

Who told you that you are a sinner?

Your church? But wait, don't fret! There's a magic cure, and your church just happens to have it! (Of course some might suggest that your church has merely cut you in order to sell you a band-aid...)

Did Adam and Eve sin?

They disobeyed God by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Right and Wrong). So, yes... Right?

Just one problem. How could Adam and Eve have been expected to comprehend the implications of their actions if, prior to their indiscretion, they had no concept of wrong, evil, punishment, suffering, pain, and death? Even if God had been successful in adequately explaining all of these concepts and the distinction between right and wrong to them beforehand, this means that **he would have had to have given them knowledge of good and evil anyway**, which turns this entire story into one big ridiculous farce.

A just, loving, and secure god would realise that simply not believing in him is NOT a crime worthy of hellfire.

A sin can NOT be inherited

I find it abhorrent that a newborn baby is considered to be dirty with sin. This makes a complete mockery of true morality, which requires both an understanding of right and wrong, and that individual's wilful intention to do wrong, in order to determine immorality.

Even our modest human justice system has the basic common sense not to prosecute minors for their 'immoral' actions, let alone for those of their ancestors.

A blood sacrifice can NOT 'pay' for a person's sin

It is an archaic, deeply flawed view of morality that says that, as long as there is blood spilled to appease god (and innocent blood at that), then the crime is forgiven.

How can someone else pay for your sins? In what sense is morality and justice served if someone, say, offers to take the place of a condemned criminal in the electric chair? Does this change the fact that the criminal has not been held responsible for his actions? And how is the innocent death anything more than a sad, pointless waste that doesn't add a grain to the overall moral equation?

This is corrupt morality, removing responsibility from the sinner and

By labeling virtually every natural urge and function as a sin (from sexuality, to having negative feelings towards our enemies), the church ensures the lifelong dependency and commitment of its guilt-ridden, emotionally-crippled followers.

causing a dangerous, volatile mindset where anything goes as long as you repent before the buzzer (also known as the 'miraculous death row conversion').

Blinded by the numbing repetition and familiarity of this salvation plan, Christians fail to see the stark depravity and poison that drips from it. Indeed, if this is not superstitious witchcraft, then I don't know what is. (Well that's not entirely true. These definitely are: Christian 'spells' cast through persuasive prayer, the macabre cannibalistic 'ritual' of communion, the truly frightening 'possession' that causes a person to speak in tongues...)

Morality

Contrary to what your church may have told you, atheists do not automatically turn to hedonism and anarchy. In fact, those who suggest that a man must be ethically restrained by a religion reveal, quite frankly, just how deep-seated their own morals are.

150 years ago: the abolition of slavery
100 years ago: the emancipation of women
50 years ago: inter-racial marriage
Today: same-sex relationships...
Why is it that the church always has to be dragged kicking and screaming (by secular outrage) towards the tolerance and compassion that, ironically, it claims to hold a monopoly on?

It is an easy target for the church to blame society's ills on man's inevitable shelving of the god myth. But the fact remains that there is a fraction of the immorality now than there was when the church had complete, unchallenged influence over every aspect of society.

This was a time of Crusades, Inquisitions, and witch- and heretic-burnings. It was a period known as the Dark Ages, and that they truly were – both morally and intellectually.

The Ten Commandments are woefully inadequate as a moral guide.

The first four are blatant religious propaganda - basically a plug for the Hebrew God. The remaining six are dangerously held up as exhaustive and inspired by those who apparently haven't read them. For example, one wonders how 'lying' and 'envy' make the big list of don'ts, but not rape, torture, child abuse, racism, slavery... And surely nobody still seriously believes that black and white moral guidelines are of much use in a grayscale world. "Thou shalt not kill" - but what about in genuine self-defense? "Thou shalt not bear false witness" - but what about lying to the Nazi officer who asks if you are hiding Jews? True morality requires judging each case on its own merits, not just overlaying the same clumsy morality stencil on everything.

Regardless, what never fails to surprise me is the egotism and arrogance of the theist who, by praying for divine favor or intervention, actually calls into doubt the very wisdom of their god!

This life is NOT a 'vale of tears'

It makes me nauseous to think that children are being taught that the most important part of their life is auditioning for the next one. This is a truly poisonous concept that inevitably leads to the degradation of our current world as a transit life - a 'vale of tears' that we must 'put up with' momentarily until our ticket is clipped and we are rescued from this miserable existence of trial and temptation.

In stark contrast, atheists in general believe this to be our one and only life, a view which, I can assure you, makes life precious beyond all value.

