were all burned and we had only the buildings and statues. The same goes if all of those were burned and we only had music and art. And if all the art, buildings, writings, and such were burned, we'd surely have enough to have the message of both Old and New Testaments in movies alone. And get this: even if all the above mentioned categories disappeared, we'd have the full life of Jesus articulated by the scientists. (More on them in a moment.)
 - k. And after seeing the list of nearly 6 billion out of 7.7 billion people populating the earth today, we could get the major parts (if not all) of the Gospel of Christ from the religions which have incorporated Him into their teachings.
 - l. Because today some have erroneously pitted science vs faith, I'd like to expound on the scientists and the particular influence of Christian scientists have had on our lives. In all centuries, Jesus followers have been at the forefront of discovery and have overwhelmingly led the advancements of modern science. It was because of their understanding of a Creator that they wanted to study His creation.
 - m. Because of Jesus' impression on brilliant thinkers, we enjoy the advancements of theology, philosophy, medicine, and over 200 more specific disciplines of sciences of which all the founding fathers were (you guessed it) Christians. See Wallace pp. 200-207.
 - n. Re: cosmology (Copernicus and later Galileo – Christians who were centuries ahead of the other religious and secular scientists re: heliocentric solar system).
 - o. The most brilliant leaders, who are also considered the most brilliant humans in history, include Christians such as Sir Isaac Newton, Augustine, and Jonathon Edwards. In fact the halls of fame for different disciplines of sciences are by in large Christians. In fact, compared with *all* others Nobel Prize winners (including free thinkers, atheists, agnostics, and other religious winners) to this day, Christians represent 65.4% of Nobel recipients.
 - p. Furthermore, the reluctant Albert Einstein developed the theory of relativity which acknowledges (in my understanding) the simultaneous appearance of time, matter, and space – which concurs with *Genesis* 1 and *John* 1, among other passages. Even coming from an atheistic perspective Einstein stated the most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible. It is only incomprehensible if one assumes no Creator. When working out his theory of relativity, Einstein first left out his computations of a beginning to the universe but later had to adjust for a beginning. Scripture first revealed this some 4 thousand years ago when Moses, under the

- illumination of the Spirit, wrote that in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth. Beginning = time. Heavens = space. Earth/planets/etc. = matter.
- q. From the earliest Scriptures: Job, Genesis, Psalms, and other poetic writings instruct us to study creation.
 - r. No other religious writing instructs us to test its veracity and study creation to better understand its Creator. Ps. 19:1-2; Ro. 1:20. There is a book of nature and book of Scripture and both reveal realities about the Creator.
 - s. The Gnostics viewed (and view) matter as evil and/or conveniently irrelevant and thus didn't prioritize sciences. However, God made the physical universe and said it was good; thus believers are inspired to discover His creation which both helps us to better understand who He is and helps us to advance our way of life.
 - t. Matter matters and we know this because the eternal spiritual Logos (Word) became flesh! And "in the fullness of time," came to redeem those under the Law.