

Christian Apologetics

Phil Stilwell ·



All-star contributor

· Srotsodenph486J1a8l c0muuAM60lg8: 72740t6t1amcu1gl1692i y18 ·

◎ WOULD A RATIONAL GOD DEMAND IRRATIONAL BELIEF?...

See more

A Michelle Orr

I mean, have you even read Scripture?

You're literally posting this in a Christian Apologetic group.

We are told to seek truth and to study.

That's precisely why Christianity gave rise to modern universities, science, and hospitals. It's why liberty almost always accompanies Christianity in governments. It's why you're able to post in a Christian group.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

A Michelle Orr Yes, I've read the Greek NT through eleven times and the English Bible through a great number. It is ultimately what led me out of Christianity, even though I had been ordained and was in ministry. Subsequent to that, I picked up a BA in philosophy and focused on epistemology. This is an apologetics site. This is where I would like to challenge apologetists on their notion of rational belief. Hence the post.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

A Michelle Orr Actually, I want to make it more precise than saying both belief and evidence might be extraordinary since extraordinary itself comes in varying degrees. Here is a graphic that reflects what I am trying to say:

If you perceive the relevant evidence for something to be 62%, you are irrational if your belief is not also 62%. And to the extent that one's degree of belief deviates from the degree of the evidence, they are irrational.

Does that make sense?

There is a good book called "Thinking in Bets" written on this concept by a highly successful poker player who went into poker after attending Harvard.

While those who lose money in Vegas had faith they would win, only those who proportion their degree of belief to the degree of the evidence win (or lose far less).

- [27m](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

A Michelle Orr

Phil Stilwell

//A Michelle Orr In your mind, if a person consciously holds a degree of belief in X greater than the degree of relevant evidence they perceive for X, are they irrational?//

Phil, I will say this about your terminology, keep your audience in mind. Speak simply whenever possible. I wager you're more cerebral. That's great! But many aren't. Just a thought sir.

I think that you're saying if someone believes something extraordinary doesn't that require extraordinary evidence, lest they're being irrational?

- [46m](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

Phil Stilwell

Tommy Howell Can you provide the counterargument to demonstrate so?

- [51m](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

A Michelle Orr In your mind, if a person consciously holds a degree of belief in X greater than the degree of relevant evidence they perceive for X, are they irrational?

- [52m](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Chauncey Lambeth

Phil Stilwell because there are copious amounts of evidence for Christianity, and I love Jesus. I want others to know him to. You are trying to destroy the joy of others, and lead them to hell. Not a life well lived.

- [3h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Chauncey Lambeth Why would you risk Muslim Hell by becoming a Christian? You can't prove the Muslim God is not real. Why bet eternity on what you can prove?

- [4h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Chauncey Lambeth

Phil Stilwell but you can't. I'm glad you're willing to bet eternity on not being able to prove God exists.

- [14h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Chauncey Lambeth Most probably the one who substantiates their claims.

- [18h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Chauncey Lambeth

Phil Stilwell or....misery loves company. Only one of us right.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Chauncey Lambeth Not at all. I teach critical thinking at universities, and I attempt to persuade people from diverse backgrounds and ideologies to develop rational minds. That entails that they must often abandon irrational ideologies, but I don't become angry in the process. I enjoy teaching! And, after all, I also was once shackled to an irrational ideology. Life is so much better on this side of truth.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Chauncey Lambeth

Phil Stilwell and this made you so angry you try to destroy other people's faith? How incredibly sad.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Tommy Howell I also used to make foolish assumptions about others when I was a Christian. Leaving Christianity made me a better person.

<https://freeoffaith.com/reasons/>

FREEOFFAITH.COM

Reasons

Reasons

- [1d](#)

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- Reply
- Remove Preview

Tommy Howell

Phil Stilwell ...And YOU might also misinterpret 1 Peter 3:15...And my "judgement" is that you've got a hardened heart.

- [1d](#)
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- Reply
- Edited

Phil Stilwell

Tommy Howell Feel free to ask questions about my heart before passing judgment. You might also read 1 Peter 3:15.

- [1d](#)
-
- Reply

Tommy Howell

Phil Stilwell Big words, empty heart

- [2d](#)
-
- Reply

A Michelle Orr

Phil Stilwell ahhh, semantics. I appreciate the meaning of words. I appreciate the link you provided

Hopefully I can find the time to explore it in depth.

In the meantime, I often use Got Questions because their knowledge/views largely represent mainstream evangelical views.

//Thankfully, the Bible contains a clear definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Simply put, the biblical definition of faith is "trusting in something you cannot explicitly prove

This definition of faith contains two aspects: intellectual assent and trust. Intellectual assent is believing something to be true. Trust is actually relying on the fact that the something is true. A chair is often used to help illustrate this. Intellectual assent is recognizing that a chair is a chair and agreeing that it is designed to support a person who sits on it. Trust is actually sitting in the chair.

Understanding these two aspects of faith is crucial. Many people believe certain facts about Jesus Christ. Many people will intellectually agree with the facts the Bible declares about Jesus. But knowing those facts to be true is not what the Bible means by "faith." The biblical definition of faith requires intellectual assent to the facts and trust in the facts.//

<https://www.gotquestions.org/definition-of-faith.html>

Again, this forum and others like it exist because we believe in reason and logic. We're told to seek out truth explicitly in Scripture.

- [2d](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Tommy Howell That will be explained, not asserted. I posted this in the hope I'd receive counterarguments, not empty assertions about how I somehow did not read the Bible correctly. Once you abandon a dialogue in which assertions are substantiated, you've committed yourself to irrationality. I hope you have not done that.

- [2d](#)
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- Reply

Tommy Howell

Phil Stilwell Sorry... You read it, but you didn't understand it.

- [2d](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

A Michelle Orr. Then let's walk through this step-by-step. Do you believe that the Bible's depiction of faith is correct?

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

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Biblical Faith

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- [2d](#)
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A Michelle Orr

Phil Stilwell nothing in this OP rings true to my experience/reading. The very directives of apologetics stand in stark contrast to it.

Many, like myself, have been led TO Christianity via deep studying. I understand that your experience was different. It led you away.

It reminds me of my sister's favorite saying, the same water that hardens the egg softens the potato.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

A Michelle Orr Then, do the directives of apologetics hold that rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence? Is evidence-proportioned belief an apologetics principle? Are believers encouraged not to believe beyond what the evidence warrants?

It seems quite clear that the Bible treats salvific belief as something binary. ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται· ὁ δὲ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται ὅτι μὴ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ.

The treatment of belief as binary and the principle of evidence-proportioned belief are intrinsically at odds. Right?

- [7m](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Dan Alexander

There is lots of solid evidence that there is a God and it is the God of the Bible. The creation of the universe from nothing requires a creator God and is the best extra biblical evidence for God. The Bible also got correct the sequence of the development of the earth in Genesis 1 and there is no way the Bible gets it correct without the Creator God also being the God of the Bible.

Evidencesforgod.com

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Lalo Guzmán

Dan Alexander I thought the scientific evidence showed that the Sun existed before the Earth. The Bible's sequence says it appeared 4 days later.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Lalo Guzmán

Dan Alexander The problem is in what Genesis doesn't say: It doesn't say, nor suggest, that the skies were cleared to reveal the lights. This idea is entirely unbiblical, because it only comes from the scientific knowledge of how the sequence actually was. One can't say that Genesis was correct with the sequence because you're applying your knowledge of the real sequence to add to Genesis instead of re-interpreting it.

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Dan Alexander

Lalo Guzmán its an issue with how to interpret the Biblical Hebrew. Apparently the Hebrew verbs there can be interpreted in a past perfect tense- for they had been made. Meaning they were there the whole time but could only be seen from the surface once the atmosphere cleared. If you want to insist your interpretation or projection is correct, I don't care.

- [2d](#)

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- Reply

Lalo Guzmán

Dan Alexander Again, the point of view is from God. Doesn't matter if he's on earth or outer space, he knows what he creates and in what order. Again, from your interpretation, even if the narrator was a human on Earth witnessing this, you would expect Genesis to read "And God cleared the skies and revealed the light". Instead, Genesis says that God created the lights and put them in the skies (doesn't even mention space, but "heavens"). This is consistent with a human writer who doesn't know space and doesn't know that the lights were already there. Genesis suggests they were placed, not revealed. This makes sense after recognizing that the writer was in fact wrong.

- [2d](#)

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- Reply

- Edited

Dan Alexander

Lalo Guzmán Genesis 1:2 clearly says the Spirit (who is the narrator) is hovering over the waters- so the narrative is told from the point of view of the surface of the earth, not from outer space. Once you understand the narrative is from the point of view of the surface, it all works. The dark atmosphere thins to let light in from the sun to start day v night. It all works. There's a video on How the Earth was made from the History Channel that shows it all. It's how I first got interested in this material.

- [2d](#)

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- Reply

Lalo Guzmán

Dan Alexander The website makes the weird assumption that the claim that the Sun appeared on the 4th day is talking from the perspective of the Earth. But Genesis 1 is talking from God's perspective.

Genesis 1:16-19 reads: "And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day."

It doesn't say God cleared the skies and revealed the Sun and the stars to Earth, it says God made the lights and set them in the skies. The former interpretation requires disbelieving what is being described in Genesis and apply knowledge that the text is not even implying. At that point we might as well admit that Genesis is scientifically inaccurate.

- [2d](#)

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- Reply

Dan Alexander

Lalo Guzmán nope- check the website

- [2d](#)

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- Reply

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Phil Stilwell

Dan Alexander The focus here is on the question of whether an actual rational God would encourage irrational belief. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. That is not what we find in the Bible. Right?

↘ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

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Phil Stilwell

Dan Alexander But irrationality is at play anytime someone's degree of belief exceeds the degree of the relevant evidence they perceive, right?

- [49m](#)
- [Reply](#)

Dan Alexander

Phil Stilwell there is nothing irrational about believing in God. There is tremendous evidence for Him. Check out the website

- [2d](#)
- [Reply](#)

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Chris Hooter

Well, what may or may not seem rational to we mere mortals

- [2d](#)
- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Chris Hooter Can you provide the counterargument to the following? ↘ Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

- [2d](#)
- [Reply](#)

Chris Hooter

Phil Stilwell Rationalism may map this or that, but at the end of the day, observation rules ... empiricism is judge and jury

- [10m](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Chris Hooter Let me provide a more rigorous formulation: √ Rational belief is a degree of belief in X that maps to the degree of the perceived relevant evidence for X. Right?

- [47m](#)

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- Reply

Chris Hooter

Phil Stilwell rationalism can map to the degree of relevant evidence ... but it might not too.

For example, the existence of Neptune was hypothesized due to perturbations in the orbit of Uranus. So low and behold they discovered Neptune right where it should have been (Newton's laws) ... score one for rationalism.

But then there's the case of Mercury's orbit, and it's perihelion, which wasn't easily explained by Newton's laws.

Well,, let's play it again, Sam ... there must be some undiscovered planet Vulcan nudging Mercury along ... well turns out that there was not a Vulcan (rather gravitational theory needed to be tweaked) ... here, rationalism connected the wrong dots in the Vulcan case.

- [15h](#)

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- Reply

- Edited

Phil Stilwell

Chris Hooter But do you agree with the following? √ Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

- [18h](#)

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- Reply

Chris Hooter

Phil Stilwell well, it could just be we don't have all the information. Even w us mere mortals, there's always more to the story, as the plot thickens

- [2d](#)

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Lee Monroe

This argument completely misunderstands biblical faith and creates a false dichotomy between faith and reason. Biblical faith isn't "belief without evidence" - that's a modern atheist caricature.

