



Hi, my name is Alen Basic and I've been a Christian for a little over 4 years after getting saved at the age of 19 in the year 2006. I was born in Melbourne, Victoria and I spent the first couple years of my life there until my mother separated from my father.

Even from that early point I don't remember believing in God. I think I was probably around 7 or 8 until I even heard about any religions. Before that point I didn't know of any and I didn't believe in any deity either.

My parents were nominally religious. My father was a Muslim but even by his own account he has been in a church more times than a mosque. My mother was Orthodox but she never really practiced her beliefs. It wasn't until I was in late primary school to early High School where we would on occasion go to a nearby Orthodox church on Friday evenings because they held social gatherings where people could eat, drink and be merry. The intent to go there was never religious, though on occasion she did light some candles for the dead.

Because of my parents nominal beliefs I wasn't raised with any religious belief at all and I first encountered religious people when I was put into a foster home at the age of 8. At that time one of my foster families was some type of Pentecostals or Charismatics. My first "taste" of Christianity was a church service with people getting "slayed in the Spirit". Needless to say the whole experience freaked me out and I didn't have a very positive view after that.

My next foster family was a place which I didn't like at all. The "mother" of the family was not only verbally abusive but also physically abusive. She also happened to be a "good Mormon" and would go to the services and drag us along with her.

At this point my animosity towards religion was kindled and for a long time after that I was not only against religion and the belief in God but I also wanted to see it eradicated from the face of the Earth. Anyone I found to be religious I immediately lost respect for.

During this period of time my mother was "giving God a go" because she was experiencing some serious issues. She started going to a local SDA church and the minister and his wife were very caring towards my mother and I. My mother started praying to God to heal her, but one time when I saw her I laughed at her and told her no one is listening to you. I told her she was talking to no one but the ceiling and the air and she might as well stop. Keep in mind I was saying this at the tender age of 8.

Fast forward to the age of 13 and I'm still heading down the same path. I still have animosity towards religion and I am still as fervent in my atheistic beliefs. At that point I come across a Bible and I immediately close it and laugh it off.

I read up to **Genesis 1:26**, it says:

*“And God said, Let **us** make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”*

As soon as I saw the word “us” I was like “Ah-ha! A contradiction already! This verse means there is more than one God but earlier on it said it was created by one”. I did not bother to think about it at all, that was enough to fully convince my mind against Christianity.

At about the age of 14 or 15 the doubts slowly started creeping in here and there. I would once in a while lay awake at night and consider everything. I would think of how we evolved and how the planets came to be and then I got stuck at the big bang. How did something come from nothing? I couldn't answer that question and it unsettled me. I would think then how could God always have existed? Since I couldn't answer that question either I just settled with my atheism thinking that if God *did* exist then I wasn't such a bad guy and He would let me in.

It wasn't until I was about 16 or 17 when my mindset started to shift away from my more extreme atheistic beliefs. At that time I got witnessed to by a couple friends and my worldview changed. I was still an atheist, no doubt about that but I was unsettled. I wasn't adamant as I used to be and I slowly become open to people's beliefs rather than looking down upon them.

Up until that point I considered most people's belief to be a crutch to help support them. It gave them emotional support and a basis for a moral framework. I ridiculed those who were

religious and their attempts to convert my mother or myself.

After that point my moral framework changed slightly. Beforehand doing anything was permissible; the only thing that would stop me from doing it was if I got caught. After this though I became aware of the possibility of facing the ultimate consequence for my actions and that fear helped me keep more in line.

During this time I made the stupid decision to leave High School and it took me a while to decide what I wanted to do. It wasn't until I was 18 when I finally decided to study I.T. Before that point I did part time studies in Japanese that never really got anywhere and I didn't work at all during that time. I am just thankful I stayed until I got my School Certificate. I dropped out in Year 11 after the realization that I just couldn't continue messing around and do nothing. My laziness finally caught up with me.

By the age of 18 I became very open and I adopted a very post-modern view of relative truth. I had a Buddhist hint in my worldview in that I believed I would die and come back again as another human over and over forever basically but I also accepted others. I believed that what I believed would happen to me, but whatever someone else believed would happen to them. In other words if you were a Christian and believed you were going to heaven, then you would. The same if you were a Muslim, a Hindu or a Buddhist. It was all true, to you.

It was at this point I became friends with a guy called Peter. He was a Christian but not in your face type of guy. It was through the way he responded to various trials that really made an impact on me. He would talk about praying to God asking His will to be done no matter if it wasn't the answer he was looking for. He had a

very godly perspective and that impressed upon me. His humility was remarkable.

