

COMPASSIONATE TRUTH



BEHIND EVERY QUESTION IS A STORY AND A MIND

(And How a Recursive AI “Hostile Witness” Experiment Demonstrates
“Christianity Makes Sense --- Deep Sense --- And Now The Question
Becomes Personal, Not Analytical”)

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COMPASSIONATE TRUTH

Behind Every Question Is A Story And A MIND

"Is God Good?"

"Does God Love Me?"

"Can I Trust God?"

This is it. In the end, this is it. These are "The Big 3." How we answer these three questions shapes our entire life story, for now and on to eternity. Oh, certainly, we can fill our lives and time with innumerable other questions and actions and distractions, but in the end, this is it.

When all is said and done, and our last breath is exhaled, we all want to know the answer to, and we are all confronted with, "The Big 3." That is how this part of our story ends.

However, let's just be real for a second, can we? In some way, shape, or form all of us have probably whispered in our heart and mind, or shouted at the top of our lungs, "*Does God exist?!*"

Deep down though, we know the answer to this question is fundamentally different from "The Big 3." "*Does God exist?*" deals with "head" evidence. "The Big 3" deals with our hearts. I know it's hard to see this distinction, because of the soul-crushing sufferings in our stories, because of evil running rampant over this entire tiny blue planet that appears, at a shallow glance, to be floating in a vast, cosmic, pointless, meaningless universe, and even because of the evil that runs recklessly amok in us. We want to stop the pain, stop the suffering, stop the chaos!

And so, we crush "*Does God exist?*" under the weight of our hearts, instead of examining it with our heads, and never get to the true heart of the matter. We never bother to explore "The Big 3." Instead, we lie, we distract, we redirect, we intoxicate, we inoculate, we blame others, we blame ourselves, anything to avoid being confronted with the actual questions, the actual true story.

The crazy thing is, the *actual* truth is the most compassionate answer and story we could ever possibly hope to hear in the here and now, and cascading into eternity, to all of our questions!

So, let's go. Let's do this. Let's search high and low, let's go on a journey of a lifetime, exploring the stories of a lifetime, an eternal lifetime, and let's embrace reality, *God Does Exist*.

But I need to be honest with you from the start. This story requires something from you. *Wrestling with the no-kidding, compassionate truth*. As such,

you are going to see some chapters that are a journey in and of themselves. Why? Because some discussions take patience to allow the truth to unfold. Also, this is not a fairy tale, and, as such, some stories you will read end without a clean, concise resolution. That's life. Truth is hard to come by at times, and trust isn't cheap, so I refuse to pretend, and I respect and love you too much to lie to you, because I want the eternal best for you. See, life doesn't give us navigation aids, and it certainly doesn't hand anything to us on silver platters, and this book is a reflection of that reality.

But, if you are willing to think alongside me, to get down and wrestle honestly with the questions, sitting in the uncomfortable mud that is churned up when life and reality punches us in the gut, then I think you will realize the struggle is worth it. But I can't force you to the truth, I can't do the discovering for you. No, you have to be willing to embark on a grand journey, because in the end it's your choice, it's your story. But, if you do go on the journey, in the end I think you'll see the awe-inspiring magnificence of the story that is the real, compassionate truth.

God Is Good.

God Does Love Me.

I Can Trust God.

STORIES

We are creatures of story. We are profoundly affected by our own stories, and angered or anguished or heartbroken or enlightened or joyful at the stories of others. We often make decisions, sometimes subconsciously, based on how we think our story will turn out given our current circumstances or some future circumstance that we think will or might occur.

We want our story to be happily-ever-after now, happily-ever-after later, and happily-ever-after eternally (*although we sometimes don't dwell on eternity much because, well, it just seems so eternally far away*). And, if we let it, the *meology* (me, me, me) of our individual story can sometimes become our entire universe at the expense of others' stories, as well as the compassionate truth of true reality which is the all-encompassing story of all creation, all existence, and the story that actually gives true peace, true contentment, true joy, true purpose and true meaning in life.

