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Dr. Charles Ryrie wrote: "The several facets of man and all of them together demand some explanation as to their origin and argue for the existence of a being who is moral and intelligent and living who could have produced man. Material, inanimate, or unconscious forces could hardly have produced man. Evolution cannot produce soul, conscience, or religious instincts. Lifeless idols do not generate living offspring." (Charles Ryrie, Basic Theology, p.32)

(Rational Proof #5)- The Historical Proof.

This argument demands that there are many things in history that must lead to the logical conviction of God's existence. Such things as the existence of the Bible, archeological discoveries which coincide with the Bible, fulfilled prophecies and Jesus Christ(His Person and Work) and transformed lives of those who have been converted, all demand an historical explanation. The only logical explanation for these things is the existence of God, otherwise these would not exist in history. The syllogism of the historical proof looks like this:

- A. Certain things exist in history which point to the existence of God.
(i.e. Bible, Jesus Christ, archeological discovery, fulfilled prophecy)
- B. All historical existences must have an adequate cause.
- C. The adequate cause of things proven in history which relate to God must be God.
- D. God must exist for He alone can only be the cause of these historical realities.

If we combine this proof with all the others, the logical evidence is overwhelming. The **only** rational conclusion that is even logical philosophically is the one that admits, God does exist. God is the only Person capable of causing these things for He and He alone is the only uncaused cause, who has no beginning nor ending, who was the beginning and cause of everything (Ps.90:2; 93:2; Jer.10: 10-16).

QUESTION #6- What are the various "faith systems" connected to God?

It is very important to realize that any concept of God is a faith concept, meaning whatever a person believes about God comes down to a matter of faith. All systems are faith systems and all concepts of God are due to one's beliefs and one's faith. For example if a person says we believe in the existence of God- it is faith that believes this. If a person says we do not believe in the existence of God- it is faith that believes that. Anything and everything connected to God is a matter of faith. Now basically there are six faith systems that exist when it comes to believing things about God:

Faith System #1- Theism.

This is the faith system that believes in the existence of a personal God. Dr. Chafer writes: "The etymology of the word theism would give it a wide range of application, but in common usage it has come to mean belief in God, and incorporates a system of beliefs which constitutes a philosophy restricted, indeed: somewhat to those findings and conclusions which human reason suggests." (Vol 1, p. 137)

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All who believe in the existence of a personal God may be classified as theist, but that does not automatically mean they are a Christian. Christianity is a theistic belief system, but theism is not limited to Christians. When it comes to theism, there are two types of theists:

(Type #1)- The Naturalistic Theists.

These are people who have concluded through nature that a personal God does exist. This does not mean that one who adheres to naturalistic theism is automatically a believer in Jesus Christ.

(Type #2)- The Naturalistic Biblical Theists.

These are people who have concluded that nature does prove the existence of God and they search the Scriptures to know God.

Obviously the theist who will intimately know God is one who studies the Bible. One who is a naturalistic theist, does believe in a personal God and tends to feel close to God when observing nature. However, one who is a naturalistic theist, tends to maximize experiences in nature and minimize the study of God's word and the end result is that, although he may feel close to God, he really isn't close to God because closeness to God is achieved by a careful, consistent pursuit and study of God's word. Certainly the believer is interested in creation and enjoys naturalistic experiences which do testify of God, However, the believer will also put the Word of God as the ultimate means of knowing God for he realizes that creation is just one of the many avenues recorded in Scripture, but which men may know God.

When it comes to theism, most theists believe the following:

- 1) God is Transcendent - God is far Superior, beyond and excels everything (Is.40: 18-25).
- 2) God is Immanent - God is part of, closely connected to everything (Col.1:16-17).
- 3) God is Absolute - God is free from any restrictions, except those He chooses to place upon Himself (Lk.1:37; Titus 1:2)
- 4) God is Perfect - God is free from any imperfections. He is flawless
- 5) God may be known Personally - It is possible for humans to personally know God.
The level of knowledge will be conditioned upon a minimum of three factors: 1) Spiritual condition (I Cor.2:14-3:1); 2) Personal faith (Heb.11:6); 3) Biblical knowledge (I Cor.3:2; I Pet.2:2; Heb.5:12ff)
- 6) God may not be known Perfectly - It is impossible for any finite man to know everything about the Infinite God (Ps. 139:6). Although a study of God and His word is demanded, it is also true that when it comes to a knowledge of God, the greatest student sees "in a mirror darkly."

