

Response to Derek Lambert

By Dan Jensen (2024)

(In order to fully benefit from this essay, I recommend reading through my “works for beginners” first. I further recommend reading through my essay on the moral argument. All of these works can be found on my website.)

I often force myself to watch videos made by Atheist YTers. It is a wacky world indeed. But, it is good to know what is out there. Over the years, I have had dialogues with countless Atheists in many venues. One of the most common though, has been online. I have tried to witness on many chats and blogs. With the rise of YT Podcasts, I have also done so in that space as well quite a bit the last few years. While I have engaged in many channels, the one I have spent the most time on until very recently is over at MythVision. This channel is run by Derek Lambert. The reason I have spent the most time over there despite Derek not being the most popular or well-known within these circles is because I thought his channel was by far and away the most well produced. It seemed to me that over time, he would start to have the biggest audience and thus this would be the best place to utilize my time and efforts on this front. I only quit because of Derek’s antics that I will explain soon. It became clear that I was no longer going to be very effective over there because of his games.

Before I say anything else, I want to say that despite my sharp critiques of Derek that will be coming soon in this essay from an intellectual and academic perspective, I do not believe Derek to be a bad dude overall. I do believe he is very dishonest on his channel, but I have no reason or evidence to believe that of him across the board. I know that he has overcome a lot in his life and I have the utmost respect for him on that score. I do not put him on the level of someone like John Pavlovitz, whom I think is indeed a liar and a really bad person across the spectrum of his life.

I merely believe that Derek is a joke from an intellectual and academic point of view and that he knows this, but chooses to be dishonest about this fact so that he can have a successful YT career. I also want to be clear that I do not believe that all of my worldview opponents are jokes. While I have made very clear in my writings that I believe this about some, such as Pavlovitz, Tony Jones, and Randal Rauser, I do not say this any time I have strong disagreements with someone from another religion or worldview. These men have earned my assessments. While Derek's dishonesty on this front is not nearly as egregious as that of Jones and Rauser because he has no credentials of any kind, it is still plenty bad. I have tons of respect for some of his guests (despite my strenuous disagreements with them), and I have the same for many scholars and apologists from other worldviews. I have made this clear in many places throughout my writings.

With that laid out, let's dive in to my critique. Derek loves to portray himself as well read and as someone who loves to get into the weeds as he often puts it. But, it is painfully obvious from his channel that he has probably never read a philosophy book in his life and that he almost entirely only reads from those that support what he wants to believe. Derek is plainly quite the sensationalist at heart. For a long time, he strongly questioned the existence of Jesus, something that is rejected by almost all scholars. Further, he even entertained at times the non-existence of Paul, something that even the wildest of Jesus mythicists cannot embrace. While he has shown some degree of sanity on these two issues over time, and I am grateful for that, he still mostly has on his show those that are not considered mainstream scholars. I am of course perfectly fine for him to have such characters on his show. But, he often uncritically practically worships them and what they have to say even when what they are advocating is considered very, very outside of mainstream scholarship. Now, this does not mean that I believe the mainstream is always correct. It is not. With that made clear, we should be honest with our audiences when our positions are far outside of the mainstream. Derek almost never is. All of this shows his strong penchant for sensationalist conclusions.

For a long time Derek routinely had on Price and Carrier, two of the most extreme and fringe scholars on the planet today. Price is a far-right cartoon, yet Derek continued to platform him despite loud protests from many in his audience. Again, there is nothing wrong with interviewing someone like Price. But, we should be honest with the audience about where he fits into the scholarly world, he should not be regularly platformed and given such a loud voice, and he should be vigorously challenged. Derek did none of this. He had him on all of the time and did a lot of backside kissing every time he gave him a voice on his show. Eventually, Derek had to give a tearful apology because his audience could no longer stomach Price. But, Derek has not hesitated to continue to treat Carrier in the same manner in spite of the fact that Carrier is a very immoral man. His hypocritical audience is fine with Carrier's sexism and immorality because he is so far to the left. Derek could not care less about this hypocrisy because it's all about making the audience happy and continuing to bring in those nice checks from YT.

I have repeatedly challenged Derek, his guests, and many in his audience. While I am very firm in my comments, I never say anything that is inappropriate. Despite that fact, Derek very often deletes and shadow bans many of my comments. He also often shadow bans the comments of others to me so that I won't see them and won't be able to respond to them. Or at least he often thought that until I saw this was taking place when I looked on his channel using my son's phone. This often makes it so that I cannot fully respond to people because Derek strategically deletes certain comments from me. All of this is extremely telling, and that is putting it very mildly. This is why I no longer try over there.

