

## **REASON TO BELIEVE**

### (A response to naturalism)

Last time, we stated that NATURALISM is dominant worldview that rejects the resurrection because

Naturalism says:

1. Nature is the whole show (all that exists)
2. When nature is the whole show, there is no *supernatural* realm
3. When there's no supernatural *realm*, there can be no supernatural *events*
4. Miracles are—by definition—supernatural events
5. Thus, there can be no supernatural events. Miracles such as the resurrection cannot occur

### **A RESPONSE TO NATURALISM**

Naturalism has two problems from the start:

- First, it is circular reasoning. It begins with a conclusion and commits a fallacy of logic; it “begs the question”
- Second, it confuses probability with evidence. The naturalist says, “Wise people base their beliefs on greater evidence. Therefore, wise people should never believe in miracles.” To put it another way, “No self-respecting, intelligent person could take miracles seriously.” But this equates probability with evidence and they are not the same things. Improbable things do happen occasionally

In the response below, #1, #2 and #3 refer specifically to naturalism's rejection of the existence of miracles while #4, #5, and #6 refer to naturalism in general. Our reasonable response:

#### **1. All experience is not uniform**

- a. You can't equate all people's experience
- b. How could you know that there weren't miracles unless you had access to all people's experiences or all possible events and occurrences?
- c. We contend that *some* people, even *most* people have *not* experienced miracles, but **SOME HAVE**

#### **2. Probability is not the same as evidence**

Naturalism says we should believe what is most probable. We should go with the odds. But,

- a. What about the Lotto? I may not have probability, but if I have the ticket, I have evidence!
- b. What about the Dodgers over the A's in the '88 World Series?
- c. What about the Giants over the undefeated Patriots in the Super Bowl 42 in 2008?
- d. We change our mind based on evidence, not probability

#### **3. Each test case should be examined and tested**

- a. For example, the resurrection...
- b. Naturalists are hesitant to do this because of their opening control belief, “We know up front that miracles don't happen”
- c. But miracles are possible in a theistic universe

#### 4. Naturalism begins with a conclusion

Namely that nature is the whole show and therefore no super-nature—supernatural realm or forces—exist

#### 5. Naturalism fails its own test of knowing

- a. It has a faulty or at least limited epistemology
- b. The naturalist will maintain that the scientific method of empirical observation and testing is the only way to know factual knowledge. This has come under serious attack from postmodernism
- c. Naturalism says that natural laws can explain all phenomena
  - i. But, if there is no other source of knowledge, then the knowledge received through this method of knowing must account for all the knowledge we have, all the data available to us. However, our knowable reality is much broader than this allows
  - ii. This may be a good method (even the best method), but it is not the only method of knowing. It is not the only source of truth
  - iii. There is no empirical verification that the scientific method is the only way to discover knowledge. Therefore, it fails its own test

(For more cf. “Paradigm Shift: A Challenge to Naturalism,” Gary Habermas, *Biblioteca Sacra*, Fall, 1989)

#### 6. Naturalism is self-refuting

- a. If naturalism is true, then human reason must be the result of natural forces
- b. These natural forces are not rational themselves, nor could they be the result of a natural cause
- c. Therefore, human reason is the result of non-rational causes
- d. This gives us strong reasons to distrust human reason, especially when it tries to formulate theories
- e. Naturalism is one such formulated theory
- f. Therefore, if naturalism is true, we have strong reasons to distrust it

### CONCLUSION

- We have good reasons for believing what we do
- If you believe your faith is true, you need never fear dialogue about it or investigation of it
- We have a reasonable and solid foundation for our faith
- To paraphrase the apostle Paul: our preaching is *not* useless, our faith is *not* in vain, we are *not* false witnesses against God, our faith is *not* worthless we are *not* still in our sins, those already dead have *not* perished, and we should *not* be pitied (1Cor 15:14-19), for...
- CHRIST HAS RISEN (He has risen indeed!)

Dispositions of the mind, like limbs of the body, acquire strength by exercise.  
(George and Karen Grant, *Shelf Life*)