Most theists would agree with these presuppositions and certainly the Biblical theist will agree with them for the following reasons:

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(Reason #1)- These presuppositions are Biblically Correct.

Theism is the only faith system that correctly corresponds with the teachings of the Bible.

(Reason #2)- These presuppositions are Mentally Correct.

These presuppositions accept and admit to the limitations of the human mind, in attempting to understand an unlimited God. This system is willing to acknowledge that **all** human reason is far inferior to God. **All** other faith systems make human reasoning superior to God.

(Reason #3)- These presuppositions are Logically Correct.

Theism is the **only** faith system that answers all of the rational proofs for the existence of God for it is the **only** faith system that accepts what is rational and logical. It is a system that carefully examines the evidence and then logically concludes that the only explanation which fits all evidence is the existence of a personal God.

The primary distinction between a theist and a Biblical theist is that atheist believe in the existence of a personal God based upon reason, whereas a Biblical theist believes in the existence of a personal God based upon reason and revelation. A theist is a religious person, not necessarily a saved person. He may have some true concepts of God, but he cannot personally know God until he is saved. Theism is a belief system held by most people, for it is the **only** system that is rational and reasonable philosophically. All other faith systems contradict what is rational and reasonable.

We must always remember that believing in the existence of a personal God and knowing the personal God are two different issues. **All Christians are theists; but not all theists are Christians.**

Faith System #2- Atheism.

This is the faith that believes no God exists. In its basic meaning, the word "atheist" comes from the Greek word "a-theos" which means No God. "Theos" is the Greek word God, and the "a" in front of it negates the word. Atheism, then, is that belief system which denies the existence of God.

What is important to realize about this system and all others, with the exception of theism, is that atheism is theoretical NOT factual. In other words, an atheist must speculate and theorize without factual evidence, because, as we have already learned, factual rational evidence establishes the existence of God. This is why an atheist must speculate concerning the cause of things. He must invent improvable theories because, as Chafer said: "He knows no cause for anything, even his own existence." (Vol.1, p. 163) In speaking of the character and reasoning abilities of the atheist, again Dr. Chafer's words are accurate: "It is probable that a

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consistent atheist has never existed. He is a sporadic individual who has forced intuition and reason out of poise in an attempt to maintain an assumed(and) negative premise." (Vol.1, p.163). Every theist should realize that the entire faith system of the atheist is built upon theory **NOT** fact. The wise apologist will be quick to point out that facts, even rational facts, point to the existence of a personal God.

When it comes to the atheist, there are, generally speaking, two types in existence:

(Type #1)- The Practical Atheist.

The practical atheist is one who lives his/her life as if there is no God. God is never given any consideration in the practical outworking of their lives. The practical atheist does not necessarily defend his atheistic position, he/she just practically lives life as if there is no God and no future accountability to God.

It is possible for a believer to actually live life and make decisions in life as a practical atheist. In fact, James warns that it is possible for a believer to practically forget about God (i.e. James 4: 13-17). Whenever a believer chooses to do what is contrary to God's word and will, he is, in a remote sense, trying to dismiss the concept of God from his mind and of his future accountability to Him.

(Type #2)- The Theoretical Atheist.

The theoretical atheist is one who adheres to a theoretical faith system that does not believe in the existence of God. The theoretical atheist is one who attempts to dogmatically defend his belief system. Although this type of individual will attempt to dogmatically defend his position, the truth is, he is not able to consistently defend his assertions and beliefs because they are always based on theory, not fact. When one attempts to defend a belief which is contrary to fact, one must have many inconsistencies which cannot be defended except through theory and speculation. (For example- Where did the world come from if there is no God? One answer, explosion. To believe an explosion causes beautiful, intricate design and order is a real stretch of faith as any explosion proves otherwise. Where does a person go when he dies? May come back as a tree or butterfly)

Among those who would classify themselves as theoretical atheists, two major distinctions may be observed:

Distinction #1- There are those who deny the existence of Any God.

The practical reality of this position is that this theoretical atheist usually makes something or someone his "god." Very few atheists don't devote themselves to something as their "god"- whether self, success, fortune, pleasure or education. Typically all atheists give themselves to something.