

## THE NEXUS

Digging in Deeper: 1 Peter 2:12

April 12, 2024

**“Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits.” (CSB – Read the chapter)**

In the wake of 9/11 there arose a whole new generation of atheists. And while their arguments were not new at all, their boldness, their rhetorical cleverness, and their energetic hostility toward all religion and Christianity in particular put a pretty new dress and an attractive layer of makeup on an old model. And, thanks to the horrible actions taken by a handful of radical Muslim terrorists, they had plenty of ammunition for their argument that religion was the biggest problem facing the world. It is deeply ironic, of course, that most of them spent most of their time making their arguments from the comfort and relative safety of Western nations with a tradition of freedom of expression that that has only ever existed in cultures created and shaped by the very Christian worldview they loved to lampoon and not in places like, say, Iran where their comments could have easily gotten them arrested and killed, but we’ll leave that alone for now. Their hatred and ridicule has inspired a whole new generation of young atheists (who aren’t so young anymore...) who relish poking holes in the faith of their Christian friends and family members. The movement’s cultural power has largely faded in recent years, but every now and then one of the surviving original leaders of the movement will say something that makes a bit of a splash. Well, Richard Dawkins, the man who was always the leading highlight of the group recently said something in an interview that has gotten everyone talking again. But this time, instead of attacking Christianity, he was claiming it. Let’s talk some today about what he said and why it matters.

In an interview originally posted on X (whose website, go figure, is still Twitter.com) on Easter Sunday, Richard Dawkins was asked for his thoughts on the British government’s decision to promote and give attention to the Muslim holiday of Ramadan instead of Easter this year. The decision itself was a reflection of just how much cultural power Islam has gained for itself in Britain over the last generation. As the interviewer notes, mosques are being built across England at a much greater clip than churches whose construction has fallen off to basically zero in recent years. What Dawkins said caught the world by surprise and, like I said, has gotten everyone at least in the Christian world talking about his comments.

Here’s what Dawkins actually said: “Well, I must say I was slightly horrified to hear that Ramadan is being promoted instead. I do think that we are culturally a Christian country and I call myself a cultural Christian. I’m not a believer, but there’s a distinction between being a believing Christian and being a cultural Christian. And so, you know, I love hymns and Christmas carols and I sort of feel at home in the Christian ethos. I feel that we are a Christian country in that sense. It’s true that statistically the number of people who actually believe in Christianity is going down, and I’m happy with that. But I would not be happy if, for example, we lost all our cathedrals and our beautiful parish churches. So I count myself a cultural Christian. I think it would matter if we, certainly if we substituted any alternative religion. That would be truly dreadful.”

When asked specifically about the issue of mosques being built at a fantastically higher rate than churches as a result of plummeting church attendance across the nation, Dawkins said he regards that as a problem. He went on to say this: “If I had to choose between Christianity and Islam, I would choose Christianity every single time. I mean, it seems to me to be a fundamentally decent religion in a way that I think Islam is not.” When pressed to give a further explanation of that response, Dawkins, in a move that seconds what I wrote a couple of days ago, noted specifically the issue of the treatment of women. While Christianity’s hands are certainly not clean on the matter (for reasons, I would argue that have much more to do with the cultures in which Christianity has existed than with the theology itself, but we’ll save that for another time), Islam’s record is much worse because there

is, in Dawkins' words, "an active hostility to women which is promoted by the holy books of Islam." That is, Islam is doctrinally hostile to women (and he adds gays here as well) in a way that Christianity is not.

Dawkins final conclusion on the discussion was that "I find that I like to live in a culturally Christian country, although I do not believe a single word of the Christian faith."

Just to make sure you know how significant a statement this was for him to make, this was the same guy who once wrote, "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully."

What changed?

Perhaps Dawkins has mellowed some with age. He's 83 now, and he was only 65 when *The God Delusion* was first published. People often grow more religious when they get into their senior years and start thinking about this life's ending and what might follow after it. Or perhaps, having gotten a closer look at what the real impact of the religion which serves as the primary shaping factor of a particular culture happens to be as the influence and impact of Islam has grown stronger and stronger in Britain in recent years, he's starting realize that all religions are not actually the same...and they're not all bad.

Here's a truth about the world that has endured throughout the ages of human history: Ideas have consequences. What we believe matters. It matters a great deal, in fact. What we believe has consequences for how we live our lives. When a set of beliefs get applied at a culture-wide level, those ideas will have consequences for everyone who is impacted by that culture. Good ideas will have positive consequences that will make life generally better for most people. Bad ideas will have negative consequences that will make life generally worse for most people. Or, to put that another way, bad ideas have victims.