The Greek word *pistis* means trust based on evidence and relationship. When Jesus praised those who believed "without seeing," He wasn't endorsing irrationality.

Thomas had already witnessed countless miracles - the "not seeing" referred specifically to the resurrection wounds, not abandoning evidence entirely.

Christianity actually DEMANDS using reason.

Acts 17:11 praises the Bereans for "examining the Scriptures daily." 1 Peter 3:15 commands believers to "give a reason for the hope you have." Isaiah 1:18 says "Come now, let us reason together." Paul constantly "reasoned" with people from Scripture. The early church was built on eyewitness testimony and logical argumentation. Here's the real issue: Atheists define "rational evidence" as only empirical/scientific evidence. But that's self-refuting - you can't scientifically prove that only scientific evidence counts.

Rational evidence includes historical testimony, logical arguments (cosmological, teleological, moral), consciousness, and explanatory coherence. Atheists routinely believe things that "exceed evidence": Consciousness emerges from matter (never demonstrated) Life arose from non-life by chance (astronomically improbable)

Objective morals don't exist (contradicts universal human experience) The universe came from nothing (violates causation) Romans 1:20 says God designed reality so rational inquiry leads to Him.

The cosmological argument, fine-tuning, consciousness, and moral arguments all use the reason God gave us. Christianity doesn't demand irrational belief - it demands following ALL the evidence (historical, logical, experiential, spiritual) wherever it leads.

The atheist argument here is really demanding we limit "acceptable evidence" to only what supports materialistic conclusions.

When we examine all evidence honestly, it points toward God, not away from Him.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

Phil Stilwell

Lee Monroe That is the package response I often encounter. But note what I actually said. I never said that faith is belief without evidence, but only that faith is a degree of belief that exceeds the evidence. That's the problem.

Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Would any rational God encourage us to be irrational by going beyond the evidence?

Here is a comprehensive survey of biblical belief: <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

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Lee Monroe

Phil Stilwell You call this a "package response," but that's just a deflection tactic to avoid engaging with the substance. These aren't memorized talking points - they're direct logical refutations of your core argument. Dismissing them as "packaged" doesn't make them wrong.

Your distinction between "belief without evidence" and "belief that exceeds evidence" doesn't solve the fundamental problem - it makes it worse. Your position is self-refuting. You argue that rational belief must "map to the degree of evidence," but this principle itself exceeds any evidence you could provide for it.

Show me the scientific study proving beliefs should be limited to empirical evidence levels. You can't, because that's a philosophical assumption that goes beyond evidence. You're applying an impossible standard that you violate constantly. Every meaningful belief in your life "exceeds evidence" by your definition: Your belief that loved ones genuinely care (beyond observable actions) Your belief that consciousness is real (not just brain chemistry) Your belief that logic itself is reliable (can't be proven without circular reasoning)

Your belief that the external world exists (could be a simulation) If you lived by your stated principle, you'd be paralyzed into complete skepticism.

Your "comprehensive survey" misses the point entirely. Biblical faith recognizes that materialistic empiricism artificially limits what counts as "evidence."

Historical testimony, logical arguments, personal experience, and explanatory coherence are rational forms of evidence that atheists dismiss simply because they point toward God.

The real question: Why demand that belief in God meet an evidentiary standard you don't apply anywhere else?

That's not rational skepticism - that's selective bias masquerading as intellectual rigor. If my responses seem "packaged," it's because bad arguments against Christianity have been thoroughly refuted for centuries.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Lee Monroe My "packaged response" comment is a truthful statement based on my many encounters with Christians and an attempt to get you to read my post more carefully. Nowhere did I say faith was completely blind. Right? The comprehensive study does not make a point. It is a comprehensive list of how faith is depicted in the Bible. I'd like to first establish that we cannot cherry-pick our favorite passage on faith and instead explore how faith was actually deployed in context. Can you get on board with this?

The next step will be to assess your notion of rational belief. Do you agree with the following?

↳ Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Lee Monroe

Phil Stilwell You're trying to control the conversation through false framing, and I'm not playing that game.

On your "packaged response" deflection: You're doing exactly what you accuse me of - deploying a standard atheist tactic to avoid engagement. "You're just giving packaged responses" is itself a packaged response used to dismiss substantive arguments without refuting them. Address the actual points or concede them.

On your "comprehensive study" setup: This is a classic bait-and-switch. You want me to agree to your methodology before seeing your conclusions - that's not how honest debate works.

I'm not "cherry-picking" verses; I'm citing clear biblical passages that directly contradict your thesis. If your "comprehensive study" can't account for passages like Acts 17:11 (Bereans examining evidence) or 1 Peter 3:15 (giving reasons for belief), then your study is flawed, not my citations.

On your "rational belief" definition: This is a loaded question designed to trap me into your framework.

You're essentially asking: "Do you agree that only empirical evidence counts?" The answer is no, and here's why that definition fails: It's self-refuting - you can't prove that principle using evidence

You don't live by it - you constantly hold beliefs that exceed strict empirical evidence. It arbitrarily excludes logical arguments, historical testimony, and rational inference. Stop trying to rig the game.

If you want to discuss biblical faith, let's examine what Scripture actually says without your predetermined conclusions. If you want to discuss rational belief, defend why your narrow definition should be accepted when it's philosophically incoherent and practically impossible to live by. Make your actual argument instead of trying to manipulate me into accepting your premises first.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Lee Monroe, Slow down and respond to me, not to someone else of your imagination. This is my post, and I'm going to "frame" my responses to my interlocutors in a way that is relevant to the post. Please do not evade engagement with my actual post.

Now, if you are a Christian, your notion of faith is dictated by how the Bible describes faith. Right?

Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων. Right?

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Lee Monroe

Phil Stilwell I'm responding directly to YOU and your actual arguments - you're the one evading.

First, let's address your territorial attitude. You posted this in a Christian apologetics group, then act offended when Christians actually engage your arguments.

"This is my post" doesn't give you dictatorial control over how people respond to your public claims. You made an argument about Christian faith being irrational - expect Christians to defend their faith vigorously.

Second, you're hop-scotching around to avoid refuting anything I've said.

You haven't addressed: How your "rational belief maps to evidence" principle is self-refuting. Why you apply impossible evidentiary standards to Christianity that you violate in daily life.

The multiple biblical passages showing faith working WITH evidence and reason. Your arbitrary limitation of what counts as "rational evidence"

Instead, you just pull out Greek words hoping to redirect the conversation.

You're trying to force me into a narrow linguistic box by quoting Hebrews 11:1 in Greek, as if hypostasis and elegchos will somehow prove your point about "belief exceeding evidence."

But this is exactly the manipulation I called out. Let's deal with what Hebrews 11:1 actually says: Elegchos means "evidence" or "proof" - the verse is saying faith IS the evidence of things not seen, not that faith operates without evidence.

Hypostasis means "substance" or "foundation" - pointing to faith as grounded, not groundless. The immediate context destroys your argument. Hebrews 11:2-40 lists people whose faith was based on God's demonstrated track record - Abraham had direct encounters, Moses saw miracles, Israelites witnessed supernatural deliverance. Their faith was response to evidence. Stop deflecting and address the actual arguments I've made. Your silence on my substantive points speaks volumes.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

Lee Monroe

Phil Stilwell This will be my final response, because honest dialogue requires both parties to engage in good faith - something you've repeatedly failed to do.

Your Intellectual Dishonesty is Clear: You've employed every classic manipulation tactic in the book: Moving goalposts (faith without evidence → faith exceeding evidence → Greek word parsing) Control framing ("This is my post," demanding I accept your loaded definitions first) Deflection (calling substantive refutations "packaged responses") Cherry-picking (one Greek verse while ignoring dozens of passages about faith and reason) False victimhood (posting antagonistic content in an apologetics group then acting offended by robust responses) Most tellingly, you've refused to address a single substantive argument I've made. Not one. That's not intellectual honesty - that's academic cowardice dressed up in scholarly language

Your Core Argument Fails Completely: Your entire thesis - that rational belief must "map to evidence" - is philosophically incoherent: It's self-refuting - you can't provide evidence for this evidentiary standard without circular reasoning. You don't live by it - you constantly hold beliefs that exceed strict empirical evidence (consciousness, logic's reliability, others' care for you) It arbitrarily limits evidence to only materialistic sources while excluding historical testimony, logical arguments, and rational inference.

The Biblical Evidence Destroys Your Position: Scripture consistently shows faith working WITH evidence and reason: Acts 17:11 - Bereans examining evidence 1 Peter 3:15 - giving reasons for belief Acts 17:2 - Paul reasoning from Scripture. Even your Hebrews 11:1 - elegechos means "evidence," showing faith IS evidence.

The Real Issue: You came here not seeking truth but trying to score rhetorical points against Christianity.

When met with substantive responses, you've deflected, redirected, and manipulated rather than engage honestly.

A truly rational person would acknowledge when their arguments have been refuted and adjust accordingly.

Your unwillingness to do so reveals this was never about rational discourse - it was about defending a predetermined conclusion through intellectual sleight of hand. I pray you'll eventually seek truth more than you seek to be right.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

James Hodge

Lee Monroe Lee, you are going to be reported to the mods for reasoning in bad faith on this page

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Lee Monroe

James Hodge I don't feel I have, but I'll respect a moderator's decision if they feel I did. They likely volunteer their time, and I agreed to the rules when I joined. I recently read them and I'm not sure where I have gone wrong in this conversation, but as I said, I'll respect their decision.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Daniel Marvin

Lee Monroe fwiw, you made some good points in your initial response to Phil and I appreciate how you are not allowing Phil to evade those objections. Just want to encourage you to be gentle in your responses, maybe dial down the antagonism a tad 😊 I enjoyed reading your post!

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Daniel Marvin

Phil Stilwell Why not just tell us what your definition of faith is? And how does that differ from "rational belief"?

- [2d](#)

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- Reply

Lee Monroe

Daniel Marvin I do apologize if I came across that way. In the moment I didn't feel I was, but it's possible I am being defensive. I'll think and pray about this. Thank you.

- [2d](#)
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- Reply
- Edited

Phil Stilwell

Lee Monroe You're mistaking volume for precision. Let me highlight your major errors in structure and substance—without deflection, without theistic deference, and without assuming a moral high ground I don't claim to possess.

● On Rational Belief: A Clarification You Continue to Evade

You repeatedly assert that my claim—that rational belief maps to the degree of the relevant evidence—is self-refuting. Yet this is not a metaphysical axiom but an epistemic heuristic, a guideline for proportioning belief to evidence. It's not a claim about the nature of reality, but a procedural principle of intellectual responsibility.

► Show me the evidence for “believe to the degree that evidence supports” is category error.

That's like asking for a measurement proving that measurements matter. This epistemic mapping principle is justified not deductively, but pragmatically: it minimizes error and increases predictive power. It's the basis of Bayesian epistemology, scientific inquiry, and rational deliberation.

You invoke cases like love, consciousness, and logic as if they violate this principle. They don't.

✓ Belief in love is not belief in something without evidence; it's belief proportioned to patterns of care, behavior, and memory—fallible, yes, but not exceeding evidence.

✓ Belief in consciousness is not “beyond evidence.” It's a direct first-person datum, epistemically basic in a way God claims are not.

✓ Belief in logic's reliability is not a leap of faith but an inductive generalization grounded in its consistent success across domains. Its validity is provisional and corrigible—again, not belief exceeding evidence.

● On Biblical Faith: The Problem Is Not Greek Grammar, It's Application

You make much of ἐπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων, suggesting that “faith is evidence.” But that is precisely the problem.

Faith in Hebrews 11 is not presented as belief derived from new evidence but as the psychological stand-in in lieu of direct evidence—“evidence of things not seen.”

