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A Deist’s Viewpoint

Does anyone really know what God is? Who god is? For that matter, if one exists? (If you believe it/he/she is/has been human/a creature at any point). There are so many different arguments and aspects of this topic, it will be very hard to reach out to every one in this paper, but we will work with what we were given. Personally, my definition is very similar to that of many deist followers (as the title insists); there was definitely something in the very beginning that created this earth/solar system/galaxy/everything (most people would refer to this creator as “God”), but this creator or “architect” is now 100% absent from earth and has no effect on its activity or outcome.

I have decided to write this paper to a recently acquired friend of mine, Luke Depner. Luke is a very strong follower and believer in Christ’s work, and I 100% understand and respect him for that. The definition Luke gave me was this, “God – Humanity’s Father, who is perfectly holy, just, and loves his children so incredibly much that he would punish his beloved first born son Jesus, to pay for the selfishness of his runaway kids in order to bring them back to his family that he now sends to love the world like he does.” This, impressively enough, came off of the top of Luke’s head. In other words, Luke believes that God created this earth, created a son Jesus in his image, and punished him for the people of earth’s benefit. I absolutely agree with the creation aspect of Luke’s belief system, but right after that is where our beliefs begin to fall astray. I believe the bible as more of a human’s over-exaggerated interpretation of past events, some fictional and some non. I do not believe that God created a son in his image to preach his teachings around the world, or that he was crucified in our honor (even though that would have been extremely nice of him).

When you look up the word “God” in the Oxford English dictionary, the following will be found, “A superhuman person (regarded as masculine) who is worshipped as having power over nature and the fortunes of mankind; a deity.” In this definition, we are referring to god as an actual human being; a person. On the other hand, if you search “God” on dictionary.com, the following is read, “The one Supreme Being, the creator and ruler of the universe”. In this definition, the authors are referring to God as a “Supreme Being” instead of a person. Whose definition are we supposed to believe? Or are we supposed to believe what our parents said when we were children? “God is a giant man up in heaven that watches over us at all times and keeps us safe”. That definition of God definitely had me puzzled for a few years, up until about 6th grade when I started thinking on my own and realizing there’s got to be more to it than that.

As Morgan Freeman states in the movie Bruce Almighty, “Parting your soup is not a miracle, Bruce, it's a magic trick. A single mom who's working two jobs, and still finds time to take her kid to soccer practice, that's a miracle. A teenager who says no to drugs and yes to an education, that's a miracle. People want me to do everything for them, but what they don't realize is, *they have the power*. You want to see a miracle, son? *Be* the miracle.” This is probably the closest to believing in a present day God of all the things I’ve heard on this earth. The term “miracle” is often tied to proof that there is a God and it still watches over all of us.

Here’s a common atheist way of looking at these so called “miracles”. This quote comes from [The Jesseph-Craig Debate](http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/doug_jesseph/jesseph-craig/index.html), “In addition, the use of God as an explanation for anything seems bound to be problematic. We are told a great deal about Him, but never enough that claims that His existence can be put to the test. Imagine, for example, a farmer who prays to God for rain to help his drought-stricken crops. Suppose it then rains. Our happy farmer explains this as the act of God in response to a prayer. But suppose it doesn’t rain. The farmer explains this as God's having had other reasons for withholding rain. Either way, the God hypothesis seems to do no real explanatory work. It can be used to account for literally anything in exactly the same way.” This quote is a very good example for a strong anti-god argument regarding miracles being god’s presence on earth. I stand by this example, agreeing that a “miracle” could be construed as literally anything, and taken in any perspective as the receiver feels.

On the other end of this argument, are the strong followers, like Luke. Take for example, “Bob” says there is absolutely no God, never was and never will be because there is no physical proof. Dr. Craig addresses this point with saying, “Many Christian theologians believe in God by faith and do not hold that there are any rational proofs for the existence of God”. Basically saying that it is instilled in their brain that there is a God, no matter what anyone says. They simply believe it; have faith that God will lead them in the right path and will look out for them. We should have loads of respect for people who follow these belief (faith) systems; I personally just have a very hard time doing so. Later in the debate, Dr. Craig states, “It is logically impossible to *make* someone *freely* do something.” This brings up an extremely good point, insisting that If God chose to create a free world, he couldn’t control everything to make sure it’s being done morally correct. This statement contradicts Jesseph’s initial argument that if God did exist, there would be no evil or suffering on this earth.