There's no doubt that Dawkins has a pretty clear anti-Islam bias in his comments here. This isn't actually the first time he's made comments suggesting that he has started distinguishing between Islam and Christianity in favor of the latter. This is perhaps the first time, though, that he has explicitly applied the label "Christian" to himself. It may only be in a cultural sense (which, from the standpoint of historically orthodox theology is functionally meaningless in terms of putting him in a right relationship with God), but considering comments Dawkins has made in the past, that's not nothing. Dawkins is clear that he doesn't believe a word of Christian theology. What he likes is the culture that has been created by the Christian worldview. More specifically, he likes the culture created by the Christian worldview better than he likes the culture created by an Islamic worldview.

I think there are a couple of ways to react to Dawkins' comments. I've seen both of them in all the conversation that has happened since. The first is largely positive. To have someone who has been as staunch an opponent of Christianity and Christian theology as Dawkins has over the years come out and not only say something positive about it, but to claim to be a cultural Christian himself is a big deal. Perhaps he is starting to move in the direction of faith in genuine ways. Maybe he will yet come to embrace a belief in Jesus as Savior and Lord before his time on earth comes to an end. That certainly seems like something worth praying for in light of what he said.

The second reaction is a bit more cynical. Dawkins' comments here reflect little more than just how far and fast Christianity is failing. If the new atheist movement can successfully get it to be seen as little more than a cultural movement, this will finally kill it off far faster than the more direct attacks they have been using in recent years. Those kind of full-frontal attacks only result in people who claim it as a personal and life-defining faith doubling down on their belief and adopting the mindset of an embattled cultural minority. That won't make them loosen their grip. It will make them tighten up

and work all the harder to spread their views. The much better approach is to do just what Dawkins does here: water it down to the point of total theological irrelevancy.

I think the better perspective is somewhere in the middle. I don't suspect Dawkins is much closer to embracing the Christian faith than he was when he wrote *The God Delusion*. He makes explicit twice in this interview that he doesn't believe a word of Christian theology. He draws a sharp line between believing Christians and cultural Christians. At the same time, having someone who has been the face of the movement that has trashed Christianity in general as unhelpful and even evil in every single instance come around to finally acknowledge that, yes, the cultural impact of Christianity really has been a good one, is pretty significant thing. If we have finally convinced Dawkins that Christianity really isn't a bad thing, there aren't many dominoes we can't topple.

The view that all religion is equally bad is an ignorant one. It treats religions generally as a cohesive block that are all little more than variations on the same theme. There are only two kinds of people who hold to such a view: those who don't really understand any religions very well, and those who are being intentionally deceptive for some reason or another. All religions are not the same. Beliefs matter. Different religions make wildly divergent truth claims. Each truth claim must be evaluated individually. Or, to pick back up our earlier theme, different religions offer different ideas to the world. Some of those ideas aren't good. Some of them very much are. All of them have consequences. What Dawkins recognizes is that those consequences are not equal. And, after spending much of his life and career criticizing Christianity, he's finally apparently recognized that the ideas of Christianity and the consequences those ideas bring (i.e., the culture they help to create) are better than a number of the available alternatives. What he doesn't explicitly say here, but which is implied rather loudly to my ears, is that secularism didn't – and couldn't have – created the culture that Dawkins professes to enjoy so much.

As a final thought here, I think this whole episode is a perfect example of what the apostle Peter was talking about in his first letter. Dawkins has slandered Christians as evildoers for a very long time. Peter said this kind of thing would happen. In fact, he all but guaranteed it. What we are to do in the face of this is not to be rude or to respond in kind. That kind of a response only serves to justify the criticism. Instead, we are to “conduct [ourselves] honorably among the Gentiles.” By “Gentiles” Peter just means people who don't believe in God, which for our purposes would be non-believers. When we do so conduct ourselves, “they will observe [our] good works and will glorify God.” By acknowledging that the culture created by Christianity is such a generally positive thing that he's willing to call himself a “cultural Christian” now, Dawkins is bringing glory to God. He's making it clear that Christians at least in Britain have done a whole lot of good – more good, in fact, than evil. They have conducted themselves honorably, and that conduct is now being recognized.

Perhaps Dawkins really is on a journey to faith, and I hope and pray he completes it before his own time on earth runs out. I hope even more, though, that Jesus' followers can continue to conduct themselves honorably among those who do not believe. The fruit of such efforts won't come immediately. In fact, in the short-term, honorable conduct will often only result in persecution. But it will eventually come, and it will be sweet indeed when it does. This is one example. May there be many, many more in the days ahead of us.

## Comments

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 12, 2024 at 4:46 pmREPLY

nice try but Christianity has been and still is as violent and ignorant as Islam. Christians killed atheists and other non-Christians for centuries. Happily, many western countries ditched Christianity as a moral

guide and now have secular laws to keep you cultists from bothering people. Anything worthwhile in Christianity was around far longer than it has been.

And since Christians can't even agree on what morals their god wants, it seems you are all just making things up. There is no one "cultural christianity" and dawkins has failed with this as he often fails with other things. All you have is one man who has shown he is more comfortable with the things he is familiar with.