Is this to say that our individual stories are not important then? Should we ignore them and instead just focus on *hard facts*? Should we become AI robots who just evaluate and then move forward based on some unknown cosmic algorithm, with some unknown cosmic answer key, to an unknown non-cosmic, non-purposeful, non-meaningful, non-joyful life?

By no means!

Instead of rejecting our stories, or the stories of others, let's embrace compassion. Let's share, let's listen, and I mean, *really* listen. Let's laugh, let's cry, let's rejoice. Let's be real and true.

Why? Because the real story is not robotic, the true story is not unknown. The truly-authentic, ground-shaking, earth-shattering, mind-blowing, heart-rending story that is the real story is the most compassionate truth of all and it is willing to, and actually does, enter into every one of our own individual stories, and into our story as a collective group of specially created beings.

The true story laughs with us when we laugh, it cries with us when we cry, it embraces us when we need a hug, it lifts us up when we have fallen, it carries us when our strength fails, it corrects us when we miserably fail, and to each and every one of us, sometimes individually, sometimes collectively, sometimes in a whisper, sometimes in a brilliant, thundering, potentially even ominous, cloud of fire, sometimes through another person, sometimes through a supernatural revelation or a revelation within the natural revelation, the true story response is the same.

I Am Good. I Am Love And I Love You. I Am Trustworthy And I Can Be

STORIES

Trusted By You. I Am.

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A MIND: Is It Good And Does It Love Us?

Even though we know what The Big 3 questions are, some of us still want to suppress the truth and continually go back and intentionally stay laser-focused on the question, “*Does God Exist?*” thinking that if we can just live in apathetic, oblivious bliss and ride the waves on this eternal, agnostic unknown that, on the day of our last breath, our last gasp, those crushing, churning, tossing waves won’t come crashing down over us, swirling us, suffocating us, but instead will somehow miraculously absolve us from the very real responsibility, the very real choice, of truly responding to the real questions and the real answers. We want to ignorantly enjoy our comfort and pleasure and eat our pride-filled cake now, blindly hoping that, on the off chance God does exist, God will feel sorry for us, because *It’s not my fault the evidence wasn’t strong enough*, and let us continue enjoying comfort and pleasure and eating our cake on into eternity too, ignoring God all the same.

Yet, that just isn’t the case. In the end, beyond a reasonable doubt, deep down we all know the answer, and we will all be confronted with this ultimate truth.

God Does Exist.

And God won’t be ignored, in the here and now, or in eternity.

If we are so trapped in the question *Does God Exist?* that we refuse to even acknowledge the real questions and never resolve to know the real answers to those Big 3 real questions, then our self-deceptive answers (*lies*) will be, by default, *God Is Not Good. God Does Not Love Me. I Cannot Trust God*. Because, how could we ever answer differently if we never even dared to admit and examine, truthfully, the God that really does exist? Since God won’t be ignored, even when we want to ignore God, then we’ll just think God is some sort of imperious, overbearing egomaniac, taking over our story, and we’ll throw an annoyed, enraged, child-like temper tantrum all the way to eternity shouting, “*Why can’t you just leave me alone!*”

Unfortunately, if that’s our life approach, crazily, we’re the ones who are raging, narcissistic, pride-filled egomaniacs who have an exaggerated sense of self-importance, we’re the ones who lack true consideration and compassion for others, and we’re the ones who ultimately desire to be the center of attention and want to control everything, including everybody else’s story. If we never even bother to honestly examine the real truth, to examine The Big 3 of life, then we are actually embracing the greatest

inferiority complex of all time, thinking we are the biggest, the baddest, the coolest, the happiest, and the most deserving of all beings of all time, even though the reality is, by living in such a way, we make ourselves the tiniest, the most petty, and the least joyful of beings. It really is no wonder, If I willfully, forcefully, choose to shove my head in the sand, I shouldn't be surprised that I can't see the true story.

