

# So, would you ever leave your faith?

**“So, would you ever leave your faith?”** That’s what I was asked. It had come out that I didn’t think evolution was plausible, and that I thought God better explained the facts.

My friend asked me, “So, what if evolution were proven? Would you leave?”

“Leave what”, I asked. “Christianity, or belief in God?”

“Well, they both go together, don’t they?”

I told my friend that there were two things that were foundational to my worldview. I’ve considered the alternatives and I’m convinced that God exists, and that Jesus rose from the dead. I’ve already covered the reasons I’m convinced [Jesus actually existed](#), that [he believed himself to be God](#), and that [he rose again to vindicate that claim](#). The one under question tonight was God’s existence.

Rather than outlining the [moral argument](#), the [cosmological argument](#), or [other apologetic standards](#), I decided to take a big picture approach. I explained that the existence of a God seemed to fit best with reality. **There are many big questions in life, and God’s existence seems to address them all.** Something that happened to my car might help explain my angle.



*Last summer I noticed that my car’s A/C wasn’t working. The car was difficult to steer too. Since these seemed unrelated, I wondered what on earth was going wrong. I turned down the radio and heard some horrible clunking noises. At this point, I noticed that my engine gauge read incredibly hot, so I pulled over to shut it down before anything worse happened. (Side note: I’m definitely not a car guy, so looking at the engine is something I do because I know you’re supposed to - not because I’ll be able to fix anything.)*

*When I opened the hood I saw oil sprayed everywhere and what remained of a*

*belt. Even though I was out of my depth at this point, I had an idea what all the big parts did. It seemed to me that there were a couple of options, broadly speaking. Either there was one thing that caused all this destruction, or I had just witnessed a remarkable automotive catastrophe. Either a bunch of individual components simultaneously self-destructed like some horrible mechanical symphony, or one thing started a chain of events. One initial problem seemed most plausible, but the symptoms were so unrelated that it seemed like a stretch.*

*After reflecting on the symptoms, a scenario began to emerge. I knew a lot of expensive things had been connected to the belt that was now in shambles. That could explain how the problem spread. Since there was an oily mess that seemed to emanate from the steering pump, that reminded me of my difficulty steering. What if that started it all? If that seized, it would probably cause the belt to slow down. If the belt slowed down, it would make sense that my A/C would suffer. Since belts don't do well with seized parts, it probably snapped pretty quickly. That would completely shut down A/C and steering and anything else connected to the belt. If the water pump stopped working, that would explain the skyrocketing engine temperature.*

*It looked like the steering pump was the single cause of everything else. Was that explanation certain? No, but it did seem most plausible. If not that, it seems I would have to track down what could explain a spontaneously dying A/C unit, difficult steering, an overheating engine, and several other symptoms. It seemed more plausible to me that there was one cause rather than many. Why look for a half-dozen explanations when you would do. And when diagnosing it, the mechanic should probably start by looking at simple causes rather than outrageously rare ones.*

**When I say I believe in God, I'm doing the same sort of thing.** I believe in God because a number of questions about reality are answered solely by his existence.

- How did something come from nothing?
- Where did life come from?
- Where did consciousness come from?
- Where did morality come from?
- What about things like justice, love, and hope?

**On the Christian worldview, all these questions and more can be answered in a single response: God.** I'm aware that nonbelievers have answers to some of these questions, but they are not terribly persuasive to me. Besides that, they require me to accept a separate explanation for each one. I *could* accept undirected macro-evolution, inexplicable forces of nature that happen to work nicely together, a herd morality that developed on its own, and all the other naturalistic explanations. Or I could observe that an all-powerful being could easily create all those things, and he could design them to function properly together. **The naturalistic worldview requires I take on a number of new, and unusual beliefs. The theistic worldview only requires I accept one.** I realize many people think that belief in an eternal, supernatural being is a big step - and maybe it is. But I'd rather take on one foreign belief than ten. And even so, this says nothing of the questions I'd have to be content leaving unanswered as a naturalist. Where did matter, space, life, consciousness, and all the rest come from? For these, there are no naturalistic answers. Nature can't explain where nature came from. Things cannot cause themselves - we have to look to other things for explanations. To explain nature we have to look beyond nature. Something you might call "super-nature". And that sounds to me like God. An omnipotent being that exists prior to space, matter, and time could create them all. A big bang needs a big-banger. The source of all life could create more life. A conscious creator would explain our consciousness. A maximally great being could do maximally great things. One explanation. One cause. Taking on this one belief that God exists explains everything we see. I'll concede that alone doesn't mean it's true. But it does mean it is the simplest explanation, and to my thinking the most plausible.