Your list of Abraham, Moses, and others having “evidence” misses the point. They are retroactively idealized. Hebrews 11 praises them for acting as if the unseen were seen. It's a theological commendation of behavior that goes beyond the available evidence—just as I claimed.

Your conflation of “faith informed by some evidence” with “faith within the limits of evidence” reveals your misunderstanding of what I mean by belief exceeding evidence. When Christians are urged to “trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (Prov. 3:5), what epistemic framework is being promoted?

● On Evidence: You Keep Repeating That Christianity Uses Evidence—But What Kind?

You accuse me of arbitrarily excluding “historical testimony, logical argument, and spiritual experience.” But you never demonstrate how these forms of evidence yield epistemically warranted belief in a God, much less in your God.

Testimony and argument can be weak or strong, and they must be assessed with care. But “faith” as biblically promoted does not wait for strong evidence—it valorizes commitment before confirmation.

What you call “evidence” is often a vague appeal to coherence or inference from improbability. But that's not epistemic sufficiency. That's motivated credence.

● On Debate Tactics: Projection Is Not Refutation

You accuse me of “goalpost moving” and “intellectual dishonesty.” Yet I've consistently:

✓ Clarified my thesis (belief exceeding evidence).

✓ Offered a rigorous definition of rational belief.

✓ Asked whether you agree with the mapping principle.

✓ Provided links to comprehensive biblical surveys without smuggling in conclusions.

Your repeated evasion of the core question—should belief map to evidence, or not?—is the clearest indicator of which side here resists epistemic clarity.

If you can admit that biblical faith, as commended, often asks for commitment prior to confirmation, and that this is not the standard you apply to other claims (e.g., Islam, astrology, or conspiracy theories), then you've conceded the argument. Until then, rhetorical heat won't replace epistemic light.

I'm always open to rigorous engagement. But if you prefer sermon over syllogism, you'll find me unmoved.

Warmly open to continued discussion—on substance, not volume.

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Daniel Marvin Let's go with the Bible's definition of faith. Fair enough?

- ↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-the-hebrews-111.../>
- ↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-hebrews-111-under.../>

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✓ The Hebrews 11:1 Puzzle

✓ The Hebrews 11:1 Puzzle

- [1d](#)
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- Reply
- Remove Preview

Phil Stilwell

Lee Monroe Principles don't "exceed evidence". They remain principles that can themselves be believed to certain degrees based on the success of their track records. Perhaps I need to simply ask you to clearly point out the flaw in the symbolic logic below:

- ↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

- [41m](#)
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- Reply

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Michael Brown

Apparently Phil has not examined the demands of Moloch, Baal, Aztec Gods, Hinduism with Sati, or others. Human Sacrifice. Irrational demands by irrational gods.

- [2d](#)
-
- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Michael Brown The irrational demand I am focused on is biblical faith. Do you subscribe to the description of biblical faith found in the Bible?

- <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

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Biblical Faith

Biblical Faith

- Pending
- [Learn more](#)

Michael Brown

Phil. Why would you only focus on biblical faith in an apologetics group? You bring your fancy flow charts with your percentages. Your narrow definitions and greek definitions. At least an intellectually honest atheist would attack faith in a general as the belief of the primitive man or some other logical. You focus on attacking only Christianity to be provocative and trying to rip away the belief of Christians. Why is that? Why must you be so intellectually empowered by my supposed disbelief as to challenge my faith. Either im deranged and the cross is false or God bless it you you are wrong. Either way leave me to my ignorance and stop trying to enlighten me and other Christians. But honestly i know you just cant help yourself.

- [21h](#)
-
- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

Phil Stilwell

Michael Brown

For you:

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/category/considerations/>

For Muslims:

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/the-weakening-of-islamic-might/>

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/low-quality-of-muslim-facebook.../>

It is incoherent that I need to critique Arab politicians before I can critique American politicians. It is incoherent that I need to critique Muslim concepts before I can critique Christian concepts.

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Considerations – Free of Faith

Considerations – Free of Faith

- [18h](#)
-
- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

Phil Stilwell

Michael Brown Why would I only critique Christianity? I teach general critical thinking. I critique all irrational ideologies. I confront JW's here in Seattle face-to-face. Search my site for "Muslim" to view my critiques of Islam. It appears you've done very little research on me.

One of the most important foundations of critical thinking is a proper epistemology. That's what I am addressing here. I'm sure you don't simply want a feel-good ideology. You want your ideology to be true. And so you don't mind if someone challenges your belief, allowing you to reassess whether your belief is true. Right?

I think that covers the meta-discussion well enough.

Do you agree with the following? ↳ Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

- [33m](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Ayala Ezequiel

To be persuaded have a change of mind or heart that something is True and that's what Scripture promotes, yes skeptics are already lost why because of close mindedness.



- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Ayala Ezequiel But rational belief is not binary, right? Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Agreed?

- [2d](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Ayala Ezequiel

Phil Stilwell nope.



- [2d](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Ayala Ezequiel Elaborate.

- [18h](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Ayala Ezequiel

Phil Stilwell unbelievers have a rational belief but it is not in any degree of relevant evidence none whatsoever with the handlers tell them their masters tell them they eat up without question it's already happened multiple times put on public display in front of all to see.



- [9h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Andrew Higgins

On the left, we have an idealized model of a secular, scientific thinker, one that ignores the fundamental truth that they are driven more by emotion than logic, just like all homo sapiens. On the right, we have a claim never made by any preacher from the pulpit, but nonetheless being used to represent preachers at the pulpit.

Alright, so that's the setup, pictures that advertise the author's bias as loudly as possible. And the author wants to know, what kind of thinking would a rational god honor?

For various reasons, I think that's a bad question from the start, as it presumes that there is only one possible answer to what a rational god would want, but putting that aside, I feel pretty confident in saying this much: he or she would not want this. What you're doing here, with your absurd misrepresentations of both sides, I don't think that's something a rational god would be super jazzed about.

• [2d](#)

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• [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Andrew Higgins Let me clarify; You think "WOULD A RATIONAL GOD DEMAND IRRATIONAL BELIEF?" is a bad question. Is that right?

• [2d](#)

•

• [Reply](#)

Andrew Higgins

Phil Stilwell

I think it's a question that can't be answered, both because we don't have enough evidence about what gods want, and because our concept of a god (switching from empirical to conceptual evidence) is very broad, open to all sorts of wild variation in desires. You really can't imagine Loki having a preference for irrational belief?

• [2d](#)

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• [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Andrew Higgins Let me confirm. You believe a rational God might, in fact, want humans to irrationally believe in him to a degree that exceeds the evidence, right?

• [2d](#)

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• [Reply](#)

James Hodge

Phil Stilwell I think we might need you to define "rational" here. My experience in answered prayer and those "leaps of faith" I have taken in my walk are anything but rational (obviously, my implied definition pits rational thought in logos while faith is in the ethos category).

• [2d](#)

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• [Reply](#)

Andrew Higgins

Phil Stilwell

Ya, you've got that right. Not only do I believe it, I've already given you a concrete example.

• [1d](#)

•

• [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Andrew Higgins What are you referring to by "concrete example"?

• [1d](#)

•

• [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

James Hodge Core rationality is as follows: Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

• [1d](#)

-
- Reply

Andrew Higgins

Phil Stilwell Loki would be down for people irrationally worshipping him. Not the Marvel character, the "real god" from Norse mythology.

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Andrew Higgins: Could Loki ever be considered a rational God, then?

- [18h](#)
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- Reply

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Andrew Gustafson

This seems to not understand Christianity at all. I won't be lectured by those who strawman Christianity.

- [2d](#)
-
- Reply

Gregory Clark

Andrew Gustafson The problem is he don't know who Christ is.

- [2d](#)
-
- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Gregory Clark I'm willing to hear out your 1 Peter 3:15 informed description of Christ.

- [18h](#)
-
- Reply

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Phil Stilwell

Andrew Gustafson There is no stramanning. Here is a comprehensive survey of the use of faith in the NT: <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

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Biblical Faith

Biblical Faith

- [18h](#)
-
- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

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John Carlson

There is actually so much evidence for the Bible, that it is irrational to not believe

- [2d](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

John Carlson That is not quite what the claim is. Do you agree with the following?

↳ Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Gregory Clark

You all call for evidence and when we bring it you deny it. You deny the creation and the book He has left us. You will die in your sins. You will believe then but it'll be to late. You love death and you will get it for all eternity. You will BEG for death and it will never come. Oh my!

- [2d](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Gregory Clark I'm not sure I have denied your evidence. Can you give me an example? I believe there could be a creator, but I have read through the Bible many times and find it logically incoherent. I've listed just a few of the issues that led me away from Christianity here: <https://freeoffaith.com/category/considerations/>

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Considerations – Free of Faith

Considerations – Free of Faith

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

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Tommy Howell

This is one of the most uneducated comments I've ever seen on this page. The evidence of Jesus Christs' life on earth, his crucifixion and his death, and his resurrection are overwhelmingly obvious in historic texts and documentation. Perhaps you need to educate yourself more about this subject before making uneducated comments. Here's a good place to start: https://www.amazon.com/.../dp/0310345863/ref=mp_s_a_1_1...

- [2d](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Michael Brown

Tommy Howell. Uneducated yes. Very. Motivated by intellectual arrogance definitely. Ask him he is only attacking biblical faith not other faiths.

- [21h](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Michael Brown

For you:

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/category/considerations/>

For Muslims:

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/low-quality-of-muslim-facebook.../>

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/the-weakening-of-islamic-might/>

And I confront JW's personally here on the streets of Seattle.

The issue is not whether you have the right faith, but about the intrinsic irrationality of faith in any God.

- [19h](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

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Phil Stilwell

Tommy Howell The issue is not how much evidence there is. The issue is that the Bible promotes irrationality by severing belief from its evidence-proportioned level.

And instead of going to Amazon, I suggest we instead to the Bible. What does the Bible actually say about faith?

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-hebrews-111-under.../>

Biblical Faith

- [19h](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

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Anonymous member 143

1.) Jesus Christ fulfilled over 300 prophecies, many being highly specific from different books/authors that were each carbon dated as being written hundreds of years before His birth.

2.) Some of these prophecies would've been absolutely impossible for Him to have had any control over if a normal man, for example, the city of His birth (Micah 5:2), His lineage and an implication of the city He would grow up in (Isaiah 11:1), that His family would flee to Egypt when He was in early childhood to avoid Him getting killed by the ruler of the time (Hosea 11:1; Jeremiah 31:15), the very specific manner in which He would be killed before the method of crucifixion even existed (Isaiah 53 and Psalms 22).

3.) The New Testament was authored by several different eyewitnesses who were willing to be brutally martyred in a horrific death to attest to what they saw and knew (without secondary gain/getting riches). The consensus of theologians is that there were at least 8 (but likely 9) authors in total attesting to the divinity of Christ (the authorship of Hebrews being the only unknown/anonymous one).

4.) The same is true of the Old Testament, all the above-mentioned prophecies about Jesus were written by different authors. The Old Testament itself was written by dozens of authors who also wrote prophecies about other major specific historical events that were fulfilled later hundreds of years after being written.

5.) The Bible contains more manuscript copies and extra-biblical evidence materials validating it than any other historical document ever created (several thousands). The Bible is so compelling that the compilation as a whole has been preserved and was written through a span over 1000 years.

6.) Prior to His return to heaven after His death/resurrection, He appeared to over 500 people in the span of 40 days (1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Acts 1:3). So many were irrefutably convinced based on the proof of their first-hand witness that Christianity began to spread like wildfire after it took place (the writings of non-Christian historians Josephus and Tacitus also confirm the early/rapid spread of Christianity).