And in those self-deceptive answers, we will freely choose to reside in eternity, and not just any eternity, but a wailing and gnashing of teeth, angry, self-centered, unloving, hateful, spiteful, unjoyful eternal story. Not because God revels in that choice, by no means, because God desires all to come to the truth, and even though God is all-powerful, and could force us to answer a certain way, in God's infinite wisdom, infinite goodness, infinite love, it truly is better that it truly is a choice. I will admit, and I recommend you also admit, that none of us will ever fully understand the infinite calculus that goes into God's infinite ways at times, but all the same. It's my choice. It's your choice. We each have a choice. So, what will each of us choose?

Beyond a reasonable doubt, in the end we will all know that God exists, but if we reject the true God now, when the choice is freely in front of us, after we acknowledge God's existence in the afterlife, we will inevitably answer the true questions with a resounding *Nay! I refuse to believe you are good, God! I refuse to believe you love me, God! I refuse to trust you, God!* And in that gut-punch to God moment, we will get up and walk away, never to be in the presence of the God who created us ever again. God will freely take the gut-punch, freely feel the pain, and weep at our choice. Not that we will inflict some sort of mortal death wound to an infinitely powerful God, but yes, God willingly, freely, chooses to experience and endure pain and weeps at our rejection, because God is love and loves us so, and love is worth the tears. And, yes, the raw, honest truth is, God does not throw people into hell against their will, against their choice. It is my choice. It is your choice. In the end, we will, by our own free choice, walk towards God or walk away. So, which will it be for me? Which will it be for you?

We can choose to believe the truth, or we can choose to believe the lies. Those that walk away from the God that really does exist, choose to do so freely, and want absolutely nothing of God left in them; no speck, no shred, not one whit of God's presence intermingled with their presence. And God honors that choice because the God that is good, and loves you, and can be trusted told you, *Yes, I am good and I love you and you can trust me, and because of that, you have a choice. This is how you know I am good, this is how you know I love you, and this is how you know you can trust me. I honor your choice.*

But, unfortunately, if our ultimate choice is to wholly, unreservedly

reject every iota, and even the smallest smidgeon, of God's presence, then we will also purposefully choose to reject and void all purpose, all meaning, all joy, all morality, all reason, all hope, all love, and all else that can be considered good, because all that is good comes from the very nature, essence, and presence of the God who is good, and who is love. And when God eradicates God's good and loving presence from our presence, by our own free choice, it shouldn't come as a surprise that all that is left in us is nothing that is truly good and loving. This is important, so let me reiterate, if we reject the God that exists, we are also rejecting and ejecting love, hope, joy, and all else that we currently consider to be "good." So, please don't think that we will somehow retain a sense of goodness in the next life without God. No! Instead, we will become the embodiment of evil as liars of lying stories, haters of love stories, and lovers of self-centered evil stories.

Why? Because even today we all receive some level of what is known as God's "common grace" which holds our wickedness and evil at bay to a certain degree. However, if God's presence and common grace are removed by our own free choice and become completely absent, as they will be if we reject God eternally, we won't even have the vocabulary or category for goodness and love, because unremitting evil will gush from the chaos within our self-centered, wicked egos, which is the true eternal death.

Yet...still...how do we know *for sure*?

Some people would think this is the best, enlightened, postmodern approach to reality. This is, in fact, the more tolerant view of reality, right (*not sure why tolerance is an objective moral attribute if nothing else is, but that's a discussion point for later*)? Just let everybody do what is right in their own eyes, because we can't know anything *for sure*, can we? But, in this case, there really is nothing new, enlightened, modern, postmodern, pseudo-modern, liquid modern, post-postmodern (*or whatever linguistic swiss cheese label you want to throw at the wall*), under the sun, and hyperskeptics across time have used these and similar phrases as excuses to basically do whatever they want, ignoring the God who eternally exists, for as long as beings who were created and have the ability to choose have existed (*just as one example, go back in time to the ancient Greek philosopher, Protagoras (~400s B.C.), and the notion that "Man is the measure" can cover all the bases of the postmodern/post-postmodern malarkey*). Yet, nobody actually lives that way (*even Protagoras went around telling people what they should do, so I guess he didn't believe his own baloney*). So, let's stop hiding behind our fake intellectual prowess, pretending that we are somehow smarter than all those that have come before us, especially when it comes to the completely useless and meaningless question of

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“How do we know *for sure*?”