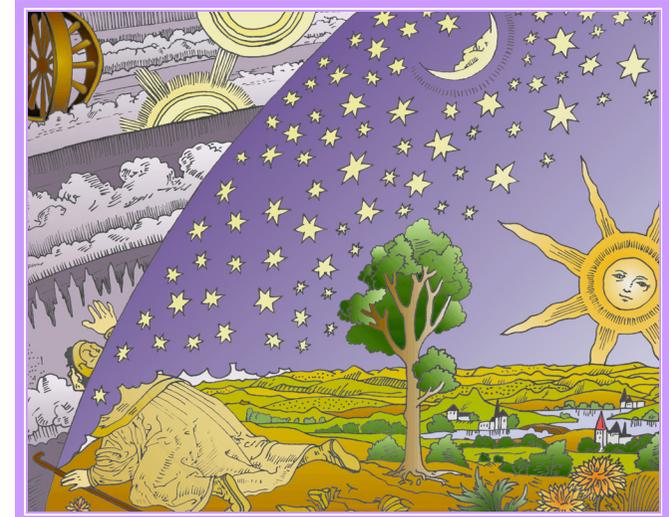
What if the greatest deception the devil ever played on man was to convince him to devote his time to mindless rituals, self-depreciation, and violent prejudices?
Of course, I realise this is a ridiculous premise: 'the devil' is a construct of religion, not vice versa...

Prayer

To the critical mind, it seems that the proportion of prayers that are specifically answered do not deviate too far from what the simple law of averages would suggest.

Having never prayed in my life, I can certainly attest to having a better than fair share of good fortune.

why do you believe in god?



Flammarion

don't be afraid to question

the Truth is never embarrassed by honest enquiry

Have you ever asked yourself this question?

I mean *seriously* asked yourself?

Pierre Charron once noted that we are baptised or circumcised a Christian or a Jew, long before we are even aware we are a human.

Is it any wonder then that, through early indoctrination while the critical mind is still developing, we almost without exception go on to inherit the *precise* religion of our parents or surrounding culture?

No, of course not - it's only natural. But that doesn't say much for the actual truth of that particular religion, does it?

"A casual stroll through the lunatic asylum shows that faith does not prove anything."

Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Creation

Most people think that you need a

god to explain the existence of the world. They point to the complexity and order of the universe as sure proof that it was designed by a conscious entity, but stop one step short of reaching the glaring conclusion to their logic.

Such an intelligent designer, one might well presume, would have to be fairly complex and ordered itself, wouldn't it? Perhaps even more so than the universe? **So then what created god?**

It is a giant leap from "We can't yet explain every aspect of the natural world" to "God did it." To rid us of a natural difficulty, the theist has invented a supernatural one.

There is no such thing as second-hand revelation. The Bible is simply hearsay.

God-of-the-gaps

We once believed that thunder and lightning was god getting angry. Of course, now we have a scientific explanation for this phenomenon, it would be hard to find anyone who still believes this.

Religion is a crutch left over from man's pre-scientific youth and, like a child with a security blanket, our continued reliance on it for emotional support is unhealthy and detrimental to our growth.

As the ground illuminated by science advances, this god-of-the-gaps of human knowledge will continue to retreat with the shadows. **You only have to look to the mistaken assumptions of your religious ancestors for a glimpse of the future of your god.**

"Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent.

Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent.

Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?

Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?"

Epicurus (341-271 BC)

In the meantime, the atheist is not so intellectually promiscuous as to jump at a supernatural explanation just so that we can have an answer, any answer, right now.

So what does the Bible tell us?

Who should we kill?

- Homosexuals (Lev.20:13, Rom.1:26-32)
- Adulterers (Lev.20:10, Deut.22:22)
- Disobedient children (Deut.21:20-21, Lev.20:9, Exod.21:15)
- Women who are not virgins on their wedding night (Deut.22:13-21)
- All non-Christians (parable told by Christ - Luke.19:27)
- Those accused of wickedness by at least two people (Deut.17:2-7)
- Anyone who works on the Sabbath (Exod.35:2-3, Num.15:32-6) (not even to kindle a fire, and no exclusion for ambulance drivers)

Women

- It is "shameful" for a woman to speak in church (1Cor.14:34-5)
- A man must OK his wife's words if they are to have force (Num.30:8)
- A woman must not teach or hold authority over a man (1Tim.2:12)
- Lot saves the messengers from the men of Sodom by offering up his virgin daughters to "do to them as you please" (Gen.19:8)
- "Kill every woman who has slept with a man, but save for yourself every girl who has never slept with a man" (Moses - Num.31:17-8)