Let’s field trip away from these debates for a second and discuss the whole basis of “argument”. My take on an argument is, you can either prove yourself right, or prove the opposition wrong. Either way, you win. A great example taken from the movie “Thank you for Smoking”, Nick Naylor is teaching his son, Joey, how to manipulate arguments. Say the father is defending vanilla ice cream, and the son is a strict chocolate advocate. The father can either A) Prove the son wrong, or B) Prove himself right. Since proving himself right is (in this case) relatively impossible, we will go with proving the son wrong. The son’s initial argument would consist of, “A human being needs chocolate. It is the best flavor in the world and no one should substitute with anything else.” The father responds with, “Chocolate is definitely good, but I need more than chocolate. For that matter, I need more than vanilla. I believe we need freedom and choice when it comes to our ice cream.” Nick Naylor didn’t need to prove himself right in saying that vanilla is the best; he simply needed to prove Joey wrong. If you can prove the other person wrong, you’re right.

Another point to be made when discussing argument is the fact that if you argue correctly, you’re never wrong. Regarding the God discussing, we will focus on the core of the question. A) Is there a God? And B) what would be the requirements (what constitutes) a god? Is it divine goodness? Immortal qualities? I’ve never seen either of these, which contradicts said definition. Even if there was a god, there would be no way or proving it (especially in 6-8 pages), so I can literally sit here and write whatever I want. Be it my grandmother’s survival of cancer, or me failing my Bio test. We can call these acts of god, or just regular everyday occurrences. These are all correct answers, and that is the beauty of argument (You can thank yourself Ms. Muecke for my smart-alec behavior regarding arguments ☺ ).

Aside from arguments, there are many many different takes on what (or who) god is. The most common on this earth is Christianity, which has roughly 2,039 million followers (and slowly decreasing). Christian’s believe in the almighty power and God as the creator and ruler of the universe. The next highest followed religion is Islam, which has 1,570 million followers (which is slowly increasing). People who follow the Islam faith also believe in a God, but their form of “Jesus” is a prophet in which we call Mohammed. According to Steven Bates, Islam means "entering into a condition of peace and security with God, through allegiance or surrender to him”. Personally, I don’t subscribe to either of these beliefs, but if I was to, I’d probably go with Christianity since it seems they are more flexible with their beliefs. The next highest following is the “No Religion” category. 775 million people (slowly dropping) fit in this category, which would include myself. A couple other noted religions are Hinduism (950 million) and Buddhism (Roughly 376 million).

Let’s roughly touch on Buddhism for a moment, which would be my personal favorite of all the religious ideas floating around out there. Some consider Buddhism to be more of a philosophy than a religion. In contrast to Christianity, classical Buddhism does not involve the recognition or worship of deities. Neither does it believe in the parting of the human soul after death to a better place. Instead, classic Buddhists believe in reincarnation; the rebirth of a living being after death into another form of life. This aspect of Buddhism I am not too sure of. I don’t have a take on what comes after this life. All I can do is hope that if I live a well-rounded life, it will be an enjoyable afterlife. Another strong belief of typical Buddhists is Karma. As B.A. Robinson states, “Karma is the sum total of an individual's actions of body, speech and mind (good, bad and neutral), taken in their current and previous lives.” Basically, what you do/how you act in your current life determines your destiny in the following, (whatever that may be).

How I see all of this is as follows, if there was ONE set God (that people claim to have been in contact with in spirit, etc.), shouldn’t the entire world follow one religion? If a person that follows Christian beliefs says that he has spoken to God, shouldn’t the rest of the world be in that religion? Since God spoke to the Christian guy, that means Christian is the best, right? But then all of the sudden an Islamic man says he saw God firsthand one night in his home. But wait…the Christian guy said he spoke with God, and people of the Islamic religion believe in a different God (Allah) than Christians do. Does this mean there are two Gods, or is one of them lying? Or are they both lying and there is no God? Or are they both telling the truth, and God accepts all religions? Because as a matter of fact, Jews believe in Jehovah, Hindu’s believe in a formless God, Sikh’s believe in Hari, Parsee followers believe in Ormazd, and Buddhists don’t really believe in any God. Which religion is right? I suppose nobody will ever know until they move on to their next phase of the cycle of the universe. Personally, I’m pretty stoked to find out what comes next after this life (not that I’m in any rush to get there or anything).

As I stated before, my definition of God is very similar to that of many deist followers (as the title insists); there was definitely something in the very beginning that created this earth/solar system/galaxy/everything (most people would refer to this creator as “God”), but this creator or “architect” is now 100% absent from earth and has no effect on its activity or outcome. We’ve briefly looked over a few different religions, and how to argue correctly regarding this “God” topic. Explore all the different path’s out there on your own and see what you’re interested in. You might just learn a little bit about yourself along the way.