PASTORJWAITS April 12, 2024 at 8:04 pmREPLY

Long time, no speak. Glad to hear from you. That's certainly an interesting perspective. I don't agree with pretty much any of it – and I think the data backs me up on that fairly well – but it is interesting and I'm glad you shared it all the same.

A few thoughts in response...

The difference between Christianity and Islam on the matter of violence is that, like Dawkins indicates on other issues, the violence of Islam is largely doctrinal. For Christianity, violence generally happens in contradiction to the teachings of the New Testament. And as far as Western countries ditching Christianity as a moral guide, I don't think the separation is quite as thorough as you would like to think. The moral foundation on which the entirety of Western culture lies is one that was shaped by Christianity and there's really no escaping that. The moral assumptions of modern, more explicitly secular nations in the cultural West are still ultimately grounded in the Christian worldview. The extent to which Christianity has shaped the moral imaginations of the modern world, especially in the West, is pretty hard to escape. Tom Holland, himself an atheist (or at least an agnostic), is pretty helpful on this point.

When you say, "Anything worthwhile in Christianity was around far longer than it has been," what do you mean? I'm not sure I follow what you are trying to say there.

While there are indeed some points of disagreement on what constitutes a biblically-rooted moral vision, there's far broader agreement such that arguing, "you are all just making things up," doesn't really ring true.

By "cultural Christianity," Dawkins is talking about Western culture and in particular as it has been manifested in Britain (and to a similar extent) the United States. But you are most certainly correct that Dawkins is expressing where his cultural comfort zone is by his comments last week.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 15, 2024 at 11:13 am

I know you don't agree with any of it, but you seem to be unable to show I'm wrong. The data doesn't support your claims.

Christianity is based on doctrinal violence, as Islam is. We see how Christianity is based on claiming that non-believers deserve death and worse. Some Christians try to ignore those parts. That doesn't mean you aren't stuck with them. The new testament is as violent as the old with the nonsense of Jesus saying that anyone who dares not accept him as king should be brought before him and murdered. Jesus also says that \*all\* of his/his father's violent ignorant laws are to be followed, no exceptions until the earth and heavens pass away (they are still here). Add that to the nonsense in Revelation, and you have nothing different from the OT genocides.

The separation is quite as thorough as I think. Again, Christianity is based on violence and as we can see in France, England, Germany, etc, Christianity is failing. Western culture was not entirely on Christianity, 1. Because Christians can't agree on what the morals of Christianity are, and 2. we have Greece, the Celts, the Germanic tribes all who have contributed to common law, democracy, etc. You simply make false claims, Jonathan, out of either ignorance or deliberate intent.

Your bible says nothing about democracy at all. What it does say is that all kings are put in place by this god and as such cannot be rejected, Romans 13. This is where the divine right of kings nonsense comes from, something the US questioned and then led other countries to question. You have tried to appeal to Tom Holland before and both you and he make false claims.

It isn't that hard to know what I mean when I say that anything worthwhile in the bible has been around long before the bible. The "golden rule" has been around for thousands of years longer. Ideas of property and personal law were around with the Sumerians. Your ignorant book simply has taken these from those cultures, being typically unoriginal.

And then you do a typically Christian thing and try to lie that there are only "some points" of disagreement, when there are hundreds of points of disagreement when it comes to what Christians claim as "biblically rooted moral vision". There is no "broad agreement" and it's a shame you try to lie about that, Jonathan. Christians \*are\* making up what they want the bible to "really" say and you all fail to show that your supposed objective morality exists at all.

Christians can't agree on what their god considers a sin. Christians can't agree on who is saved and how they are saved. They cannot agree if women are considered to be second-class citizens/property or not. They cannot agree if this god hates LGBT+ people or not. They cannot agree who is a Christian at all, and who are the heretics, apostates, etc. They cannot agree if divorce is a sin, if adultery is a sin, if eating the wrongs things is a sin.

And I know, you'll try to claim those as "minor" things, which is always fun, since if this god spent the time to mention it, it would seem to not be "minor" at all. Can anything commanded by this god be considered "minor"? It would seem not, being all equal by definition coming from this perfect being.

Again, there is no such thing as "cultural Christianity" since, again, there is no one Christian morality. No wonder you poor folks can't do what Jesus repeatedly promises. You are either doing something wrong or your bible is wrong. And there is no one "western culture" despite the false claims of some Christians. Shall we consider Catholicism the only western culture christianity? Lutheranism? Calvinism? Anabaptists?

PASTORJWAITS April 15, 2024 at 11:41 am

I'm curious: given your regular charge that Christians can't agree on a correct understanding of the Scriptures rendering them all wrong, why are you so confident that your entirely negative (and generally woodenly literal) understanding of the Scriptures is so much more likely to be correct than those offered by Christians over the years? What you seem to be insisting on as in our first round of conversation, is that Christians (like me) don't really understand the Scriptures, but that you do and that your interpretation is the obviously correct one. On what grounds do you make such an assumption?