7.) Mathematically the odds of Christ fulfilling all the prophecies He did are just too convincingly astronomical. Even when being fantastically generous and assuming a coin-toss probability factor of 0.5 for each fulfilled prophecy, the likelihood of just 4 being fulfilled is incredibly low (let alone 300+):

$$(1/2) * (1/2) * (1/2) * (1/2) = 1/16$$

To put into perspective how unrealistic even this probability factor would be, it would be akin to saying there would be a 6.25% likelihood of any given randomly born human to be descended from Columbus, born in Austin TX, raised in Mexico to escape the president's order to kill them, then starting their life's business in Houston TX, only to be murdered later via being field dressed alive by the government. Obviously the exercise doesn't do justice to illustrate how improbable the specific situational factors would truly be. Even being generous and arguing each had a 10% chance of being fulfilled, just 4 happening would be a probability factor of 1 in 10,000 (obviously in reality the real likelihood would be even lower). Please consider exploring these truths with an open heart. Also, Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis is a great but super short read (#1 bestselling apologetics book on Amazon).

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Anonymous member 143 I read nearly all of CS Lewis when I was a Christian.

This post is quite focused. It's focused on the notion of faith. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. But redemptive faith does not limit the degree of belief to the actual degree of the evidence. Right? A God who values truth would not demand irrational loyalty. And a God who is rational would never glorify belief that exceeds the evidence. Right?

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

Kristopher WiththeKing Coleman

Phil Stilwell wait you were a Christian? Now it all makes sense.....so you blindly believed in God but never because of any interaction with God that gave you undeniable proof, why were you a Christian without proof? That's just weird

- [2d](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Lalo Guzmán

Kristopher WiththeKing Coleman Is knowledge of apologetics required for salvation?

- [2d](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Mo Owen

Phil Stilwell I have responded to our original post but I wanted to respond here. It's an interesting proposition you have but not new. It's from the enlightenment period. It poses that humans understand the mind of God. You nor I understand the mind of God. You think by putting God to the test under His rules you can outsmart Him. Your position "a rational God would never glorify belief that exceeds evidence" is a false one. You made that up. Who says God wouldn't do that? Humans who have deconstructed their belief because they feel somewhat slighted by God.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Mo Owen Let's work through this step-by-step. Is there any reason for a rational God to encourage or promote irrationality?

Once we have that answered, we can then move on to the irrationality of faith: <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

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Evidence-Proportioned Belief

Evidence-Proportioned Belief

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

Mo Owen

Phil Stilwell define what you mean by irrationality in this context please..

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Mo Owen Core rationality is as follows: Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Irrationality is measured by the extent to which the degree of belief does not map to the degree of evidence. Right?

Here is the formalization: <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

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Evidence-Proportioned Belief

Evidence-Proportioned Belief

- [18h](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

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Jason Luttrell

Anonymous member 143 Wouln't that be more likely if Jesus was aware of the prophecies and sought to fulfill them?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Jason Luttrell

You said: <<that were each carbon dated as being written hundreds of years before His birth.>>

The only version of the old testament that is old enough to be dated before Christ's birth is the Qumran (or Dead Sea) scrolls. The majority of the scrolls were written between 150 BC and 70 AD. Which means that your claim is actually false. Before the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, the Aleppo Codex (c. 920 AD) and the Leningrad Codex (c. 1008 AD) were the oldest known complete Hebrew Bible manuscripts.

You that claim is patently false.

Other than that, I find the rest of your claims worth considering critically.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Anonymous member 143

Jason Luttrell not true

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dating_the_Bible

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Andy Walker

What "irrational loyalty"?? By the way..you exercise faith every day

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Andy Walker I've heard that often from those who have no access to the way I live life. If I said you are a Christian because you could not handle reality, should anyone respect my unsubstantiated speculation about your mental state?

This may help: <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-it-takes-more-faith/>

I recommend that, as soon as you discover your degree of belief exceeds the degree of relevant evidence, you adjust your degree of belief to the rational level.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

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Frank Jones

You are mistaken. God gives evidence to true Christians in order for us to believe. In other words, God proves Himself to us and gives us the faith to believe. ☐

Therefore, we have adequate evidence to believe in Christ.

Jer 29:13☐☐☐

13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

John 14:6

Jesus said unto him, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.

I understand your confusion as you couldn't possibly understand. ☐

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Frank Jones My argument is that the faith of the Bible is a faith that encourages a degree of belief that exceeds the degree of the evidence. This is made clear here: ↘ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

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- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

Frank Jones

Phil Stilwell

How can you make that statement when you don't know the degree of evidence?

☐ It's impossible for you to believe since God has not proven Himself to you. ☐

God Himself is the evidence that He☐☐ gives to those who seek Him.

Once again, God proves Himself to true Christians.

This is why the apostles and early Christians died for their beliefs. This is why Muslims are converting to Christianity on the pain of death.

Once again, I understand your confusion as you couldn't possibly understand. ☐☐

☐

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Frank Jones Everyone has access to the degree of evidence available to them. Core rationality only requires that you then map your degree of belief to the degree of the evidence you perceive. This is contrary to biblical faith. Faith is therefore irrational.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Calvin Wayne Robinson

There is plenty of evidence.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Calvin Wayne Robinson That is not the focus of this post. I'm asking the following: WOULD A RATIONAL GOD DEMAND IRRATIONAL BELIEF?

Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. All alleged Gods who value truth would not demand irrational loyalty. And any God who is rational would never glorify belief that exceeds the evidence. Right?

- [2d](#)
-
- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

David J Fenton

Phil Stilwell God speaks of reasoning together. He presents evidence and proves his points with logical reasoning. Though faith is described as evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1-3 ESV

[1] Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. [2] For by it the people of old received their commendation. [3] By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

Abraham's faith was rational, in that nothing in it was bizarre. He believed what God promised and acted upon it.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

Phil Stilwell

David J Fenton Hebrews 11:1 is intrinsically circular, right?

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-hebrews-111-under.../>

↘ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-the-hebrews-111.../>

But perhaps I misunderstand you. Do you agree with the following? — Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

- [18h](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

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Doug Harold

Throughout Scripture, we see that God uses evidence to build faith. Strong faith is grounded on evidence - not feelings, emotions, or a sense of piety.

Many times, the most pious people seem to get the relationship between faith and evidence exactly backwards. They believe that the more evidence you have, the less faith you need.

The correct view is that evidence builds faith. God gives a person faith by giving him *reason* to have faith in Him. Therefore, the more evidence you have, the *more* faith God expects of you.

- [2d](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Doug Harold A comprehensive survey of πίστις in the NT does not support that: ↘ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

And neither do the explicit descriptions of faith: "Ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων·

Right?

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Biblical Faith

Biblical Faith

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

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Dan Stephens

What do you mean by irrational belief?

- [2d](#)
-
- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Dan Stephens: Anytime the degree of belief does not map to the degree of the relevant evidence.

- [1d](#)
-
- Reply

Dan Stephens

Phil Stilwell And where do you get the criteria to establish said map?

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Dan Stephens: You can both test it and examine the math.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

- [1d](#)
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- Edited

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Thomas Kenneally

Can you point me to something that you believe in that does not require 'faith that exceeds the evidence'?

- [2d](#)
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- Reply

Hans Krug

Thomas Kenneally Daniel's 70 weeks

- [2d](#)
-
- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Thomas Kenneally Sure. When I throw a fair die, I have around a 16% degree of confidence I'll throw a six. If my confidence was higher than 16% in this case, I would have faith, and faith is always irrational in that it deviates from the degree of the evidence.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Thomas Kenneally

Phil Stilwell Okay, but you're still exhibiting faith that exceeds the evidence in that example. You believe the die exists, that your senses are reliable, and that the future will resemble the past.

Nothing can be proven 100%, so we all operate on some level of faith beyond absolute evidence. The real question is: is that faith well-reasoned and grounded in the evidence we do have?

That's why, when it comes to Christianity, we need to actually examine the evidence and ask: is this faith well-reasoned and supported by what we know?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Thomas Kenneally No, the 16% credence is simply nested within a very high credence, based on inductive experience, that my senses are reliable and that the future will resemble the past. Absolute (100%) credences are not justified for anything inductively assessed, and so you will not find me adopting dogmatism about the existence of things I perceive. If you agree that nothing (inductively assessed) can be proven 100%, then why would you place a 100% degree of belief in those things? That is irrational.

Once again: Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

Now, look at the original post. Here is a survey of biblical faith you can use to assess whether it is rational. <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

Remember, rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

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Biblical Faith

Biblical Faith

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

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Wayne Clarke

18. Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

(Isaiah, 1)

- [2d](#)
-

- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Wayne Clarke Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

- [1d](#)

-

- Reply

Wayne Clarke

Phil Stilwell yes, and there's plenty of it, if you want to really dig for it.

- [1d](#)

-

- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Wayne Clarke If you agree that rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence, and you have read Hebrews 11:1, then you also recognize that faith is intrinsically irrational. Right?

↘ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-hebrews-111-under.../>

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✓ Hebrews 11:1 Under the Microscope

✓ Hebrews 11:1 Under the Microscope

- [1d](#)

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- Reply

- Remove Preview

- Edited

Wayne Clarke

Phil Stilwell no, just because I have faith in things not seen, doesn't mean it's irrational. My faith is based on the evidence I have seen. Is believing that the sun will rise again tomorrow irrational? No, because you have already had the evidence that it will.

My faith in God, and that he exists is based on the evidence he's left for us, his creation, his intelligent design, and also eye witness accounts we can read about.

- [1d](#)

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- Reply

- Edited

Phil Stilwell

Wayne Clarke One is irrational to the extent that their degree of belief does not map to the degree of the evidence, right?

Here is a formalization of this principle: ↘ <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

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Evidence-Proportioned Belief

Evidence-Proportioned Belief

- [18h](#)

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- Reply

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Erik Weaver

We have tons of evidence. And we have Prophecies fulfilled. Some TO THE DAY for Israel. But belief in the Gospel of Salvation, 1 Cor 15:1-4, requires believing that Jesus died a bloody death, was buried, and rose again according to Prophecy. A point so important it is in the Gospel TWICE. Jesus not only died TO THE DAY AND YEAR Propheesied in Daniel 9, but in the EXACT YEAR according to the DSS11Q13. One Shmetah after the 9th Jubilee on the Ages Calendar.

- [2d](#)

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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Erik Weaver The issue here is whether a rational God would promote irrationality. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. How does the Bible define faith? ↘ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

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Biblical Faith

Biblical Faith

- [1d](#)

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- [Reply](#)

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Jason Luttrell

Faith and loyalty isn't irrational....reliance on your own powers of rational thought is irrational.

- [2d](#)

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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Jason Luttrell But a degree of belief that exceeds the degree of the evidence is intrinsically irrational. Right?

- [1d](#)

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- [Reply](#)

- [Edited](#)

Jason Luttrell

Part of the irrationality of your position based on the following:

1. Your opinion is not reliable on what type of evidence constitutes valid evidence.
2. Your ability to judge all of the available evidence is not sufficient to populate a reliable list.

Thus your conclusion of what the evidence does or does not support is not sufficient reason to reject or accept any position with respect to the existence or character of God.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Jason Luttrell One may be wrong about legitimate evidence, but prior to that, we can know with certainty that someone is irrational if their degree of belief does not map to the degree of the evidence. Right?

Here is a formalization of that notion: \ <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

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Evidence-Proportioned Belief

Evidence-Proportioned Belief

- [18h](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

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Mike DeLessio

I have a real issue with your “art”. It’s downright offensive. It makes it look like believers have to check their brains at the door. There is no @blind faith”. We go to Bible “study”. We listen to preachers dissect and explain scripture. We are very much a “reasoned faith”.