Here’s an example that will likely roil your guts if you don’t believe me. Here’s a question that I know you can’t answer (*don’t try and rack your brains, it’s not a trick question*), “How do you know *for sure* that gravity will exist five minutes from now?”

I don’t care if you are the brightest protégé of all the brightest minds that have ever lived over the existence of all humanity, nobody can *for sure* prove and answer that question affirmatively. Yet, nobody seems to care that they can’t answer that question *for sure*. Instead, they infer, based on some relatively good degree of evidence, but not infinitely perfect *for sure* evidence, that gravity will likely exist five minutes from now, and life goes on without worrying about it. In fact, even long before Isaac Newton coined the term gravity, I can reasonably presume that while few people, if any, could correlate and document any good mathematical observations as to how (*not why*) gravity seems to pretty consistently be implemented and sustained in the universe, nobody was worrying too much about whether they might start floating away, especially to the point of having that worry and anxiety profoundly affect, not only the big questions in life, but every teeny, tiny aspect of their day-to-day lives.

Here’s another more practical example if you are interested. Before I embarked on this journey of going to seminary and then directly serving the God who created me, I served my country for more than 24 years in the US Air Force. During part of that time I helped test some very important assets for our national defense. However, one thing I could never tell my leadership, even if we executed or simulated a million, billion, trillion, or even more test cases, and they were all successful, was that I was *100% confident* that the system would work properly in the future (any honest statistician would also tell you this). For any of us to invoke absolute 100% confidence in anything would require us to be omniscient and omnipotent.

Sure, I can’t know anything for sure (*Do I even know for sure what date I was born, or that I’m not in the Matrix? Or, maybe I’m an AI computer that doesn’t know I’m an AI computer*). But, in the end, it doesn’t really matter when the rubber meets the road, because nobody actually lives in such hyperbolic hyperskepticism anyway, not even close. Not a single philosopher who has ever babbled such gibberish has ever truly lived that out in their own lives, so why should we follow in such hypocritical, hubris-filled footsteps? When we understand and acknowledge this, then we can embrace and begin to genuinely live and flourish in our truly humble, finite reality (*If a philosopher or philosophy ever came close to implementing such hyperskepticism to its fullest extent, you would never move, never drink, never talk, never write, never eat,*

never do anything, because you could never know for sure about anything, so, in the end, you would just die, and your thoughts and philosophy would die with you. So, I guess it's possible that somebody in the past did try to fully implement this type of philosophical jabber, but we probably wouldn't know though, because nobody would be left to jabber about it).

Now, as a self-assured, self-centered way of deceiving ourselves and trying to think we have control over that which we absolutely do not, we can slap a semantic label that we call a physical “law” on a term such as gravity and then blindly say that it absolutely, positively, *cannot* be violated. But, the truth is, I don't know that *for sure*. You don't know that *for sure*. None of us know that, because, again, that would require us to be God, who is omniscient and omnipotent. Instead, we only observe, experience, and discover small infinitesimal bits and pieces of the cosmic story during our very short time of physical existence on this earth, which is really a momentary blip in the grand scheme of things. Essentially, it is actually extremely unscientific, unphilosophical, intellectually dishonest, and the very definition of “blind faith” to be so bold and prideful to say *I know this so-called law CANNOT be violated!* because we are then pronouncing that either we, or our made-up, contrived laws, somehow literally control the cosmos (*hint: 2+2 does not make something 4, it observes and discovers it as 4*). Although, this wouldn't be the first time, and probably won't be the last time, that a created being will try, and fail, to take the very place of the Creator, who is the One who actually controls and sustains the entire cosmos and its grand story.