On the matter of Western Culture, that's not just a claim of Christians. That's a claim of historians both Christian and secular dating back a couple of hundred years.

And on the matter of orthodox consensus, we've talked about that before. There is lots of disagreement about a whole lot of points of doctrine among Christians. But there is a core of truth claims that are

pretty broadly endorsed. The rest aren't minor in the sense that they don't matter, but in the sense that they don't determine salvation.

As for the rest, you simply don't make a very compelling case. You haven't yet offered anything that strikes me as particularly convincing for your point. With respect, you don't really understand Christianity on its own terms. You only see it through your worldview lens, which, let's be honest, is pretty biased against Christianity. With that kind of a lens in place, you will be able to find all sorts of things that seem to be insufficiencies and devastating problems to you, but which to someone willing to take it on its own terms and from out of a worldview lens that does not share your bias don't pose even the slightest bit of issue and which suggests that you don't really understand the theological and interpretive questions as well as you think you do. You won't see it that way, of course, but that's where the line between your position and mine runs. But as we saw in our first round, we don't merely disagree on how to understand the relevant facts, we disagree about the facts themselves. That makes it tough to have productive conversations. We can try, though.

And, as before, in spite of the concern you expressed some time ago on your own blog when you linked to our conversation, I won't take it down as long as we can continue to be civil in our engagement. I'm happy for folks to be able to see what a dialogue like ours looks like in order to take away from it what they can. Thanks for the opportunity to do this!

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 15, 2024 at 9:21 pm

I'll be back later to address the rest of your post. However, I do want to ask about "woodenly literal". Does this mean we can ignore the claims of Christians that their messiah literally rose from the dead? Why or why not? That event has no more evidence for it than the rest of the silliness in your bible.

PASTORJWAITS April 16, 2024 at 5:43 am

Not at all. Over the course of our conversations you have repeatedly insisted that certain passages filled with symbolic and figurative imagery can only mean what they literally say. When I have offered up alternative explanations, you reject those because "that's what the words say." Our conversation about Mark 12 comes to mind.

The better approach is to take all of the Scriptures seriously, but only those parts literally that were meant by their authors or speakers to be literally true. Also, there are all kinds of symbolic actions taken in the Scriptures. And context matters a great deal as well – the context of the immediately surrounding verses, of the larger passage, of the chapter, of the whole document, and of the whole collection of documents. You're certainly not guilty of making this kind of a mistake that I have seen, but the kind of thinking about the Bible you are demonstrating is where the flat-earthers got their start. They looked at passages making reference to the four-corners of the earth, took them literally, and concluded that the earth must therefore be flat. That's ridiculous, of course, but when someone doesn't understand what they are reading, all kinds of incorrect conclusions about what it must mean can follow.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 16, 2024 at 10:29 am

As expected, you of course can't consider the resurrection to be less than literal, since your entire religion depends on that baseless story.

As is typical, Christians, including you, cannot agree on what passages mean, and each Christian comes out with a different claim if something must be literal, metaphor, exaggeration, etc, and insist that only their version is the right one, with no evidence to support them at all.

Again, Jonathan, your Jesus promises certain abilities to his true followers quite literally. Neither you or any other self-professed Christian can do these things. That seems valid evidence that you are either doing something wrong, e.g. your interpretation is wrong, or your Bible is simply making false claims.

You have no more knowledge about what parts of the Bible were somehow “meant” as literal by the authors than any other Christian, Jonathan. You’ve yet to offer context to support your claims or that you have that certain actions are only “symbolic”. These books in your Bible were never meant to be read together, the “Bible” is an artificial construct by humans. That’s why Christians have so many problems with their “Bible” constantly contradicting itself and why there are dozens, if not far more, versions of Christianity.

The Bible supports a flat earth (and it’s not just about verses mentioning four corners) so you have yet another problem, Jonathan. You assume with no evidence that the authors of the Bible stories were educated when we have nothing to support that. It is ridiculous to think the earth is flat, just as it is ridiculous to think a human being died and came back to life.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 16, 2024 at 10:09 am

Jonathan, it’s not able you can’t show your version of Christianity to be true at all, considering how you can’t do what Jesus promises to his true followers. So, I’m quite confident your claims are wrong per your own Bible.

As usual, you try to claim that only you know which parts of the Bible are to be considered literal, metaphor, exaggeration, etc and yet you can’t show this to be the case. You try to appeal to tradition, a logical fallacy, to pretend that people who made up nonsense in the past should be accepted without consideration.

I don’t say you don’t really understand the scriptures, I’m saying you can’t show that your claims about them are any better than the Christians that you disagree with. I’m also noting that you have yet to show I’m wrong. Let me ask you a question, what makes you think only your version is right? On what grounds do you make such an assumption? I make the assumption since you can’t show me wrong.