To be honest, I would be offended in the other side, if I were a seeker looking at your meme. It suggests any questioning is from the devil. That is also not true (not always true). If you doubt or don’t understand, and ask questions and then reason through the answers to come closer to faith, that is noble. “Come, let us reason together”. If however, you get answers and just mock, refuse to listen, and keep rejecting honest replies, then maybe you do need to look at who is influencing your continued doubt. THAT is actually Satan’s first conversation with humanity: “Did God really say?...”

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Mike DeLessio No one accused you of blind faith. Reread the post. You are taking offense based on a misperception. And your interpretation of the image is also incorrect. It is the devil who is promoting my position. Right? Take a closer look at my words and the image.

Now, let’s return to the meat of the issue. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

- [1d](#)
-

- Reply

Mike DeLessio

Phil Stilwell Maybe I misunderstand the image, but it does show that the people in church that Jesus is pointing at, are doing very little. That's what the image suggests from first glance.

- [23h](#)

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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Mike DeLessio Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

- [23h](#)

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- Reply

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Kenneth Wayne Bridge

Phil Stilwell

A degree of belief that goes beyond the evidence would be certainty, no longer faith. Faith is required for life itself. Pistis is best translated as trust. The most thoroughly committed empiricists must trust that their observations are accurate.

There are, of course different degrees of faith, from I hope so to I'd bet my life on it, but your categorization of Christian faith as faith that exceeds the evidence amounts to question begging. You're trying to limit the outcome of any discussion by painting circles around your thesis and then claiming you hit the bullseye.

Your protest that you aren't accusing Christians of blind faith is severely undercut by your visual where you represent people shouting "Little evidence? Just believe."

- [2d](#)

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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Kenneth Wayne Bridge Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. A degree of belief that maps to the degree of the evidence is not faith. Right? A rational mind will simply ensure they proportion their belief to the evidence. Right?

- [1d](#)

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- Reply

Kenneth Wayne Bridge

Phil Stilwell

All reasoning is somewhat circular. It is not clear what you mean by rational belief. Rational is often used as a synonym for logical. Logic is instrumental and methodical but not foundational. It is useful for ensuring that our results are properly consistent with our premises.

Anselm's ontological proof for the existence of is a perfect syllogism. Our concept of God includes that He is perfect. A God that doesn't exist would not be perfect. Therefore God must exist.

That the result of the logic is consistent with the premises is undeniable. However Anselm's ontological proof is susceptible to the objection that the first premise is questionable because an idea does not necessarily establish a fact.

Logic is useful, even necessary, but it is not sufficient to establish certainty. There can be no certainty for finite beings such as we humans are. Some faith, or trust if you will, is necessary.

I'm afraid your attempt to establish a gradient of rational belief is a fool's errand. How do you measure what percentage of someone's beliefs are rational and what objective standard do you use in order to make that determination?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Kenneth Wayne Bridge Let's examine your key claims one at a time.

1. "All reasoning is somewhat circular."

↳ Response:

At the base level of foundational axioms, some circularity may arise (e.g., trusting reason to evaluate reason). But once the axioms are in place, circularity within a system is precisely what logic is designed to avoid. You're conflating foundational assumptions (which we can admit are pragmatically adopted and revisable) with vicious circularity, which is epistemically fatal. The point isn't that no reasoning has assumptions—it's that we test and adjust those assumptions based on their explanatory success, predictive power, and coherence with empirical data. Christianity typically exempts itself from this process.

2. "It is not clear what you mean by rational belief."

↳ Clarification:

Rational belief is belief proportioned to the strength of the total available evidence. It's not a synonym for certainty; in fact, it rejects certainty where evidence is limited. It reflects Bayesian credencing, not binary thinking. If there's 70% confirming evidence for a claim, rationality entails believing it with ~70% confidence—not 100%, and not 10%. This approach is scalable, corrigible, and evidence-responsive—unlike Christian faith, which often remains fixed even when confronted with contrary data.

3. "Logic is instrumental and methodical but not foundational."

↳ Response:

Correct in part—logic is a tool. But its validity is inductively inferred from its repeated success in reliably modeling reality. You don't need to treat logic as a metaphysical necessity; you treat it as a method that, like a compass, keeps pointing somewhere useful. By contrast, Christian faith demands belief independent of performance or predictive success—a much weaker epistemic stance.

4. "Anselm's proof is a perfect syllogism."

↳ Response:

The ontological argument is formally valid. But its soundness fails because the first premise assumes that existence is a perfection—which is neither self-evident nor empirically supportable. This highlights a central flaw in the apologetic use of logic: it's treated as content-producing when in fact it is structure-preserving. Garbage in, garbage out. The syllogism is only as strong as its premises—and Christianity routinely imports unjustified ones.

5. "Some faith... is necessary."

↳ Response:

This equivocates on the term faith. A pilot "trusts" the instruments because they have been tested under controlled conditions thousands of times. This is high-confidence belief proportionate to evidence—not faith in the biblical sense (e.g., belief in things not seen, not yet verified, or unfalsifiable). Trust grounded in prior success and testability is categorically different from the trust Christianity demands, which is often immune to disconfirmation.

6. "Your gradient of rational belief is a fool's errand."

↳ Response:

The rational gradient isn't about measuring belief in others with a ruler. It's about maintaining a normative model that says, "Belief strength should track evidential strength." This model—Bayesian in nature—is widely used in science, medicine, economics, and jurisprudence. If you reject this, you're left with a flattening of epistemic standards: gut feeling, tradition, or divine fiat can then masquerade as justified belief. That's a recipe for belief inflation and error proliferation.

In Summary:

- A rational belief is not a claim to certainty—it is a claim to proportion.
- Faith, in the biblical sense, is belief where evidence is insufficient—and often celebrated because it is.
- Logic doesn't produce belief; it filters belief. And it's the quality of the premises that Christian faith routinely fails to deliver.
- Trust grounded in empirical success is not equivalent to doctrinal allegiance insulated from evidence.

You asked, "How do you measure rationality?" Answer: By testing how closely one's credences track with evidence and how willing one is to revise them when the evidence shifts. Faith, by contrast, is often applauded precisely when it resists that revision.

- [18h](#)
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- Reply

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Kyle Cameron

There is overwhelming evidence if you're not blind to it

- [2d](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Kyle Cameron I used to preach that. Then I read through the Bible deeply and honestly. But the focus here is rational belief. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

- [1d](#)
-
- Reply

Kyle Cameron

Phil Stilwell so you want all necessity of faith to be removed before you believe?

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Kyle Cameron

"for God so loved the world that He gave His only son, for whosoever believes (through faith) would not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16
"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the promise of things unseen" Hebrews 1:1

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Kyle Cameron If faith is a degree of belief that exceeds the degree of the evidence, then, yes. Faith becomes shackles of hope in that case. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right? These articles demonstrate the circularity of Hebrews 11:1.

- ↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-hebrews-111-under.../>
- ↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-the-hebrews-111.../>

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✓ Hebrews 11:1 Under the Microscope

✓ Hebrews 11:1 Under the Microscope

- [18h](#)
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Christopher Kaip

Just because you see something is irrational doesn't make it so it's just your opinion that is it that is all.

- [2d](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Christopher Kaip I think we can agree on what irrationality is. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. This make any degree of belief that does not reflect the degree of the perceived relevant evidence irrational. Right?

<https://freeoffaith.com/faith/>

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

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Steven H. Jones

Phil Stilwell

Your arguments consistently rely on a redefinition of faith and an arbitrary standard of rationality that you do not apply consistently across domains. You insist that "rational belief must map precisely to the degree of evidence," but this principle itself lacks that kind of evidence. It's a philosophical assumption—one you're allowed to make—but you treat it as self-evident and universal, which is epistemically dishonest.

Further, your conversation tactics reveal an unwillingness to engage actual rebuttals. When others offer reasonable responses rooted in theology, philosophy, and Scripture, you redirect, diminish, or attempt to reframe the terms rather than engage them directly. That's not dialogue—it's rhetorical entrenchment.

This brings me to something worth stating plainly: Even if you succeed rhetorically—if you control the conversation, wear down others, or "win" the thread—it doesn't make your argument true. That's the Rhetorical Success Sophism: Rhetorical success is not equivalent to truth.

If your aim is truth, you must engage alternative views on their strongest terms, not on your own preloaded definitions. If your aim is control, then you're not doing apologetics, you're doing theater.

Your post is a philosophical provocation disguised as a question. You seek to present Christianity as intellectually dishonest by setting up a rhetorical trap. The thoughtful responders have done well to challenge you both theologically

and philosophically. The conversation isn't flawed because of their content, but because you refuse to acknowledge counterarguments unless you can reframe them to preserve your conclusion.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Steven H. Jones Let use the Bible's definition of faith. Fair enough? <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>
Does the Bible demand that the degree of the belief map to the degree of the evidence?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Steven H. Jones

You've asked us to use "the Bible's definition of faith," but the model presented in your article is not it. Rather than letting Scripture define faith on its own terms, you impose a narrow, empiricist model of belief—defined strictly as "alignment with quantified empirical evidence"—and then condemn biblical faith for not fitting that model.

That's not analysis. It's a closed-loop critique. You redefine faith as "belief without evidence," dismiss all counterexamples, and then declare the system irrational for not conforming to your imported framework. That's not a fair reading of the biblical text. It's a philosophical filter pretending to be exegesis.

Your "evidence gradient" graphic may look tidy, but it relies on assumptions that are neither universally accepted nor self-evident. Specifically:

That only quantifiable, empirical data count as legitimate evidence;

That belief must scale in lockstep with such data, and

That any deviation from that proportion is automatically irrational.

But this model excludes the very categories most of human knowledge relies on: historical testimony, memory, moral knowledge, rational inference, interpersonal trust—even science itself rests on philosophical commitments not empirically provable.

So ironically, your model collapses under the weight of its own standard. You're depending on kinds of evidence that your framework doesn't allow.

This is why your argument feels more like a definitional trap than a philosophical inquiry. Competing views are never allowed to stand on their own terms—they're reframed, diminished, or disqualified based on your preferred vocabulary.

And when someone resists that framing, you grade them for being evasive or confused.

But defining others out of the conversation is not the same as proving your point. This leads to a crucial distinction:

Rhetorical success is not equivalent to truth.

You can score points, reframe objections, and "win" a thread—but if your method filters out every view but your own, you haven't reasoned your way to a conclusion. You've just insulated your assumptions from challenge.

Faith and the Chair

One of the most insightful illustrations in this thread came from A. Michelle Orr, who borrowed the classic chair analogy from GotQuestions.org:

"Intellectual assent is recognizing that a chair is a chair and agreeing that it is designed to support a person who sits on it. Trust is actually sitting in the chair."

It's a simple but profound picture of biblical faith.

Recognizing the nature of the chair = acknowledgment of reality.

Agreeing it can support you = intellectual affirmation.

Sitting in it = trust.

And most importantly:

Even if you refuse to sit, the chair remains a chair.

The reality of the chair is not determined by your posture toward it. Likewise, truth exists independently of your level of confidence in it.

This is where your "evidence gradient" fails. It treats belief as an internal calculation and implies that the correctness of belief is tied to how closely it tracks with your sense of certainty. But reality does not conform to your subjective map of probability. It either is or isn't. The chair either holds or it doesn't. God either exists or He doesn't.

Biblical faith doesn't ask you to deny reason. It invites you to trust in what is objectively trustworthy—even when not exhaustively proven by empirical measurement.

The Bible's view of faith is not belief in spite of evidence. It's trust in light of testimony, character, and revelation—including historic events and rational reflection. It welcomes questions, engages reason, and calls for allegiance grounded in more than just sensory input.

