

More Than a Carpenter: Chapters 4-6

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By: Cole Keenum

Before you read this section, ponder/discuss the following:

1. In August 2017, Richard Dawkins, one of the “Four [Horseman](#) of the Non-Apocalypse,” [asserted](#) on the Bill Maher show that “Faith is the opposite of science. Faith is the belief in something without evidence.” Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. Why are you a follower of Christ? What reasons do you have for your belief (if any)?
3. Why does a good God allow bad things to happen?

Chapter 4 & 5:

1. McDowell notes that “atheists of the past... [realized](#) that without God we inhabit a cold, dark, pointless universe.” The new atheists, he argues, “actually celebrate the death of God.” How do our non-believing friends, especially atheists, view their life in a godless world? How should their worldview influence our outreach to them?
2. Is the Lord a “[God of the gaps](#)” or is He something more? How might we respond to someone who accuses us of believing in God to explain those things which science hasn’t been able to explain?
 - a. *Something else to consider:* Science explains *how* things happen, but doesn’t explain *why* things happen. For example: Newton’s Laws explain why the planets orbit the sun, but they do not explain why the laws of gravity should exist at all, or why the gravitational constant is precisely set at $6.67408 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^3 \text{ kg}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-2}$. Perhaps the biggest “mystery” (we know the answer) is the existence of a universe at all.
 - b. *Another point here:* Since around 2015 the popular academic atheist arguments have tended to center on the [anthropic principle](#). In short, the argument would go like this: “If/Since there are infinite universes, there are infinite chances for order and life to arise. Of course we exist in an orderly universe, the sample size is massive! Intelligent life, like us, could only exist in a universe which harbored the conditions for intelligent life to form in the first place!”
 - i. One problem with this thinking is that we have no evidence for other universes. We can only observe one! The cosmologists who propose this solution try to explain away the seemingly-unexplainable order in the universe, but their initial premise requires a blind faith.
 - ii. Check out this [link](#) for a good resource on this new argument.
3. When you read the Bible or go to church, Christopher Hitchens might argue that you are being oppressed. How would you respond to someone who thinks that faith in God is self-destructive?

Chapter 6

1. Consider the Bible: In it we have a 1,500 year-long compilation of 66 books written down by 40 “authors” of various cultural and personal backgrounds. Although it was originally written in three languages and divided into two Testaments, it still tells one story and culminates in the short-lived ministry of one Man. This saga remains relevant two thousand years after its final installment, and it’s principles are still adhered to by some 2.2 billion people who identify as Christians.
2. Macklemore has a [line](#) where he mentions that people still “paraphrase a book written 3500 years ago.” How might we respond to someone who thinks that the Bible has lost relevance?