Actually it is just the claims of Christians. Show secular historians who say that Christianity is the sole basis of western civilization.

Yep, we have talked about “orthodox consensus” aka Christians agreeing on their claims, and you still fail to show that this exists. At best, there may be one core doctrine that is agreed upon, that Jesus resurrected. Other than that, you have nothing. No agreement on who is saved, how one is saved, what morals this God wants, what heaven and hell are, how to interpret the Bible, etc. That you can’t agree on what determines salvation seems quite important, yes? And if you don’t get any of the above right, your salvation isn’t guaranteed since at least some of you are doing something completely wrong. How doesn’t interpreting what God wants as morals not determine salvation? IF you can’t interpret the Bible correctly, you then have no idea what it takes to be saved, etc.

It is your baseless opinion that I do not offer a “very compelling case”. Your denial of points is nothing new and that you can’t counter those points seems to indicate you aren’t even trying, dear.

There is no respect when you simply lie and claim I somehow “don’t” really understand christianity on its own terms” aka I dare not agree with your version. Reality is biased against Christianity, including your version of it, and every other Christian’s version of it.

Again, I have found insufficiencies and devastating problems in it and you have yet to show how those issues aren’t real. All your nonsense about “taking it on its own terms” mean is “don’t question it when it makes no sense”.

Again, Jonathan, you’ve yet to show I somehow don’t “real” understand the theological and interpretive questions. Christians obviously don’t either since you all come up with different claims about them.

It’s nothing new to see a Christian try to create an escape plan for when their claims fail, to falsely claim that disagreement that they can’t handle is somehow not “civil”.

PASTORJWAITS April 16, 2024 at 10:16 am

I fear I’ve been unclear on a point. I have not intended to claim, nor do I think that Christianity is the sole basis of Western civilization. It was the primary shaping influence, yes, but not the sole one.

I’m curious: Do you think the Bible can be correctly interpreted?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 16, 2024 at 10:31 am

There is again nothing to show that Christianity is the “primary shaping influence” either since there is no one version of Christianity.

The bible can be interpreted to a point with what evidence we have from archaeology, etc. Claims of magic interpretation, essential to christian claims of the “holy spirit” telling them that only their version is the right one, cannot be shown as a valid method of interpretation.

PASTORJWAITS April 16, 2024 at 10:42 am

That Christianity as a religion, even in spite of its seemingly endless variety, lies at the heart of Western civilization is a point that has been made so many times I would have thought it to be beyond dispute. If you reject that historical fact, I’m really not sure what else to tell you on the matter. We’ll have to just agree to disagree there.

Although I’m not entirely sure what you mean by “magic interpretation,” I do agree with you that somebody’s declaring, “the Holy Spirit told me,” should not be the basis of putting much stock in their particular spin on the Scriptures.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 16, 2024 at 4:25 pm

Yep, you have read a lot of false claims by christians about it being the basis of western civilization. That doesn’t make your nonsense true.

It is not a historical fact, so you fail again, Jonathan. Christians love to claim responsibility for what they didn’t do. We see that in the sciences and in culture.

So, since all christians use the claim “The holy spirit told me” even you, there is no reason to accept that assertion as true. And since christians have no evidence their particular version is the right one, you



seem to have quite a problem. "magic interpretation" is when Christians try to invoke the supernatural as the source of their interpretation.

I've offered Christians the chance to do an altar challenge à la Ezekiel to see who the real ones are but they are all strangely adverse to that. The Bible offers another method, since Jesus promises various things to his true followers, e.g. getting prayers answered, doing miracles like him, healing people, but unfortunately, not a single Christian seems to be able to do those things.

PASTORJWAITS April 16, 2024 at 4:46 pm

You're just mistaken in that first part. I'm not sure how to convince you otherwise, so we'll have to leave that one.

For what exactly do you think Christians incorrectly claim responsibility? I'd be curious to know your list. Have I ever used the phrase "the Holy Spirit told me" in any of our conversations? I can't remember a time if I did. I don't know that I've even invoked the supernatural as the source of a particular interpretation we have discussed.

The Old Testament doesn't apply to followers of Jesus. He fulfilled and replaced it with the new covenant. Offering up an old covenant ritual to prove the validity of a new covenant concept doesn't make sense and reflects that lack of understanding we were talking about earlier. Jesus offered exactly one way to tell who's following Him and who's not. We are to love one another after the pattern of His love for us. People who do that, even if they disagree about another of other points, are following Him. People who don't aren't.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 17, 2024 at 11:43 am

Yep, no surprise, since you can't show I'm wrong. You have no idea how to support your false claims.

Here are a few: Christians claim their god has "given" medical knowledge to humans. Christians claim responsibility for being against slavery. Christians claim responsible for "western civilization" and they are all false.

