

**Review: Dan Barker, *Godless: How an Evangelical Preacher Became One of America's Leading Atheists*, Ulysses Press, Berkeley, CA, 2008**

Pages: 376

**The Compatibility of Faith and Atheism**

The moment a Christian labels himself an ‘evangelical’, suspicions should arise. Dan Barker spends the first chapter of this Atheist’s tirade trying to convince the reader he was a “born-again Christian”, a case of ‘me thinketh he doth protest too much’. Of course he says all the right words, but nowadays so too can an AI-programmed ‘Christian’ avatar.

Highlights of this Atheist low-light:

1. The Problem of Evil influenced Dan’s decision to reject God , yet as an Atheist he has no idea how to *objectively* explain what evil is!

“Opening my eyes to the real world ... such as the problem of evil.” [p40]

2. Barker arrogantly claims he *knows* God doesn’t exist, but that Atheism is not a belief, merely a “lack of belief”!

“We should start with what we *do* know ... We should start with the nonexistence of God.” [p92]

3. He subjectively defines, “ ‘Good’ is that which enhances life and ‘evil’ is that which threatens it [p112],” yet doesn’t define “enhance”, nor what happens when one’s life is “threatened” by another person remaining alive.

Dan later gives a second, different definition which is equally nebulous: “morality implies avoiding or minimising harm.” [p210]

4. God can’t exist because someone had to have created him; the juvenile Atheist’s ‘where did God come from?’. [p159]

5. He's a multiverse mystic; that this ridiculous fantasy is somehow compatible with the scientific method he claims to be defending. [p163]  
Barker is a super-confused man, a fool who pulled his own house down to dwell in the wilderness.

Barker is an ultra-confused fool who pulled his own house down to dwell in the wilderness.

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## **Preface (pp. ix-xii)**

## **Introduction (pp. xiii-xv)**

### **I) The Call (pp. 1-32)**

"I had confessed to God that I was a sinner ... and I had accepted the death of Jesus on the cross as payment for my sin. I humbly asked Christ to come into my heart and make me a new creature, and I became 'born again' ... I had been baptised and I knew I was going to heaven." [pp3-4].

On offerings: "we normally got between \$50 and \$100 per meeting, sometimes nothing at all."

### **II) The Fall (pp. 33-45)**

"Jesus still had not returned ...and I began to realise that it was not going to happen." [p36]

"[I was becoming] less fundamentalist and more of a moderate evangelical ... My sermons began to have less and less hell and more love." [p36]

"After a couple more years of evolving theology, I became one of those hated liberals." [p37]

"If the Prodigal Son is a parable and Adam and Eve are a metaphor, then why is God not one huge figure of speech? ... I studied evolution and natural history." [p39]

"I lost faith in faith." [p40]

“Opening my eyes to the real world ... such as the problem of evil.” [p40]

“I am a biological organism in a natural environment, and that is all there is.” [p42]

On still preaching: “It took a tremendous effort just to get the words out, words that I no longer believed .... I never preached another sermon.” [pp43-4]

### **III) The Fallout (pp. 46-66)**

### **IV) The New Call (pp. 67-85)**

Barker in his ignorance claims the descendants of Ishmael are the Arabs, which is impossible since Abraham was from Iraq and Hagar from Egypt! [p82]

### **V) Why I Am an Atheist (pp. 86-103)**

“ ‘Atheist’ is not a label; it is merely a description . . . Atheism is the lack of theism, the lack of *belief* in god(s).” [p90]

“We should start with what we *do* know ... We should start with the nonexistence of God.” [p92]

“When I preached the gospel ... I was just caught up in an erroneous way of thinking.” [p96]

“A lack of belief is not a belief.” [Does Barker believe that he lacks belief?]

Some Atheists join the Unitarian -Universal Church.

Atheist may be motivated by:

-Religious immorality and hypocrisy.

-Superstitiousness,  
-Christian ‘intolerance’.

## **VI) Refuting God (pp. 104-)**

Evolution explains how complexity can arise from simplicity.” [p106]

“ ‘Good’ is that which enhances life and ‘evil’ is that which threatens it.” [p112]

## **VII) Omani-Aqueous (pp. 121-129)**

Claim: “omnipotence contradicts omniscience”.

“I don’t think ... free will exists ... we have the *illusion* of free will.” [p128]

## **VIII) Cosmological Kalamity (pp. 130-144)**

## **IX) Dear Theologian (pp. 145-156)**

## **X) The Bible and Morality (pp. 157-202)**

“Abraham found it difficult to obey God’s command to kill his son ... Jephthah ... to murder his daughter ... Both of these men, if they were truly moral, would have defied God ... They should have said to God ... ‘God, you created hell—you can go to hell ... “Speaking for myself, if the biblical heaven and hell exist, I would choose hell.” [p170]

## **XI) Murder, He Wrote (pp. 203-207)**

## **XII) For Goodness Sake (pp. 208-221)**

## **XIII) Bible Contradictions (pp. 222-242)**

## **XIV) Understanding Discrepancy (pp. 243-250)**

## **XV) Did Jesus Exist (pp. 251-276)**

## **XVI) Did Jesus Really Rise From the Dead? (pp. 277-304)**

A third of the clergy in the Church of England reject the idea that Jesus bodily came back to life.

**XVII) We Go to Washington (pp. 305-319)**

**XVIII) Adventures in Atheism (pp. 320-336)**

**XIX) Life and Death Matters (pp. 337-356)**

“As an atheist, I can still speak in tongues and ‘feel’ the presence of God ... I only speak in tongues once every few years just to see if I still have the touch.” [p348]