So, to return to the question I was posed, the proving of evolution would not cause me to turn from Christianity. (I think proof of such a thing is a very tall order, though I accepted it for the sake of argument.) Evolution itself says nothing about Jesus' resurrection or God's existence. As I hope I've explained above, I am convinced that God exists. Until a better explanation can be given for reality, things like evolution seem minor and insignificant.

In the rest of life, we typically exhaust simple answers before turning to the extravagant. Why not in metaphysical questions as well? Smart people have examined the evidence and come to different conclusions. I realize that. But if *you* haven't pondered the issue, you would do well to consider it. **Given the shape of**

reality, what is the most plausible explanation - one cause or an infinite number of causes?

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# Jesus' Resurrection: Ridiculous or Reasonable?

May 10, 2012 marked our kickoff meeting, and it went great!

Below is video from our first section on presenting a positive case for the hypothesis that God resurrected Jesus from the dead. We also discussed how historical claims are evaluated and examined some alternate theories.

[Download PDF from the meeting.](#)

Topical Resources:

## 1. Books

1. [The Case for Christ](#), by Lee Strobel
2. [The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus](#), by Gary Habermas
3. [The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach](#), by Michael Licona

## 2. Articles

1. "Contemporary Scholarship and the Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ", by William Lane Craig  
<http://www.leaderu.com/truth/1truth22.html>
2. "Easter: Myth, Hallucination, or History?", by Edwin M. Yamauchi

<http://www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/yama.html>

3. Jesus' Resurrection and Christian Origins, by N.T. Wright

[http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright\\_Jesus\\_Resurrection.htm](http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Jesus_Resurrection.htm)

### 3. Websites

1. Gary Habermas: <http://www.garyhabermas.com/>

2. Reasonable Faith: <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/>

### 4. Debates

1. Did Jesus Rise From The Dead? - Bart Ehrman Vs William Lane Craig

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhT4IENSwac>

### 5. Other

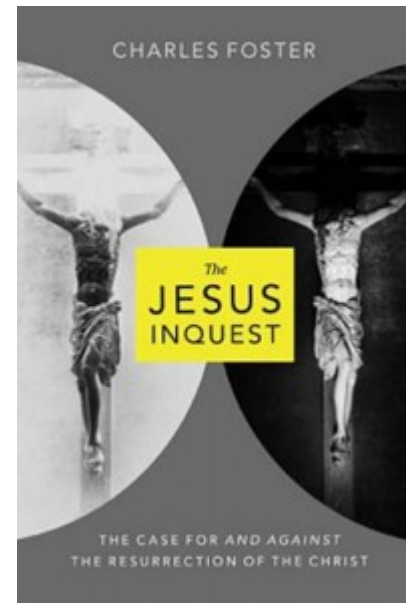
1. LOTS more resources of all kinds here:

<http://www.apologetics315.com/search/label/resurrection>

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## [The Jesus Inquest](#)

Charles Foster is a barrister and tutor in medical law and ethics at the University of Oxford. That explains [The Jesus Inquest](#). If you are looking for a book about the death, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances of Christ that is heavily documented and presented like courtroom testimony, this is the book for you.



Though this may sound daunting, Foster's approach works. He designates two speakers, X (a skeptic) and Y (a believer), to present the best case for each side. John Lennox has noted that "Charles Foster has managed to do what should be legally impossible: to combine the role of defense and prosecution." The key arguments deal with the source documents; Jesus' death, burial, and post-resurrection appearances; the empty tomb; and the early church's perspective on resurrections in general. The Shroud of Turin, the Jesus family tomb, and the Gospel of Peter get additional post-debate coverage.

Foster allows X to present his case completely and compellingly. No straw man here: Foster seems determined to engage with the best arguments. Foster's fairness actually makes reading X's arguments a little uncomfortable. But through the voice of Y, Foster gives us the answers to even the best of questions. Historically, logically, and biblically, Y responds by tiptoeing through the minefields of skepticism, revealing a path to truth that broadens as the book unfolds.

One of the best chapters focuses on the origins of the Christian idea of resurrection. X gives quite the list of mythological stories involving death and resurrection among pagan gods. Ever since Dan Brown cited faux historians to make Christianity a cheap knockoff of the cult of Mithras, Christians have needed this type of apologetic to address some of the most common dismissals of Christianity. While there are books that deal more exhaustively with this subject, [The Jesus Inquest](#) provides a more than adequate overview of the claims and rebuttals.

If you are unfamiliar with the different facets of the Resurrection debate, The Jesus Inquest fills in the details admirably. If you know someone who is skeptical but open to a challenge, this book will acknowledge their position while responding with clarity and truth.