Every Christian believes that the Holy Spirit is the medium between their god and them, correct? How else do you know how to interpret your Bible since it is largely incoherent, and Christians can't agree on what it literally means.

Is this wrong in your Bible?

"For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." John 14

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you." John 16

"And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual." 1 Corinthians 2

The OT does indeed apply to followers of Jesus Christ and Christ is shown saying so himself in Matthew 5. So you fail rather dramatically, Jonathan.

“17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish (put to an end) the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish (put to an end) them but to fulfill them (put them into action). 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5

It's notable that the word “new” used in Luke only can also mean simply “as in respecting the substance” rather than an entirely different novel thing. So it seems that Jesus is not mentioning a new covenant as most Christians want to pretend. That fits much better with what Jesus says in Matthew 5.

And Jesus did not offer only one way. You are either ignorant or intentionally trying to lie about what your Bible contains, Jonathan. You also have the problem that Christians do not agree on what loving one another means, since you all have entirely different sets of morals you follow. You again are simply doing what all Christians do, try to claim that only your version is the right one and you have no evidence of this. You Christians can't agree on what this “pattern of His love for is” even is.

“22 Jesus answered them, ‘Have[b] faith in God. 23 Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, “Be taken up and thrown into the sea”, and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. 24 So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received[c] it, and it will be yours.” – Mark 11

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news[d] to the whole creation. 16 The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes in their hands,[e] and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” Mark 16

“7 ‘Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? 10 Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” Matthew 7

“1 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. 12 Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If in my name you ask me[e] for anything, I will do it.” John 14

“ 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. “ John 15

“13 Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. 14 Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them,

anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18 Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.” James 5

No wonder you can't do the above.

PASTORJWAITS April 17, 2024 at 12:08 pm

Did you have a time in the past when you prayed and felt like God didn't answer? This seems to be a really big issue for you that you keep coming back to it over and over again. I'm sorry for that experience, whatever it was. It seems to have been a pretty significant one for you.

On the role of Christianity as a religion in shaping Western culture, it's not so much that I don't have any basis for supporting the claim that Christianity as a religion played a significant (arguably the most significant) role in shaping western civilization as it is that there is so much evidence of it that I don't really know where to begin. Denying an historically reality so thoroughly demonstrated and sourced as this one is a little like denying the earth is round. If someone has convinced themselves of that, it's hard to have a productive conversation. I'm not necessarily a big Wikipedia fan, but if you look up "The History of Western Civilization" the sentence they have for the page summary before you click on it is this: "Western Christianity has played a prominent role in the shaping of Western civilization, which throughout most of its history, has been nearly equivalent to Christian culture." That's not to say it's the only shaping influence. Greek and Roman (which can collectively be referred to as "classical thought") culture played a significant role as well. Contact with the Islamic world played a contributing role too. But the predominant shaping role was the Christian religion. That's not a specifically Christian claim to make. It's just an historical one. Do a bit of research on the matter and the case becomes pretty irrefutable.

As for the parade of Scripture, yes, I'm aware of all of those. We've talked about some of them before. I'll leave it to you to go back and find those parts of our conversation and read what I wrote then again. I'm not sure that making the same arguments again will be worth either of our time.

On the Old Testament application to followers of Jesus, Jesus' point in the passage from the Sermon on the Mount you cite there was not that the Law applied to His followers, but to lay out for the people just how high God's standards are for those who would follow Him. His point was to help His audience see that being in a relationship with God is impossible apart from Jesus' help. Go check out the author of Hebrews' argument on the matter in more detail. He (or perhaps she; we don't know) argues that the Law is obsolete and passing away. Why? Because as a covenant it was fulfilled and replaced by the new covenant in Christ. This was something God had told the people He was planning to do way back in the prophet Jeremiah's time. The apostle Paul talks more about the separation of the new covenant from the old and the lack of authority of the old over new covenant believers in his letter to the Galatia believers. This certainly isn't Bible 101 stuff, so many folks don't understand this idea very well, but it's there all the same in the text for anyone who cares to understand it.

As for the Holy Spirit's role in understanding the Scriptures, yes, I do think He plays a profound role in that process. My point was simply that when someone frames out a claim like that (i.e., "The Holy Spirit told me this and thus we must do it"), there's a good chance whatever it was didn't come from the Holy Spirit at all. Unfortunately, that's an easy thing to claim and too often an unhelpfully convincing one. It

has been used to provide cover for spiritual abuse way too often. People who really have been helped by the Holy Spirit to understand a passage of Scripture are typically a good bit more humble in their presentation.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 18, 2024 at 10:34 am

Yep, since all Christians have, despite the promises per the bible. I just didn't make excuses why this god fails miserably in its promise like Christians do. I realized it was nonsense as Islam is, as Hinduism is, as Zeuism is, etc. And this is simply a minor reason I'm an atheist. The lack of evidence is far more concerning. You don't need to be sorry for your god failing, you just have to admit that your bible is full of false promises. Again, curious how you can't do what your god promises, Jonathan. Why not?