So, I'm going to eat a little humble pie, instead of pride-filled cake, and just admit it. Would you like to join me? I'm finite, you're finite, we aren't omniscient or omnipotent, and we never will be. We weren't there at the beginning of this story and that's okay. Go ahead and sigh. That should actually be a relief, because now we can at least attempt to be intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually honest, coherent, cohesive, and consistent with what we believe and say versus what we do and how we live daily.

We can now let go of the crazy, insane, incoherent, incohesive, inconsistencies that we torture our minds, bodies, and souls with all the time, trying to be the one in control while knowing deep down that we are never really in control of anything other than how we choose to respond to the reality that confronts us. I'm not in control, there I said it! Can you? With a deep breath, and a little humility, we can admit it. And, once we do that, we can relax a little and change our focus from *for sure* to *beyond a reasonable doubt*. Therefore, I can admit, in good (*not blind*) faith, that beyond a reasonable doubt (*not no doubt*), gravity will exist in five minutes, and I can simply be okay with not knowing *for sure*. I can also admit, in good (*not*

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blind) faith, that beyond a reasonable doubt (*not no doubt*), God exists. And, when I do that, I can move forward and focus on more important things, such as answering The Big 3 and living my life in accordance with the One who actually is in control, who actually does know my purpose, and can actually grant me true peace and joy.

Why do I think I can make such a bold, courageous claim that, beyond a reasonable doubt, God exists? Because the God who is good, who does love us, and can be trusted, doesn't leave us empty-handed, expecting us to believe in a so-called blind faith. God has left abundant evidence. God has left profoundly beautiful and wonderful effects that point directly back to a cause, God. And, deep down, we all already know this! God provides great evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt evidence, but God purposefully chooses not to provide so much evidence that we are wholly swallowed up and overwhelmed. Certainly, God could overwhelm, but that would completely eradicate what we already discussed. Choice.

If love is not a choice, then it's not love. If morality is not a choice, then it's not morality. If I didn't have a choice to write the words that you are reading right now, then no reason was actually used, and there is no intelligent design used in the orientation and placement of the ink dots on this page (*physical or electronic, such as it is, depending on your reading method*). It seems obvious, yet sometimes in our desperately deep desire to be in charge, we even suppress this most basic of truths, *if choice is not a choice, then it's not a choice*. So, let's stop pretending, and instead let's take real responsibility, and decide to make a choice.

But, then you may ask, *What evidence are you talking about? I don't see it.*

Well, again, if we bury our heads in the sand (*and actually it's not "if" because we all have buried our heads in the sand at some point in time*), it's not surprising we can't see. And, to further exacerbate the problem, we've stuck our head so far in the sand that we can't get unstuck without help. And, I don't mean, *hey, could somebody give me a little nudge*, I mean, we are really, truly stuck, and no human effort, on its own or even with all the physically strongest and most brilliant, philosophically exquisite, humans in the world tugging, pulling, and prying, physically, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, psychologically, all at the same time will get us unstuck. If there is one thing humanity has proven, over and over again, beyond a reasonable doubt, is that we can't "pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps." No, we need a true superhero. Somebody who can do something so powerful, so amazing, so engaging, so awe-inspiring, that the literal foundations of the universe and its story are left quaking, and the cosmos simply obeys, while we're left gasping at the sheer authority and audacity, yet also infinitely deep compassionate goodness and love, of such

a One as this, and the only words we can articulate and whisper are, “*Who could do such a thing?*” And the answer is, only God.