By contrast, your model restricts evidence to what fits a Bayesian chart and then penalizes the biblical worldview for operating in a broader epistemological arena.

You're free to hold that position. But it isn't neutral, and it certainly isn't universally compelling.

If we're after truth—not just rhetorical control—we have to engage other frameworks honestly, including those that reach beyond our favorite data points. Reality doesn't bend to our preferred model.

The chair remains a chair.

God remains God.

And truth remains true—whether or not we choose to sit.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Steven H. Jones Let's carefully unpack your objections and examine their internal coherence rather than measuring their rhetorical density.

1. "You impose a narrow empiricist model of belief..."

↳ Response:

No, the model advanced is not "strictly empiricist" in the sense of denying testimony, inference, or memory as valid forms of evidence. Rather, it grades belief proportionally based on the total epistemic weight of all inputs—empirical or otherwise. The central critique is this: Christianity not only fails to require proportionality between belief and evidence, but often valorizes belief against the evidence (e.g., John 20:29, Hebrews 11:1). This isn't a strawman; it's explicitly biblical.

Your invocation of categories like "historical testimony," "rational inference," or "interpersonal trust" does not rescue Christianity's faith demands unless these are consistently calibrated to the actual strength of the evidence they provide—something the biblical model of faith demonstrably resists.

2. "You redefine faith as 'belief without evidence'..."

↳ Response:

The biblical verses cited (e.g., 2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:1; John 20:29) explicitly describe faith as confidence in what is unseen—not as a proportional response to evidence. So this is not an imported framework; it's an inductive observation of what Scripture actually promotes. If Christians wish to adopt a more evidentialist model of belief, they must do so in defiance of key biblical descriptions.

3. "Your model excludes categories most of human knowledge relies on."

↳ Response:

No, it doesn't. What it excludes is epistemic special pleading. If a Christian invokes historical testimony or personal experience, that's valid—as long as its evidential weight is appraised in the same way it would be in any other domain (e.g., for alien abduction claims or courtroom eyewitness testimony). The critique here is that faith allows an epistemic double standard: what is dismissed as hearsay or weak evidence in everyday life is suddenly treated as decisive when religious beliefs are involved.

4. "The chair remains a chair, even if you don't sit in it."

↳ Response:

This analogy fails to track the core epistemic critique. Yes, reality is independent of belief. But epistemology isn't about what is, it's about what we're justified in believing is. No one denies that if God exists, God exists independently of our belief. But the question is: What justifies belief in God's existence? The chair analogy only works if the chair is visible, testable, and demonstrably capable of holding weight. In Christianity's case, the "chair" is said to hold, but we're often told not to test its legs, only to "sit in faith."

5. "You treat your own assumptions as self-evident."

↳ Response:

Not at all. The claim that belief should scale with evidence is a normative epistemic principle supported by centuries of successful practice in science, jurisprudence, and everyday reasoning. If you reject this, what's your alternative? A flat epistemology where sincerity or tradition is enough? If you accept proportionality in every other domain but suspend it in religion, that demands justification, not the other way around.

6. "Your method filters out every view but your own."

↳ Response:

No—views aren't "filtered out" arbitrarily; they are evaluated against a common standard: Does the belief credibly follow from the total available evidence? If Christianity cannot clear that bar by its own evidentiary merits, it is not being "filtered"—it is being weighed and found wanting.

7. "Biblical faith is trust in what is objectively trustworthy."

↳ Response:

That is the assertion. But is it demonstrably true that the object of Christian faith—its claims about history, cosmology, eschatology, or salvation—is objectively trustworthy? The argument here is that when put to the same standards applied to other truth-claims, the Christian system consistently fails to provide proportionate, publicly verifiable evidence.

Your core objection seems to be that holding Christianity to the same epistemic standard we apply elsewhere is unfair.

But that is the fair standard. The central claim here is not rhetorical theater—it is this:

A rational God, if one existed, would not demand belief disproportionate to the degree of available evidence. The Bible does demand such belief. Therefore, the Bible does not describe a rational God.

You're welcome to believe otherwise. But if the truth of that belief matters, then proportionality to evidence must remain the benchmark. Otherwise, you are asking for belief because it feels right, not because it maps to the actual world.

► The chair may or may not be there. But it's not intellectually honest to ask people to sit before they're allowed to check. Do you think any other domain should operate by this model of belief?

- [18h](#)

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- [Reply](#)

Steven H. Jones

let me take you at your word and examine internal coherence rather than rhetorical density.

1. "The model advanced is not strictly empiricist..."

You claim your model includes more than empirical inputs—but it still insists belief must be calibrated to the weighted sum of all those inputs on a sliding scale of proportionality. That remains functionally reductionist because:

You offer no method for quantifying non-empirical inputs (like moral obligation or divine testimony),

And yet you grade belief as though such quantification is not only possible but authoritative.

That's not a rejection of empiricism—it's empiricism in a trench coat, quietly excluding rival epistemologies by forcing them into its metric. It may sound generous, but it still requires every belief system to pass through your calibration tool.

That's not neutrality. That's epistemic gatekeeping.

2. "The biblical model promotes belief against evidence."

Citing verses like Hebrews 11:1 or John 20:29 does not support your claim. Those verses affirm trust in the unseen, not belief contrary to reason. "Unseen" does not mean "unjustified." It means not directly observable—which is true of most meaningful things: justice, love, moral law, the future, even your own consciousness.

Biblical faith is not blind. It's grounded in historical testimony, fulfilled prophecy, moral coherence, and divine character.

The earliest Christians didn't believe despite evidence. They believed because of it (Acts 1:3; Luke 1:3; 1 John 1:1–3).

You're free to reject those conclusions, but mischaracterizing the definition of faith is not a fair starting point. It's a philosophical filter masquerading as biblical exegesis.

3. "I don't exclude other sources of knowledge—I just evaluate them the same way."

But here's the rub: "the same way" means your way. You assume that all claims—from courtroom testimony to resurrection accounts—must be empirically proportioned to qualify as rational. But not all knowledge is reducible to that formula.

Even your own reasoning rests on unprovable premises: the reliability of logic, the trustworthiness of memory, the interpretability of sense data. You presuppose these—you don't calibrate them. Why? Because you accept that not all truth is empirically demonstrable. So do I. The difference is that I don't demand other people's beliefs compress themselves into a Bayesian spreadsheet to count as legitimate.

4. "The chair analogy fails. You can't sit without testing it."

This reframing sidesteps the point. The chair metaphor (originally shared by A. Michelle Orr) isn't about bypassing investigation. It's about the difference between assent and trust. Faith in Scripture isn't asking anyone to refuse examination—it's asking them to move from recognition of credibility to personal commitment.

You can inspect the chair. You can assess its design. But you won't know it holds until you actually sit. And here's the key: its ability to hold you is not determined by your epistemic comfort level.

The chair either holds—or it doesn't. God either exists—or He doesn't. Reality is not scaled to our sense of certainty. And truth does not fluctuate based on whether it clears someone's subjective probability threshold.

5. "Belief should scale to the evidence. What's the alternative?"

I don't reject that belief and evidence relate. I reject your flattened definition of evidence and your privatized scale of proportionality. Your model isn't wrong because it values evidence. It's wrong because it overestimates its scope and universality—and fails to acknowledge the presuppositions and interpretive lenses embedded in every epistemic framework, including your own.

No worldview is belief-free. Yours included.

6. "I'm not filtering opposing views—just evaluating them."

That would be more credible if alternate views were engaged on their own terms rather than recast into categories that make them immediately dismissible. A system that demands all other systems mimic its evidentiary methodology in order to be "rational" isn't evaluating competing models. It's absorbing and redefining them until only one model survives—your own.

That's not open dialogue. That's a philosophical monopoly.

7. "Christianity fails to provide proportionate, publicly verifiable evidence."

This is an assertion that rests on your own epistemic framework. But if "public verifiability" means only repeatable lab data, then of course historical, metaphysical, and theological claims won't qualify. That doesn't make them false. It makes them different kinds of claims.

Your argument doesn't show Christianity fails to meet evidence standards. It shows it fails to meet your standards—ones you don't apply consistently across other domains.

Final Thought

You say, "The chair may or may not be there, but it's not intellectually honest to ask people to sit before they're allowed to check."

No disagreement there. But here's the irony:

Christianity invites the world to "come and see"—to examine the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It welcomes questions, urges the testing of truth claims (1 Thess. 5:21), and grounds its faith in public history and personal encounter—not blind trust.

But you approach the chair with a ruler, demand it match your blueprint, dismiss the designer's voice, and then criticize those who sit as irrational.

The chair remains a chair—regardless of your criteria.

Truth exists independently of our ability to measure it.

And ultimate reality is not obligated to conform to your gatekeeping rubric.

If we're truly after what is real—not merely what is verifiable under specific conditions—then we must allow frameworks that extend beyond our own preferences.

Because trust is not irrational when the object is worthy.

- [16h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Darrell Lee

This is absolutely incorrect. We are even told that we need to test scripture, and to be critical of what we hear. And we certainly aren't ever asked to have faith beyond what the evidence shows. The evidence is overwhelmingly in support of scripture. (And none of us have seen. We have all only heard, but we can see the evidence, just as Thomas could.)

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Darrell Lee Let's look at the bulk of the passages. The bible overwhelmingly encourages belief that exceeds the evidence.

Here is a comprehensive survey of the relevant verses: \ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

However, it does appear you agree with the following: Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

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Biblical Faith

Biblical Faith

- [18h](#)
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- Reply
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Braden Stone

James 1:5:

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

We are commanded to question and seek truth.

Proverbs 23:23

Buy the truth and do not sell it—

wisdom, instruction and insight as well.

If your point is to draw from the belief present in scripture then you must acknowledge the truth of what scripture says:

We are not called to follow blindly, Phil. Your post draws upon misunderstanding and public opinion while overlooking what it actually says in the Bible.

- [2d](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Braden Stone But that is not the message of my post. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

And does the Bible demand that belief map to the evidence? Here is a comprehensive survey on biblical faith: <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

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Biblical Faith

Biblical Faith

- [1d](#)
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- Reply
- Remove Preview

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Shain Bergan

“Christianity often glorifies faith that exceeds evidence, promoting belief over inquiry.”

It does?

I seem to remember Jesus doing miracles to prove to people that he was authority.

I seem to remember Jesus reappearing to dozens of people after His resurrection.

I seem to remember Jesus showing the wounds on His hands?

I seem to remember Jews holding strict extensive records over family lines and scripture so that when the Messiah came, His fulfilling of the prophecies and the Davidic line would be proven.

I seem to remember Jesus' apostles telling everyone they could about their EYEWITNESS accounts of their time with Jesus, some of which were written down and held sacred and strictly adhered to and copied over the course of hundreds of years.

It seems to me that God has been quite generous with the evidence.

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Shain Bergan Who said, "Blessed are those who have not seen, yet believe"?

And do you agree with me on the following notion? ↘ Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Michael Gerahty

I'm so tired of anti Judeo-Christian straw man arguments. Atheists faith that God doesn't exist is based upon no evidence whatsoever.

Why can't atheists prove that God does not exist?

- [2d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Michael Gerahty You may have to take that up with an atheist. I hope you are not assuming I'm an atheist. Are you?

<https://freeoffaith.com/reasons/>

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Reasons

Reasons

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

Michael Gerahty

Phil Stilwell No, just a troll.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Michael Gerahty Can you define and substantiate that?

- [18h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Michael Gerahty

Phil Stilwell This is the last time I will interact with you - I shake the dust from my feet. You have the same information as the rest of us, but appear to only comment in ways that will you hope will distress Christians. Every post of yours that I have seen is argumentative for the sake of it, and showing no understanding of Christianity. I'll pray for your salvation.

