
Subject: Re: hope none of you are them

Posted by [Javacx](#) on Sat, 29 Jul 2006 06:00:23 GMT

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KIRBY-098 wrote on Mon, 24 July 2006 20:45Java, come back please.

I'm afraid you're not the only one struggling to make day to day life work blissfully ad infinitum. I haven't posted recently because I wanted to reflect on the information and make sure that my position is clear, at the very least, to myself.

I've managed to find the time to thoroughly read through your article and I've got some issues I'd like to talk about. It's interesting to note that the author managed to provide a fairly effective argument to justify objective truth in favour of the Bible using subjective conditions. My concerns however, deal with the frameshift the author used in affirming the "philosophical" by means of the "historical". This of course, I'm referring to the argument of "Who is Jesus". Like I said before, the New Testament is something I regard in a truthful historic light due to the high level of correspondence used in its formulation. I've got a few quams about that as well, but I'll get to those later.

The author mentions that it is futile to try and argue the case for the philosophical aspects of the Bible (miracles and God's existence) from the historical point of view when the individual denies or reserves judgment on the possibility of either. This has the potential to work out nicely, but it doesn't exactly cover all the tracks. From the agnostic point of view, the reservation of knowledge isn't because such knowledge doesn't exist, it's because the form of the knowledge is supposedly unknowable; so even if you did "know" it, you wouldn't know you knew it. The point is, if you're "unsure" about the existence of God or miracles, you can't possibly subscribe to the conclusions provided as a solid link to the objective truth claimed by the Bible. Thus, any such conclusions made, while possibly logically coherent, are entirely dependent on whether or not the individual's epistemological criteria allow for it to be truth. While a bit confusing at first, I'll explain it a bit more in a moment. I understand it seems to be grasping at straws, but it is rather a fundamental question that needs answering before anything else can be considered. An example is better to get this point home:

On the topic of euthanasia, it's easy enough to say: "Euthanasia is wrong because it is murder". But when drilled about it, it comes down to asking where the moral code comes from and why it is authentic. Assuming a Christian debator, it goes such that "the Bible (thus God) teaches that murder is wrong, therefore it is wrong." Simply put, the argument has escalated from an ethical dilemma to a metaphysical one. The issue of the existence of God (save the meandering details of Biblical authenticity) is now the focus. A similar objection is brought up: How do you know God exists? The question is reasonable, and fundamental toward determining whether or not euthanasia is moral or not. Regardless of whatever answer given (generally); "I know God exists because *insert answer*", the response is inevitably "How do you know that is true?". The argument shifts to an epistemological conundrum because the nature of knowledge invariably is fundamental before even touching the subject of God, the Bible, morals, etc. So the philosophical argument for any given situation (again, in general) is: Epistemology --> Metaphysics --> Morals --> Anything else

So to bring it full circle, epistemological questions need to be answered before you can start going

about saying "this is true" and more in context, "the Bible is true because *blah blah*". So while we use the historical evidence to point to an accurate account of the events that transpired, the issue lies primarily with the epistemological problems that arise. If the history of the Bible is assumed true as written, then obviously the whole package is assumed truth by association. However, the philosophical issues can't be discredited merely because the history seems to be the encompassing factor. The author doesn't seem to answer this issue at all, so I find contention with it. That being said, I do not think that anyone is trying to trick anyone else. That is, I do not believe that Biblical authors intentionally meant to deceive.

For example, take the book written by Ezekiel. I have no reason to believe that Ezekiel did NOT literally see what he claims to have seen (I'm aware this is OT and not NT). I do, however, have reason to believe that what Ezekiel saw did not happen in the reality (I use that loosely, for philosophical reasons) that you and I exist in. This isn't some silly existentialist metaphor or anything, it's simply that the events that occurred in the book of Ezekiel defy the natural logic of the universe. Let me be clear however: I'm not saying the events could not have happened. I am inclined however, to believe that they did not actually happen because it is unlikely for the laws of physics to be broken in such a contextual and specific manner to suit a certain ends. I understand it sounds like I am picking and choosing, but from my point of view I am not. I would no more take the word of the Koran, which claims similar miraculous events to support a metaphysical proof for the very reason that I find miracles to be a highly contestable subject.