You again fail at showing that christainity shaped wester culture since there is no one "Christianity", and thus you have nothing to base your claims on. It is exactly that you don't have any basis for your claims. It's hilarious that your excuse now is that there is ever so much that you just don't know where to begin. Really, Jonathan? That's the best you have? Would you accept that excuse from me? From a muslim? Then you continue to make more baseless claims.

You have no "historical reality" and repeating a baseless claims doesn't make it come true. Again, we have plenty of evidence that the earth is round, you have evidently nothing to support your claims. All you have are whining about me daring not to blindly agree with someone who has no evidence for his claims, despite the repeated claims of having ever so much. Yep, it's typical for someone who doesn't like Wikipedia to run to it when it supports him. That's called hypocrisy.

Now you try to walk back your claims, like this one "The moral foundation on which the entirety of Western culture lies is one that was shaped by Christianity and there's really no escaping that." And this one "That Christianity as a religion, even in spite of its seemingly endless variety, lies at the heart of Western civilization is a point that has been made so many times I would have thought it to be beyond dispute."

As always, the Christian tries to lie and when they are caught, they suddenly realize that they were wrong and "really didn't" mean what they claimed. If I hadn't pushed back, you'd have kept on lying. And as usual, you never answered my question: "Shall we consider Catholicism the only western culture christianity? Lutheranism? Calvinism? Anabaptists?"

Again, still no evidence for your claims. I've already done research on the matter and again, you are wrong as I have repeatedly indicated. You have no "irrefutable" case, since I have indeed refuted it.

Seems like you aren't happy with me showing how you are wrong about your scripture. I've read what you've written and it still fails, Jonathan. All of those verses show that Christians do indeed use the holy spirit to interpret the bible. You have done little more than the "but but I didn't say it word for word" with this "Have I ever used the phrase "the Holy Spirit told me" in any of our conversations? I can't remember a time if I did. I don't know that I've even invoked the supernatural as the source of a particular interpretation we have discussed." When it comes to using the supernatural to interpret the bible. Per your bible, that's entirely where interpretation comes from, belying your claim.

That's quite an attempt to interpret the sermon on the mount so you don't have to follow all of this god's laws, Jonathan, and nothing supports your claims that it is only an example. Jesus says one must follow, not that they might want to. You again try to completely ignore what your bible literally says. You have no idea what jesus' point was, you are simply making baseless assumptions so you don't have to deal with those ridiculous laws. The laws, per jesus are as important as his help. The author of Hebrews?

You mean that anonymous nonsense invented so the Jewish laws can be ignored, and the Jews should be hated? Yeah, that's not helping your case much. Curious how Jesus never said that the law was obsolete or passing away, not until the earth and heavens end. Now, why do you follow someone that you can't even identify, rather than Jesus?

Jesus says "new covenant" once, and again, never rescinds the laws of the OT. Yep, there is mention of a change in covenants in the OT, and not once does Jesus say it meant leaving those laws behind. At best, you may make the case that the interpretation of the laws is changed, but not the laws themselves. The reason people don't understand it is you simply have made it up. It is not in the text at all. And again, you have to claim only your understanding is correct "anyone who cares to understand it", with no evidence at all.

Then we're back to the Holy Spirit, where you claim you don't use it and now you claim you do. Which is it, Jonathan? This "Have I ever used the phrase "the Holy Spirit told me" in any of our conversations? I can't remember a time if I did. I don't know that I've even invoked the supernatural as the source of a particular interpretation we have discussed." "

or

"As for the Holy Spirit's role in understanding the Scriptures, yes, I do think He plays a profound role in that process. My point was simply that when someone frames out a claim like that (i.e., "The Holy Spirit told me this and thus we must do it"), there's a good chance whatever it was didn't come from the Holy Spirit at all. Unfortunately, that's an easy thing to claim and too often an unhelpfully convincing one."

So, Jonathan, do tell how you know if it's "really" the ol' HS or not? You claim it, other Christians claim it, and not one of you can show that your claims are true. It's nothing new that you claim everyone but you isn't right, and have to insist that they have to be "humble" to you for you to perhaps accept their claims. How can one be humble, or not, in simply saying "The Holy Spirit told me so"?

PASTORJWAITS April 18, 2024 at 11:24 am

Interesting. That must have been a really hard experience for you. What did you pray for that you felt like God didn't answer? Why did you pray for that thing? What kind of answer were you looking for?