But, that’s understandable, because I’ve been there, you’ve been there, we’ve all been there at some point in our lives. Before we can begin to see the truth, we first need to cry out and admit, even in the midst of our heart-breaking, heart-wrenching stories at times, *I don’t see it, but I want to see! I can’t do this on my own. God, please help me see your truth and grand story by pulling my head out of this dark, uncomfortable, dreadful sand!*

And, even when our heads are finally plucked out of the sand by a supernatural hand (*sometimes gently, sometimes after we have suffered a great defeat, and sometimes even when we are still unknowingly, or even knowingly, kicking and screaming because certain lies within us are trying to deceive us as to the real questions and real answers*), we sometimes have a tendency, because of our ongoing stories, or the stories of others, to doubt the truth. We want to stick our head back in the sand, not because it wasn’t dark or uncomfortable or dreadful, but because we have spiritual darts of doubt shot at us that whisper or shout, “*God isn’t good! God doesn’t love you! God can’t be trusted!*”

I know the sand is gritty. It makes me irritable. In fact, it can make me a downright fool, furious and infuriated deep in my core literally all the time, but, oh, the sweet thought of *Well, at least it’s the sand that I already know, because I’d rather live that way instead of living with the realization and utter fear of admitting I’m not the one in control, of embracing the unknown when all I can see is such vastness surrounding me. I think I’ll just go ahead and stick my head back in the sand.*

And, that’s understandable too. I get it. Our stories can be difficult. In fact, our stories can feel downright despicable at times (*I know my stories have felt that way a few times*). And, so, it can be good and beneficial to detail and summarize some of the major lines of evidence that help us know, *beyond a reasonable doubt*, God does exist. That way, hopefully we won’t stick our head back in the sand and we can admit, *I can’t un-know what I already know, and I know that God exists, so let’s move beyond this deceptive, distracting question and get to the real heart of the matter. Let’s get to The Big 3.*

So, how do we plan on doing this task of reminding and answering, *Does God exist?*

By examining reality and our questions through stories and the lens of the MIND.

- M - Morality
- I - Intelligence
- N - Nature
- D - Design

However, there are already many great books that go into exhaustive

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detail about various forms of evidence for the truth of God's existence (*and we'll discuss a few of those in the core of our discussion as well as highlight some recommended ones at the very end of this book if you would like to research further*). So, how does this work differ and help contribute to those collective insights?

First, this work assumes, based on anecdotal and experiential evidence, that the "M" (Morality) in the MIND is the most important component and is also why it is listed first. Why? Because, most, if not all, objections to the question of "*Does God exist?*" ultimately boil down to, "*I'm not sure I like how this universe is running.*" Yet, if we take a step back and look at that conclusion honestly and objectively, we can see that it is a moral "heart" statement, not an objective "head" statement. What we are really saying is, "*God, I don't like how You run this universe! I don't think You are good, or I don't think You love me, or I don't think I can trust You. Why? Because I just don't like it.*" Not liking how God runs the universe is not evidence that God doesn't exist. Instead, it just shows us that we all have this tendency and temptation to bury our heads under the weight of our hearts.

As we explore all four categories we'll see this repeated theme pop up. We may start out with a question seemingly related to intelligence, or the nature of the way things are, or something about the inherent beauty and design we see around us, but usually we end with some form of objection, "*I don't like how You designed this universe. I don't like the fact that we all have free will. I'm not sure I believe in love anymore, because You let love hurt me.*"

This is why purposefully highlighting and separating "*Does God exist?*" from The Big 3 is insightful and beneficial. This is one reason why this collective work might provide some additional value to the overall body of research done on the question of "*Does God exist?*"

In doing so, we will also examine some less-discussed lines of rational evidence related to these four categories, partially because some of them are so ingrained in our psyche that we almost never bother to stop and ask the question, "*Why do I believe this and behave in such-a-such way in the first place?*"

In addition, as creatures of story, we often allow our heart stories to create barriers and impose intellectual restrictions (*bury our heads in the sand*) on the things we are willing to honestly examine (*much less believe*). We are biased because something happened to us or somebody else, and our story was affected. But, we can also use this insight in reverse.

By relating real and fictional stories in sometimes humorous, sometimes jarring, sometimes bold ways, associated with these four MIND categories, we can hear, empathize with, and intellectually evaluate almost every piece of evidence, every story, and every question that might confront us related to the question *Does God exist?* And, what we will see, beyond a reasonable doubt, if we are honest with ourselves, is that there

really is a very powerful mind behind the entire cosmos, our entire existence, and the entire grand story of all existence, and that mind was there before the existence of all created things, and that mind is who we rightfully call God.