It seems to me that, while miracles are epistemologically possible, they are unlikely to fit the criteria established by the Bible. Sadly, it is another circular argument. For, in order for the God of the Bible to be affirmed, we must take the word of the book which establishes the very God it claims to exist; proved by the miracles claimed in the Bible caused by the God claimed to exist, proved by the miracles...

The point is, the question of "Who is Jesus" is historically viable; But the evidence for His divinity is circumstantial and highly contextual. I am quite unsure as to how the events described in the New Testament considered miraculous actually occurred. I personally don't believe that anyone intended to deceive, but I am swayed by logic and probability to say that something is fishy to which I do not have enough evidence to make judgment on. Now, I have made one large assumption here that makes my argument quite weak. I'm assuming that because by "modern standards" the authenticity of the Bible is justified, that it must be true. While I most definitely do consider most literature I read as truth, I would be less than inclined to do so about something, however historically viable, regarding the divine and objective. I say this purely for philosophical reasons that I've elaborated beforehand. For example, if I were given a choice on historical documents, all considered historically viable by modern standards, all claiming contact with the divine, and all having claim to miracles which actually happened... how am I to choose which is truth? Why is the word of one man worth more than the next? Historic viability does not seem to confirm the authentic existence of miracles, nor does it seem to make it probable. Which leads me to my next point: The authors of the New Testament.

It is to my understanding that the authors of the New Testament were not limited to those who have been selected for the Bible. I'm not sure who selected Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and *the* Gospels, but I am quite sure there are more pieces of correspondence to the New Testament that apparently didn't make the cut. This may or may not be a necessary piece of information to have. For should the information contradict, or introduce foreign elements to the Bible, does that

not effect the overall clarity and "objectivity" of the Bible? Why were these documents not included? If it were for religious reasons, then we have a serious man-made problem here. I am trying to discern how it is that what we have now called the Bible is God-inspired and for all intents and purposes "perfect". I would also like to know how it can be considered a perfect document when it is people like you and I, fallable, silly people have the ability to slip words in and call it the word of God. Worse, we have the ability to slip possibly contradictory gospels from the same era by the same people that followed Jesus around. I've asked this question to some Christian friends, and the common response is "God wouldn't let that happen." I'm sure you can understand why I don't buy that. Unfortunately, it's another circular situation. The God affirmed by the Bible wouldn't allow the Bible to be tweaked with new books and gospels, but without the exact content of the Bible as it is now, it would be "less perfect", thus not the word of God, thus wouldn't affirm the God that says that it can't be tweaked. It's self-affirming, so it's covering it's ass. Unfortunately, we have to fall back onto philosophical problems in order to discern whether or not the God of the Bible is who He says He is.

Regardless, enough time has been spent on the New Testament. I am thoroughly unsure about it's application in my life because there are many philosophical loose ends that can't simply be fixed by assuming something is truth because the Bible says it is truth. Surely God would help us solve these problems without telling us to close our eyes and just nod... right?

The Old Testament is a whole new story. I'm sure I don't need to remind you how crazy it actually sounds upon reading it the first time. I understand that in Biblical context, the Old Testament was a different time because of the nature of sin. I am confused as to some of the explanations given to describe why it is the old testament stories are possible. I understand that according to the new testament, Jesus said all of it was true, but as I've already tried to contend, I'm not sure that's a good enough answer (as arrogant as that sounds). Almost everything about the New Testament defies the logic that you and I live by today. I am either left thinking that God was a big meanie who was far more involved in our lives insomuch that people seemed to frequently talk with Him (which would, at least to me, be the deciding factor in this big cosmological game) and get responses, or the stories written in the old testament were greatly exaggerated and changed over time before actually being recorded. I call attention to Genesis, where it claims that people live for upwards of nine HUNDRED years. Everything we know about biology says this can NOT happen. So either we weren't human back then, or something is awry in the story. Likewise is the story of the flood, and how Noah managed to fit two of every animal into an arc that physically could not contain two of every animal. The point is, the God introduced in the Old Testament seems to be so fictitious and unapplicable to our lives today because of the events claimed to have happened, that calling it truth is comparable to saying that I can fly if I REALLY try hard enough.

I have a few more issues I want to call attention to, but I want to let you respond before I start making the same arguments that you've answered time and time again and thus wasting both our times.