- [15h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Mo Owen

Atheists' god is irrationality. That's what they worship.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Mo Owen Do you have an argument to accompany that claim?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Mo Owen

Phil Stilwell sure. Atheists must figure out how nothing magically exploded and created order, space, time and matter. That's a serious miracle. Matter of fact it's the same miracle we have but ours makes sense. Because matter, space, and time can be neither created nor destroyed and the world does not evolve into order but disorder. So without God you have not only a miracle but an impossible miracle by your own standards.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

Phil Stilwell

Mo Owen Why can humans not simply say "I don't know" when the evidence is lacking? Think of all the humans who should have done that 1,000 years ago, before the discovery of electrons when they saw lightning, but instead invoked their favorite God as the source. Is there something amiss with admitting you don't know when you don't know? It seems that Christians "know" their God created the universe, and Muslims "know" their God created the universe. But that is not knowledge. That is a lack of epistemic humility, humility abandoned by those with an inability to be content not knowing. Why do I need to figure out the origin of the universe to have a good life? It just doesn't follow. And I recommend you stick to what actual cosmologists are actually saying: \ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../13/was-the-big-bang-a-miracle/> The irrational invention of "knowledge" in the absence of evidence has long been one of the most pernicious threats to human minds: \ <https://freeoffaith.com/2024/11/13/25/> And the key issue here is that rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right? Here is a more formalized explanation: \ <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

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✓ Was the Big Bang a "Miracle"?

✓ Was the Big Bang a "Miracle"?

- [18h](#)
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- [Reply](#)
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Mark Hull

Here is my issue with your reasoning: how much evidence is enough to exceed rational belief? The standard is entirely subjective. Who determines how much is enough? If you are a skeptic, no amount of evidence will satisfy you, if you are a believer, and have experienced the love, grace and mercy of God, through the blood of Jesus the Christ, then your experiential evidence, added to your scientific evidence, will be more than enough. God is spirit and reveals Himself in the spiritual realm, which cannot be weighed or measured in physical dimensions. As you accept the level of divine revelation God has provided, through natural law and creation, He will provide more and deeper revelation and understanding. Once you have rejected that revelation you have been given, you have opened yourself to all sorts of deception. (Romans chapters 1-3)

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Mark Hull

Add... "Then that lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will eliminate with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not accept the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness." 2Thess.2.8,2Thess.2.9,2Thess.2.10,2Thess.2.11,2Thess.2.12 NASB

If you have already rejected the truth, you no longer have the ability to accurately weigh the amount of evidence sufficient for rational belief. You are now under the "deluding influence."

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Mark Hull As soon as someone consciously hold a degree of belief that does not match the degree of the evidence, they become irrational. Right? And the extent to which someone is irrational is the degree to which their belief does not map to the degree of the evidence. Right?

- [1h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Mary Scott

Where's the eye roll icon? Everyone welcome Phil (everyone's favorite atheist) back for his take on Christianity which he admittedly doesn't understand. Welcome back Phil S.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Zachary Braxton Self

The premise is in error. We are commended for believing without seeing because it requires more faith and is a result of more grace given from God. Consider those who saw the risen Christ and still did not believe. And it's not as if we only believe in what we can see. So, this post is not worth much else of my time.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Zachary Braxton Self Try faith in any other domain, whether it be Vegas, romance, or the stock market. Faith demonstrably does not work. And what does not work is irrational. What are the chances a rational God would promote irrationality?

Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

<https://freeoffaith.com/faith/>

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Rationality vs Faith

Rationality vs Faith

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
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Charles Stitch Wong ·

I agree with the author's question.. it's a real question that needs to be answered.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Tommy Howell

Charles Stitch Wong There are several answers in the comments.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Mark Smith

Dang... all those words in the first sentence, none of em correct..
You literally have to twist most of Christian theology to come up with that... gobbledegook, as my dad used to call it.
The question is whether you misrepresented Christianity on purpose... so?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

Phil Stilwell

Mark Smith We can likely tease the truth out through a focus and civil conversation. I really like this group since most participants are quite willing to enage in good faith and in a manner consistent with 1 Peter 3:15.
Would you like to present your counterarguments? I promise to read them carefully.

- [1h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Brown's Chapel Baptist Church

1 Corinthians 1:18-20

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.
19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.
20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Brown's Chapel Baptist Church I used to preach that. In Baptist churches. Then I read through the Bible deeply and honestly.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/reasons/>

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Reasons

Reasons

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Remove Preview](#)

Brown's Chapel Baptist Church

Phil Stilwell

And after reading the Bible, honestly and deeply, you apparently have become one of those the Apostle Paul described as “Ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth “.

- [1d](#)
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- Reply
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Phil Stilwell

Perhaps epistemology makes everyone grumpy, but the comments in this thread are lacking the quality of the responses in other threads for this group.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/2024/11/11/22/#grok>

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Mo Owen

Phil Stilwell consider the author.

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Mo Owen A short track record, but impressive enough to be implemented by a multitude of companies for whom accuracy is paramount.

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Mo Owen

Phil Stilwell if facts are involved. Your chart is merely opinion.

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

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Tommy Howell

Phil Stilwell Yes! When it comes to matters of spirituality and personal faith, let's pull out the statistics chart. 😊

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Meghan Lewis Reid

But don't you see? The evidence is IN the Faith. Get to know God, truly and with intention, and you will see nothing but evidence.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Wayne Clarke

Would it be irrational to believe that the sun will rise again tomorrow?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

David Cate

You keep using rational and irrational. What constitutes evidence for you? You've read, but obviously not believe, so what caused your doubt - specifically please

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Warren Rodgers

The claims made by the OP are often echoed by many atheists, and sadly many believers parrot these claims unknowingly giving credence to the atheists' reasons against believing. But this just simply isn't the case and not what the bible intended.

The greek word that is translated faith in the New Testament is the word pistis. It does not mean trust in spite of evidence, but in light of it. You will scarcely find an example throughout the bible where God asks someone to believe him without giving proof of who he was. Such as Moses and the burning bush,

Even today God does not demand our faith without evidence. As the very keystone of our faith, the crucifixion is one of the most attested events of antiquity,

it is a historical certainty that Jesus of Nazareth lived, taught and died by crucifixion.

And the evidence of his resurrection can be found in the lives changed in its aftermath, 11 men went from cowering in fear behind a locked door after seeing their rabbi executed and cowering behind a locked door to standing up against the most powerful empire in world history to proclaim that He is God,

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Joe McGinley

Does anyone have an example of what the meme is referring to?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Joe McGinley I apologize if the image is not clear. The core question is, would it be a God or a devil who is more likely to encourage you to believe to a degree that exceeds the degree of the evidence?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Joe McGinley

Phil Stilwell Do you have an example? Like Muslims believe Muhammad road a donkey into space? Or Scientology believing we are reincarnated aliens or something like that?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Lion of Amos

Biblical faith was based on what had been witnessed. Not unreasonable. Your argument is moot in the face of reality. You may have points based on specific practitioners of forms of Christianity that emphasize blind faith but not on Christianity from its founding based on evidence. Do you have an argument against biblical Christianity?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Lion of Amos, I'm being more precise than assessing what is "reasonable". I am focused on what is rational. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

- [1h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Jason Grennan

Both evolution and creation require faith. Most people say they "follow the science " when they believe in evolution, but don't understand enough about it to really evaluate the evidence for themselves. Science is the ability to replicate a hypothesis until we can prove it is a truth. None of the main themes of evolution and the Big Bang (matter from nothing, life from non-living matter, change from one kind of life to another, order from chaos) is able to be duplicated in a laboratory or a controlled environment.

Meanwhile, the fossil record, wide variety of life today, similarities and differences found in animal and plant kingdoms also line up with the story of creation and Noah's flood.

Ultimately the decision is up to the person what explanation for the evidence to accept. The rest falls on faith.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Boleton Terrier

Yeah. It's like "God gave me a brain. Now, I must no use it if I stumble across some ancient documents that contradict the brain that God gave me...."

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Daniel Kraft

This may be before your time, but just a question for you. "When TV signals went from analog to digital, when did you get "proof" they were broadcasting digitally?" ONLY AFTER you got the converter box. Before you got converted all you saw was static and white noise.

Believe and you will see or doubt and do without.

Trust the people that are getting good reception.

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Fred Fisher

Falsely equates "the visible" with "the invisible" and dismisses written Word.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Fred Fisher Can you elaborate to a point that your response can be assessed for coherence and factuality?

- [19h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Jason Tuck

Rome crucified the Jewish Messiah and replaced him with a Christian Church

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Wayne Clarke

Jason Tuck I Think christendom is more appropriate

- [1d](#)
-
- [Reply](#)

Jason Tuck

Wayne Clarke you're right

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Michael Brown

Jason Tuck. By your definition, all religions are cults. And rome killed.the jewish messiah at the demand of the jewish people and evolved into a church. Precision is important instead of inaccurate arguments and provocative statements.

- [21h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Jason Tuck

Michael Brown Jesus wasn't the first or last Jew the Romans crucified.
Who owned all the Crosses in Jerusalem?

- [20h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Michael Brown

Jason Tuck. That historical fact eludrs me.

- [20h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Michael Brown

Phil Stilwell. Irrational loyalty is another name of faith. You can coin it with adjectives that slant it to a narrative you are choosing to provide.

Loyalty to an invisible deity whether christian or not will always appear to be illogical. Rationality or logic of a supernatural deity is not something that Christians or believers of other higher beings question.

Your critique is invalid as is the logic. Logic and faith are compatible. Faith without logic is foolishness. Logic without faith ascribed has no moral compass or center. Without religion, there is no ethics or moral values to actions resulting in a state of nature.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Jason Luttrell

Michael Brown what is your definition of logic here? Is it the sort of expansive definition of everything reasonable, or is it the classical definition that is more restrictive...something like "the process of making valid conclusions from premises"?

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Michael Brown No, faith and logic are incompatible. Once you accept logic, you must concede that faith is illogical. Here is the formalization of this: \ <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

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Evidence-Proportioned Belief

Evidence-Proportioned Belief

- [19h](#)
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Orlando D. Alvarez

You'd have to ignore both reason and Scripture to land on a conclusion like that. 🤔

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Wayne Clarke

Orlando D. Alvarez He can't use reason as its a God given attribute 😏

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

Orlando D. Alvarez

Wayne Clarke

- [1d](#)
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- Reply

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Phil Stilwell

Orlando D. Alvarez

Nope: The Bible is clear about faith. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. The Bible blesses those who have not seen and yet believe, and circularly calls faith "evidence" and "substance".

- ↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>
- ↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-hebrews-111-under.../>
- ↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/borrowing/>

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Biblical Faith

Biblical Faith

- [19h](#)
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- Remove Preview
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Dustin Scott

Romans 1: 20 - 37

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

- [1d](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Dustin Scott That's one of the passages that led me away from Christianity. If it is true, there should be millions of pre-Gospel testimonies of recognizing God in the things which are made.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-the-missing-romans.../>

And, as you'll note, the focus here is the abandoning of rationality by those turning instead to faith. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

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✓ The Missing Romans 1:20 Testimonies

✓ The Missing Romans 1:20 Testimonies

- [19h](#)
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- [Reply](#)
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Daniel Kirkman

The Bible doesn't present faith as belief without evidence—it presents it as trust based on sufficient evidence. Jesus invited investigation: "Touch my hands, put your hand in my side" (John 20:27). The resurrection is grounded in eyewitness accounts, public claims, and historical details—not myth or private visions.

When it says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20:29), it's not endorsing irrationality. It's affirming those who trust based on reliable testimony rather than direct experience—something we do every day in courts, history, and relationships.