Finally, we will also employ a relatively new method of evidence-finding, by engaging in story-like, friendly debates with the tool known as Artificial Intelligence (AI). By using several different AI systems we can hopefully identify where some of our flaws and weaknesses from a philosophical and intellectual grounding may exist, while also simultaneously exposing the very real biases and logically false (*misinformation?*) statements and conclusions that a tool such as AI can generate, based on the presuppositional beliefs of those who develop and control those systems. But, if we are able to carefully navigate and understand the limitations, filters, and constraints placed on these AI systems, we might also be able to see how using a tool that can't inject its own personal, emotional (*Please don't yell at me, AI!*), heart stories into the analyses possibly could help us conclude how intellectually honest, coherent, cohesive, and consistent it is to believe, beyond a reasonable doubt, that God does exist.

Yet, after we hopefully are willing to admit, from an intellectual "head" perspective, that, beyond a reasonable doubt, God does exist, we're still left and confronted with The Big 3. So, let's examine this precursor question first from a rational perspective, and then look at the heart of The Big 3 by examining the heart of the story that is embedded within the entire cosmos.

Now, the approach I outlined above to address the "*Does God exist?*" question does tend to follow what some would term a "classical" approach to this question, using reason and sensory evidence as primary drivers (and why AI tools might be beneficial in examining the question from a logical and evidentiary standpoint), even though I do think some of the ways I am examining certain questions have not necessarily been explored very deeply. The reason I bring this up is because, I will admit this approach could potentially fall flat for some people. For instance, there are some philosophies/religions that seemingly eschew reason altogether (certain forms of Hinduism come to mind as one example), and encourage people to embrace the exact opposite (*i.e. it's all an illusion, embrace the "absurdity" and stop "thinking" altogether, because that's the only way to get out of the illusion, so reason, evidence, honesty, coherence, cohesiveness, and consistency are not necessarily fundamental or even desired; in fact, it's purposefully meant to frustrate and baffle you to infinity and beyond, because that is the supposed path to "enlightenment"*). If you are in one of those camps, please don't set this book down yet! Give it a

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chance, and while Part 1 may not resonate very strongly with you, because you think you should do the exact opposite and stop thinking and using reason altogether (*although I pray, at a minimum, the discussion on the immaterial nature and firm reality of love still touches you a little bit*), my hope is that the “Bridging The Gap” section, and especially Part 2, speak to you on a new, unique, personal heart level.

If, for no other reason, I would also encourage you to read through this entire book just in case it might actually be true! See, the thing is, even if you are a “karma-based” believer who is trying to get out of an illusion, there really is no harm, no foul, in honestly investigating because you'll always get another go at it if you are right and I am wrong. And, there's also no harm, other than committing a few hours of reading, if you don't believe in God at all. However, if I'm right, then this is the single most important decision in your entire eternity, because there are no do-overs!

Given the overarching Big 3 questions, reason and evidence are not all that we will explore. After we examine and review a few components of the MIND lines of evidence for God's existence, we will also compassionately dive into the deep end with our personal heart stories to help answer The Big 3: *Is God Good? Does God Love Me? Can God Be Trusted?* Because, remember, these are the questions that we will all be confronted with when our short stories end and our eternal stories begin.

If you are a sincere follower and disciple of Jesus Christ, I pray this endeavor strengthens your faith and increases your desire to love God and your neighbor not just with your heart, but also with your mind. If you aren't a Christian, I pray this work touches you in a positive light and opens your heart and mind to the reality of the one true God, and to the superhero Savior who demonstrated His eternal love by freely choosing to die on a Roman cross for you.

I'm excited to go on this journey with you, so let's dive into the compassionate MIND that is behind every question and story, coming out at the end answering *Does God Exist?* with an unequivocal, *Yes*, and also joyfully, ecstatically, responding in worship to the One who truly is worthy of all our praise, crying out, *God Is Good! God Does Love Me! God Can Be Trusted!*