I have already given further details regarding my experience over at his channel in my essay "Education and Evangelicals." That essay can be found on my website. Between what I have said over there and thus far in this essay, you should have a pretty good idea of the type of presenter Derek is. Derek largely ignored me and that was fine. That was his prerogative. However, it was quite clear from his antics that he noticed me. That made his ignoring very telling. He does not want to answer me because he knows that he can't. One time though, Derek did respond to me, I believe out of frustration. He told

me to provide the strongest philosophical argument I could for my case. He did so because I have often challenged him and countless others on his channel on that front. I answered him and he did not respond. One of the primary ways I have challenged him and others concerns the moral argument.

Then recently Derek had on Carrier to discuss the issue of morality. I am not saying that Derek solely had me in mind, I am sure that he did not. But, given all that I've laid out, I do believe that he had me in mind to a large extent. If I'm wrong there, fine. Either way, Derek is an Empiricist. Almost all of his guests are Empiricists. I have often pointed this out to him, them, and many of those in his audience. Empiricism is plagued with problems and none of them ever answer me on this point. So, how did Derek proceed to try to answer the moral argument? He did so as an Empiricist! He is so blind to his own Empiricism, he cannot even see outside of it for one second. He so badly misunderstands the moral argument, one almost has to feel sorry for him.

It was quite plain from his interview with Carrier, that he believes the argument is saying that there really was no morality before the time of Christianity, and that Christianity gave to us morality. Thus, morality must have come from God and the Christian God at that. This is not the argument at all. He thinks the argument is a purely historical argument, and it is not even primarily that on any level. It is a philosophical argument. But, Derek is entirely clueless about this. He even calls us liars for allegedly arguing in this manner, when that is not even the argument in the first place! He erects a straw man in every sense of the term, and then proceeds to try to demolish that straw man through Carrier. Derek is the liar for incessantly pretending to know what he is talking about when he does not.

I have little respect for Carrier, but I do want to be fair to him and say that I don't think he is confused about the philosophical moral argument. My guess is that he does not know my history with Derek and that Derek asked him to come on the show to discuss how morality existed before the dawn of Christianity. My guess is that Carrier was all too happy to oblige as this is something he has written about extensively. It is true that as

orthodox Christians, we do believe that the morality of the ancient world was rather barbaric. We do argue that Christianity has greatly benefited the world. But, this is largely a supplemental argument. It is not the moral argument proper and it never has been. I know that Carrier understands this and probably had no idea how ignorant Derek is on this point.

Regarding the historical argument, pointing to the rare exceptions in the ancient world, such as many of the great Greek philosophers, does not prove all that Carrier wants it to prove. But, that aside, it would not really matter all that much if the ancient world was far more moral than it actually was in fact. All this would point to is God's common grace. God could have done things that way if He so pleased. We are not saved by our good works, and so this morality would not disprove Biblical Christianity. It would not even matter if all non-Christians (and by *Christians* here I am only referring to orthodox Christians) seemed to be more moral than true Christians from an earthly perspective. That statement should not in any way be interpreted as me advocating for antinomianism. I am no antinomian and my writings have more than made this clear. However, it could have been the case that God only chose to save the worst of sinners. Even after the radical change that would take place in regeneration, these people would still outwardly struggle with many things for some time. What matters to God is that radical breach from the past and that now this person worships the one and only true and living God in contrast to his or her rejection of Him pre-regeneration. I am not saying that this is how God did things. I am very convinced that the historical record says otherwise and that Carrier is deeply mistaken. But, that is not what the philosophical moral argument is dealing with in the first place.

Even further, no orthodox Christian is saying that morality was absent from the ancient world. That position would in itself be heretical because it would so blatantly and overtly contradict the biblical record. The Bible is very clear that all people have the law of God written on their hearts to some extent. This is precisely why all people are guilty before Him. In fact, the moral argument is arguing from the premise that all people know that objective morality exists! For crying out loud, the entire notion that morality was

basically absent before the time of Christ would destroy the moral argument. When I say that Derek is a joke intellectually and academically speaking, I am not trying to be mean. I am merely stating a fact.

We can all agree that a great deal of morality existed before the time of Christ. That is not the issue. The question is: Was this morality objective or simply based on the instincts of the individuals. If the latter is the case, then I am free to choose orthodox Christian morality over all others. Neither Derek or Carrier can argue against that. If it is the former, where did that objective morality come from? If it was solely evolved, how on earth can it be objective? Again, please read my essay on the moral argument and respond to it if you want me to take you seriously regarding allegedly answering the moral argument itself.

Derek would never ever have someone like myself, or James White, or my pastor Jason Wallace on his show. He knows that he would be exposed. But, that fact should in itself expose him enough for anyone reading this essay with an open mind. Finally, I am more than happy to formally debate any of Derek's guests. Either he or any of them can officially make that challenge over at my website and I will grant that request as long as the terms are fair and reasonable. I'm definitely not holding my breath though....