At this point in my post-modern worldview I decided to research into all the major religions I could think of. I started with Buddhism and Hinduism and quickly rejected those. I saw that they were manmade and like most eastern religions were customized to suit the audience's belief. In some versions there was a heaven-like place to go to when you die, in other just peaceful nothingness.

I looked into Islam and was put off by its brutishness. I was highly attracted to Islam before this point. I had friends who were Muslim and encouraged me to go to the Mosque with them but I declined. I liked it for it had a very rigid feel to it that impressed me but after reading into it I was repulsed and let it be.

I looked into Christianity and Judaism but from the books I was reading they basically suggested the Jews were polytheists and that to me seemed to be enough proof against them both since if Judaism is false so too is Christianity.

I left this bit of soul searching defeated but resolved. I had given God a go and I proved that all organized religion was false. My doubts concerning religion possibly being true faded and my atheistic resolve was strengthened.

Enter my third year at TAFE. I was in my second year of I.T. studies and I was on my way to sign up for that year's classes when I spot a man handing out what I perceive to probably be Bibles. I immediately begin to head the other direction because the last thing I want is a Bible and unlike other people I was far too superstitious to just throw a sacred book in the bin. I knew I would be stuck with it.

So, this guy sees me and makes a beeline towards me. I start dying inside as I come to accept the fact that he is going to give me a Bible and I am going to take it and be stuck with it. He gives it to me cheerfully and I take it from him reluctantly. On the way back out the registration the guy goes to give me another but I quickly pull out the one he just gave me and he smiles. I smile to, being thankful I wasn't stuck with yet another Bible.

I found out that this man was a part of the Gideon's ministry and I don't know if I'll ever meet that man who gave me that Bible again on Earth, but I know I'll meet him in heaven.

It was a New Testament Bible with the Old Testament books Psalms and Proverbs. I opened up at Matthew and quickly put it down out of sheer boredom. The first page was completely filled with genealogies and I simply wasn't interested. It remained untouched and gathering dust on my bedside corner for the next couple months.

I finally decided to read it again after some time and since I wasn't familiar with the Bible I asked a friend who I knew was a Christian. He told me I should read the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Romans. I devoured both.

I was not highly impressed with John until about the 8th chapter. Up until this point I'm reading but not comprehending. As I continue to read the more I get confused and frustrated. I start thinking "Why can't I understand what is being written here?" and it's at this point I come to this passage:

"Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning,

and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" - John 8:43-46.

Reading that passage really shook me up. It was after that point I began to consider the teachings in the Bible and what I was going to do with them. I began reading up on issues that concerned me such as evolution. Evolution was a barrier to me because I believed if it was true then religion was false and it was that simple. I did some reading up on it, not enough to convince me it was false but enough to shake my confidence in it as an absolute fact.

After this and further thinking I began to consider what I was to do. I thought perhaps I should clean myself up first; I had to begin acting morally. I thought I should perhaps continue reading the Bible before making a hasty decision. I pondered over this until the thought hit me concerning the urgency of the matter. Did I want to die before making the right decision?

As I got ready to pray before the Lord I thought to myself I won't change. I'll do everything as I use to do because I don't want anyone thinking I'm weird; I don't want to be some sort of "religious nutcase". Things changed after I came before God confessing my belief in Him and confessing my sin before Him. I repented of my sin and I trusted Christ as my Savior from the penalty of hell for my sin.

Though it wasn't a real emotional experience things did change quite quickly, namely I began throwing out everything that I thought would be displeasing to God. My large collection of

music was key, and it was a tough decision to make.

I woke up the next day (my decision was late the night before) and things were different. I became sensitive to sin. Before I would normally lie to get out of something but now the very thought pierced my conscience. As my mother spoke to me and swearing as she would normally do; I felt like someone was stabbing me. It was like the swearing was an attack on me. This was something really amazing as I swore more than anyone else I had known. I had family friends and my friends joke that I could never get a job at McDonalds because every second word out of my mouth was cussing.

I began to read the Bible intently, I finished the NT the first time in just a couple days and I began reading it again and again. I was going to all the church meetings and loving it. I wanted to get more and more involved and eventually felt called to the ministry.

Skip forward a couple years and after a lot of bad mistakes and a sharp learning curve and I'm just weeks away from beginning my studies at college. During these years God broke me, humbled me and took my façade of legalism that I had began to trust in and thrust me into His grace.

God has been very gracious to me in opening my eyes to Him after nearly 20 years of rebellion but I am not the only one. Even while we were still sinners Christ died for us to pay for our sin. This is the heart of our God so please turn to Him today, do not delay.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. - 1st John 1:9