Slavery

- God supports slavery (Lev.25:44-6, Exod.21:2-8, Eph.6:5, Col.3:22)
- Instructions on how to sell your daughter as a slave (Exod.21:7-8)
- When to give your slaves "severe" or "light" beatings (Luke.12:42-8)
- OK to beat slaves only if they don't die within 2 days (Exod.21:20-1)
- How to mark your slave: drive an awl through its ear (Deut.15:17)

Marriage

- It's best if all people remain unmarried. Marriage is a lesser-of-two-evils compromise for Christians too weak to resist their sexual urges, "for it is better to marry than to burn." (Paul - 1Cor.7:1-2, 8-9, 25-6, 38)
- The rapist of an unwed woman must buy her and make her his wife (apparently a far more 'holy' union than a genuine, loving same-sex relationship - Deut.22:28-9)

Justice

- If a man suspects his wife of cheating he can serve her a cursed drink; if she becomes deformed, then that proves her guilt (Num.5:12-31)
- 42 children killed by bears for calling a prophet 'baldy' (2King.2:23-4)
- OK to beat your children with a rod - it won't kill them (Prov.23:13-4)
- God commits, orders, or endorses every form of atrocity known to man (pretty much pick a page of the Old Testament at random)

Do the Old Testament laws still apply?

- Every "jot" and "tittle" (Christ - Matt.5:17-9)

Christ, what a role model...

- Christ tells us we must "hate" our entire family, and even our own life, if we want to be one of His disciples (Luke.14:26)
- Those who abandon their families will be rewarded (Matt.19:29)
- "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother... And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." (Christ - Matt.10:35-6)
- "I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Christ - Matt.10:34)
- If you don't have a sword, sell your clothes to buy one (Luke.22:36)
- Curses fig tree for not bearing fruit in off-season (Mark.11:12-4, 20-1)
- Didn't want to help girl because she was a "dog" gentile (Matt.15:22-8)

Of course there are several good passages in the Bible, the ones that are carefully selected by your minister for Sunday readings. But (and pardon the analogy) if you find some chocolate in a pile of dung you don't eat it, right? No. The good is tainted by the bad that surrounds it.

Don't take your minister's word for it Don't even take my word for it Look it up for yourself

Take Matthew 1:22-3. Ask yourself: Was he telling the truth when he said that Christ's virgin birth had fulfilled a prophesy (Isaiah 7:14)?

Look it up. Read the context around it. Judge for yourself. Wasn't Isaiah actually claiming that the baby would be a sign that a planned siege on Jerusalem during a civil war would fail? In fact, doesn't the prophet then go on and try to fulfil his own prophesy at Isaiah 8?!

Let me tell you about Mithra...

Mithra was a Persian/Indian god of the 6th century BC. Apparently, he was **born of a virgin on December 25th** (as were the gods Osiris, Horus, Marduk, Sol, Saturn, and Apollo), a birth witnessed by shepherds, and by **gift-bearing Magi who had followed a falling star**. He became **known as the Light / Good Shepherd / Son of God**, and was said to be **able to raise the dead, cast out devils, and cure the blind, lame, and sick**. Like the god Attis, Mithra was **sacrificed at the spring equinox** (Easter, or 'Eostre', being the ancient goddess of spring), **rose up after three days**, and **ascended to paradise** (a Persian word). Prior to this, Mithra **celebrated a Last Supper with his 12 disciples** (representing the 12 signs of the zodiac). In memory of this, his **followers would 'eat' their god in the form of wafers and bread** (like the followers of Osiris, Adonis, and Dionysus) – **bread marked with the cross**, a symbol borrowed from another god, Tammuz. Mithra's worshippers also believed there would be a **'day of judgment' when sinners and the 'unbaptised' would be dragged down to darkness...**

Sound familiar?

Christianity is simply a mish-mash, hand-me-down, patchwork quilt of all the most memorable elements of a thousand different 'pagan' religions that came before it.

Born of a virgin

As we have seen, the virgin birth story is neither unique nor original to Christianity. Traditionally, a claim of virgin birth was a way of conveying the authenticity and importance of a god (and sometimes

"To assert that the earth revolves around the sun is as erroneous as to claim that Jesus was not born of a virgin."

Cardinal Bellarmine at Galileo's trial, 1615

even mortals, such as Julius Caesar) to a largely uneducated audience.

December 25th

This date marks the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere - the turning point of winter as the days start to get longer again. Long before Christianity, sun god worshippers set aside this day to celebrate the beauty of nature with the return or 'birth' of the sun.

With the obvious symbolism for the pagans, it is easy to see why many virgin-born saviour gods were said to have been born on December 25th in the hope of winning credulous and superstitious converts. **It was in 350AD that Pope Julius I 'set' Christ's birthday to keep up this long tradition.**