Faith in the Christian context isn't a rejection of reason. It's a relational trust in a God who has already revealed Himself through creation, conscience, Scripture, and ultimately in the person of Jesus. God doesn't ask us to ignore reason—but to recognize its limits and respond to the evidence He's provided.

A rational God wouldn't demand irrational belief—but He may call us to trust what's been reasonably revealed, even when we don't have exhaustive proof.

- [17h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Daniel Kirkman Nor did I.

Here is what faith is according to a comprehensive survey of the Bible.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

There is an explicit definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-hebrews-111-under.../>

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-the-hebrews-111.../>

Faith is therefore intrinsically irrational

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

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Biblical Faith

Biblical Faith

- [17h](#)
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Markus Satu Sebelas

No, this is not an accurate understanding. Trust and faith is in the Person of Christ. It's not based on anything irrational.

The existence of God is a rational belief based on many lines of evidence. Relationship with God is based on trust and faith in the Person and character of God. Therefore, we trust his word because of who he is. It is neither irrational nor blind.

Modern science began because people of faith recognised that God is a rational being who created us with rational minds, and therefore the capability of exploring and understanding the universe we live in.

- [17h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Markus Satu Sebelas Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Irrational belief is any belief that does not map to the degree of the evidence, right?

And the circularity of the biblical definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 is a clear demonstration that the belief desired by the Christian God is irrational.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-hebrews-111-under.../>

↘ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-the-hebrews-111.../>

Here is a comprehensive survey of the notion of faith in the NT: <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

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✓ Hebrews 11:1 Under the Microscope

✓ Hebrews 11:1 Under the Microscope

- [17h](#)
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William Campbell

That's trossachs but go on.

- [14h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

William Campbell What relevant point would you like to discuss?

- [5h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Eu Sou Nada

Hey Phil Stilwell. Any evidence for evolution?

- [13h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Eu Sou Nada I teach epistemology, not evolution. What's your degree in?

- [5h](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

A Michelle Orr

Phil Stilwell appeal to authority is a logical fallacy. Having a degree cannot possibly equal being correct. If it did, then everyone with degrees wouldn't disagree with others who hold the same degree(s). Additionally, history demonstrates that the authorities often get things wrong.

- [5h](#)

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- [Reply](#)

Eu Sou Nada

Phil Stilwell still waiting

- [5h](#)

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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Eu Sou Nada I don't have evidence for evolution other than what you'd find in a basic university class on it. My undergraduate degree is in philosophy. How about you? What is your degree in?

Your question could be related to my post, but I currently don't understand how. Could you respond to my post and not derail it with irrelevant topics? Fair enough?

↳ 1 Peter 3:15

- [5h](#)

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- [Reply](#)

- [Edited](#)

Phil Stilwell

A Michelle Orr Would you like to engage the post? Only arguments and evidence establish truth. Do you have arguments or evidence you'd like to contribute?

- [5h](#)

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- [Reply](#)

- [Edited](#)

Eu Sou Nada

Phil Stilwell so you admit. you have nothing. Already knew that. Too bad that degree didn't help you. byt keep believing nothing created everything. And life came from non life

- [5h](#)

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- [Reply](#)

Eu Sou Nada

Phil Stilwell shes too smart to

- [5h](#)

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- [Reply](#)

A Michelle Orr

Phil Stilwell I'm moderating your OP. I published it.

I engage as I'm able to.

Sometimes I will encourage counter arguments by my presence and sometimes I will plant seeds of rebuttals for others.

We publish many posts. I volunteer in several groups. I apologize if I sometimes don't respond. I'll catch up with you on

the next one 😊

- [5h](#)

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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Eu Sou Nada Are you a Christian? Have you read 1 Peter 3:15?

As an agnostic, I am not forced to believe anything. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

I have a couple of related questions.

↳ Is it possible that both evolution and Christianity are wrong?

↳ Are Christians who believe in evolution not real Christians?

Your answers to these questions will help to establish your understanding of logic.

- [4h](#)

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- [Reply](#)

- [Edited](#)

Phil Stilwell

A Michelle Orr Now I understand. Your encouragement to respond with evidence and argumentation is appreciated. Thanks.

And thanks for the pace at which you've been publishing the posts I submit. It's just about right...though this one has kept me almost too busy. 😊

- [4h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Eu Sou Nada

Phil Stilwell only 2 choices. Either God created everything. Or nothing did. Which one do u pick

- [3h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Eu Sou Nada

Phil Stilwell well I know how much logic u have. It's sad really

- [3h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

A Michelle Orr

Eu Sou Nada we do not engage in personal attacks.

We asked members to focus on the topic, not the individual.

If you feel strongly about another member, you don't have to engage. You can even block other group members. Please be advised not to block Admins.

- [3h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Eu Sou Nada

Phil Stilwell I'm not getting any response. It's not showing up for some reason

- [2h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Eu Sou Nada I listen to several cosmology/physics podcasts, and it seems to me that, even though there certainly could be a creator, there is no logical necessity for there to be a divine creator. Do you have information that might move the needle for me?

Sean Carroll's podcast, Mindscape, is very good and accessible to those who have no degree in physics.

↳ <https://www.preposterousuniverse.com/podcast/>

I think you'd benefit from first putting your epistemology in order. Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. Right?

PREPOSTEROUSUNIVERSE.COM

Sean Carroll's Mindscape Podcast – Sean Carroll

Sean Carroll's Mindscape Podcast – Sean Carroll

- [1h](#)
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Eu Sou Nada

A Michelle Orr what personal attack

- [3h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

A Michelle Orr

Eu Sou Nada the one I removed. You focused your comment on the individual by stating he thinks he's better than others (paraphrasing because I'm multitasking).

I'm not fussing at you. I'm simply redirecting you back to the topic. We understand that many of the topics we discuss here are deeply held personal views. Sometimes, especially on the Internet, we allow our focus to rest on the individual and not just the view.

- [2h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Eu Sou Nada

A Michelle Orr so u don't like facts. Got it

- [2h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Eu Sou Nada

A Michelle Orr I'm out

- [2h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Eu Sou Nada

A Michelle Orr ur response isn't showing up. Sorry if facts bother u

- [2h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

A Michelle Orr

Eu Sou Nada I think you need a timeout.

Please take this time to review the group guidelines for engaging.

- [2h](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

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Alan C Silva

Phil Stilwell what is your criteria for the Christian claim that Jesus is God? That would deem it enough evidence to have faith in him?

Second do you believe macro evolution is true?

Do you believe the Big Bang's theory is enough explanation to how our Universe and matter came to be?

I'm just wondering if you have consistency or if you are just emotionally invested in this topic in the guise of rationality and knowing ur answer to those questions will help me understand such.

- [11h](#)
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- [Reply](#)
- [Edited](#)

Phil Stilwell

Alan C Silva Your comment highlights the problem. Belief is not binary. It's not like a light switch you turn on or off. ☒ Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. ☒ Rational belief is intrinsically gradient, not binary as the Bible presents it.

☒ ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται· ὁ δὲ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται ὅτι μὴ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ.

<https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

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- [10h](#)
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Alan C Silva

Phil Stilwell basically u are not gonna answer the clarifying questions?

And you expect to have everyone accept your unreasonable proposition of "your criteria is not enough for the evidence we have to have high low or mid degree of faith, I have no criteria so I know what I am talking about"

I want you to grasp this, what you have so far is merely irrational opinion. For you refuse to present and clarification, or engage with any opposition.

There's 0 reason take what you are saying seriously with that kind of attitude of "trust me bruh".

So I still wonder if you hold all those things to the same level of skepticism, criteria and what degree of belief in you have on those things, you can't come to all of us, and try to redefine beliefs, when you do not hold that authority nor can you keep consistency.

- [2h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Arik McGathey

If this was true, this page wouldn't exist. Ha ha

Also, what makes you think that you know what a deity would want or do? All you're saying is that that's what YOU would do. And since you aren't a deity, that means nothing.

- [10h](#)
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Phil Stilwell

Arik McGathey: Not just any deity. A "rational" deity as the OP specifies. If you believe it is possible for a creator of the universe to be irrational, I'm willing to hear you out on your reasons.

- [1h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Jason Luttrell

Is it rational to believe someone based on their ability to know? For example, can I claim that believing an submarine engineer's explanation of how Submarines don't implode, without independent verification is a rational belief?

If so, or if there is some rational basis for an appeal to authority, then the faith in an all knowing benevolent God is not irrational.

There is, of course, a prerequisite belief that the aforementioned God exists, which can also have a rational basis, although it doesn't need to if the all knowing God is as he is described in the Bible. In that case, the awareness of God is the default condition for humans, and not knowing is a choice one would have to make.

But, from a Christian perspective, saving faith is not just agreement on the fact of God's existence, but also actively trusting (in deeds and in thought) that God must be loved.

- [9h](#)
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Phil Stilwell

Jason Luttrell Here the issue is core rationality. I contend that the Bible accepts (promotes?) a degree of belief that exceeds the degree of the evidence.. This is intrinsically irrational as demonstrated in a more formal way here:

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

And a full survey of biblical faith is found here: ↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

More saliently, the following addresses the explicit definition of "pistis" in Hebrews.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-hebrews-111-under.../>

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/.../%e2%9c%93-the-hebrews-111.../>

Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence. This runs contrary to the way the Bible defines and treats faith.

A God who values truth would not demand irrational loyalty. And a God who is rational would never glorify belief that exceeds the evidence. Right?

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- [8h](#)
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Alan C Silva

Jason Luttrell dude he doesn't respond to anything dude, all he does is ctrl+c and paste. I read his paper and he doesn't understand that Christians are rational and know the evidence has to be equivalently = to the faith, he doesn't understand that faith in the Bible means, trust same thing with belief means trust that's why Paul said "Satan knows God exist" meaning believing God is real or not is not truly what faith is all about trusting him. He refused to lay out any sort of measure/criteria to what would be sufficient evidence, basically his diminish of the evidence is nothing more than arbitrary with 0 coherence. He couldn't even answer his position on macro evolution, big bang and give his criteria as to how he measure such. Cause those are claims of the same level as God. All he did was copy past the same thing over and over, when u read his post u will see he is guilty of all the points he made.

- [2h](#)
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Phil Stilwell

Alan C Silva A good principle to adopt in discussions such as this one is to always counter what you disagree with, not with emotional assertions, but with actual, relevant arguments and evidence.

This post is focused on one central notion.

↳ Rational belief is a degree of belief that maps to the degree of the relevant evidence.

We can initiate a healthy conversation if you'll first indicate whether you agree or disagree with this notion.

- [1h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

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Connor Bailey

This is a false dichotomy.

- [8h](#)
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- [Reply](#)

Phil Stilwell

Connor Bailey That will be demonstrated, not asserted.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/evidence-proportioned-belief/>

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- [8h](#)
-
- Reply
- Remove Preview

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Brock Mollett

This is not what the Bible calls you to...like at all

- [5h](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Brock Mollett What is biblical faith? Here is a comprehensive survey of faith in the New Testament.

↳ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

Does it match your notion of biblical faith?

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Biblical Faith

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Travelingg Coachh

You took that verse SUPER out of context, but lots of Christian opposition tries to do that, so nothing new there. Something else that isn't new: someone attacking a teaching of Christianity without knowing what they teach. The Bible TELLS us to study and have logical and rational reasoning for what we believe so as to defend our faith against the skeptics and guide those that can't find their own way.

- [4h](#)
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- Reply

Phil Stilwell

Travelingg Coachh My alleged taking the verse out of context seems like the best place to start our discussion. Simply provide your hermeneutical take on the verse.
You might check your position on biblical faith against this comprehensive survey of biblical faith.
↘ <https://freeoffaith.com/biblical-faith/>

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