On the rest, we'll have to once again agree to disagree. I am curious, though, do you have a source on your repeated claim that the Christian religion did not play any role in the shaping of Western culture? Also, given that you reject any kind of a shaping role that the Christian religion played, to what do you attribute that primary role? Also, given just how thoroughly Christianized Europe was during a great deal of the historical period that is generally understood to comprise Western civilization, how did it manage to not play any kind of a shaping role? If you don't like Wikipedia, simply type "what were the primary shaping influences of Western civilization" into your search engine and read through some of the results. It's not just the pretty thoroughly sourced Wikipedia article that makes the claim. That was just the first and clearest statement the sat at the top of the list of results. There are plenty of others making the same claim. If you are committed to rejecting this conclusion held by Christian and secular scholars alike, I'll stop trying to convince you otherwise. Whatever you would like to conclude about me and my position from there will simply be what it is.

On your last paragraph, are you really interested in a serious conversation about how believers over the centuries have discerned whether something is really from the Holy Spirit or not?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 18, 2024 at 4:58 pm

I prayed not to lose my faith. Curious how your god never showed up, Jonathan, despite the promises in the bible. Now, do make excuses for why it failed \*that\*.

I'll be back to finish my reply.

PASTORJWAITS April 18, 2024 at 5:02 pm

What was going on then that you felt like you were losing your faith? What brought you to that point?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 19, 2024 at 11:13 am

Nothing special. It's great that you try to fish for things that aren't there to validate your presuppositions, Jonathan.

No evidence, no reason to believe in this nonsense, but I gave this god a chance.

PASTORJWAITS April 19, 2024 at 11:21 am

I'm not trying to fish for anything. I'm just trying to better understand your story. What did giving God a chance look like for you? So, your faith was just dwindling and you felt like asking for help? What made you think your faith was going away? Going away as compared with what? What made you think it was fading? Why was that something that mattered to you enough to prompt you to ask for help? Did you talk to anybody about it other than God?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 19, 2024 at 11:32 am

Wow, Jonathan. The fishing goes on. You are desperate to find a reason you can find acceptable on why I ceased being a christian. I suspect you are looking for the usual emotional reason, that christians try to pretend all atheists have.

Giving god a chance was praying to it since jesus promises that a christian will have all prayers answered. That failed rather pitifully.

When I doubted the bible's claims, that's when I knew my faith was going away, and when there was no answer given to my questions by either other christians or this god.

I was being fair asking for help rather than just leaving. Your god failed, Jonathan.

And why would I need to talk to someone else about this when christianity promises this god will answer? Your question is typical of any cult, "talk to a believer, they'll convince you to stay in the cult". If god can't answer me, then no one can.

PASTORJWAITS April 19, 2024 at 11:48 am

I'm still not fishing. Nor am I feeling particularly desperate. Just trying to understand.

What made you start to doubt the Bible's claims? What Christians did you talk with about these doubts? Friends? Family members? A pastor?

If God had answered your prayer to strengthen your faith (I assume that's what you prayed), what would that have looked like to you? What were you expecting then as far as answers went?

While we're thinking about this, what do you make of Paul's testimony that he prayed for God to take away some "thorn in the flesh," whatever that was, and God basically told him no.

And talking to another person is always a good thing to do in those times because God does most of His work through the ministry of people. As I'll note in the sermon I'll preach this Sunday, the apostle Paul tells us that while God Himself has given us the ministry of reconciliation, He has given us the message of reconciliation. He does the work. He gives us the job of telling other people about it. Talking with people about our doubts and struggles is always a good thing to do. I'm sorry you missed out on this opportunity when you were in that season of questioning.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 22, 2024 at 11:20 am

And more fishing. I found that the bible's claims were false since the promises in the bible do not come true. Curious how Jesus claims that any true Christian will get any prayer answered, answered quickly and with what is asked for. There is no "wait, no, here's something else" that Christians have invented to excuse their bible.

I talked to friends, family members and the pastor. That was quite amusing, looking back on it, since he had nothing, other than the claim of God's mysterious ways. Just like any apologist. Again, you are fishing since you keep desperately looking for an excuse to reject my reasons for finding your religion to be nonsense.

God would have appeared to me and spoke to me. Just like in the bible. And do explain why I shouldn't have expected this.

Paul was a rather amusingly delusional fellow. Curious how this God failed Paul, and me, and Paul simply had to make up an excuse why his God failed \*and\* contradict Jesus by doing so. I realized this God simply didn't exist.

Curious how this God, rather than doing what the bible promises, has to work through people, just as if it doesn't exist. The bible has that this God will do anything to save the lost sheep, and this is what I needed. It failed.

Now, Jonathan, will you be honest enough to tell your audience how Paul ignores what Jesus promises? I suspect not, since like Paul, you have to make up excuses for your God's failure to cling to your religion, and your paycheck.

PASTORJWAITS April 22, 2024 at 11:46 am

I'm still not feeling any particular desperation to reject your reasons for rejecting Christianity. I'm just trying to understand more fully why you did. Why was maintaining your faith in that season something of sufficient significance to you that you felt the need to pray for it? What led you to question it in the first place? What questions did you ask your pastor?

What draws you toward the conclusion that Paul was delusional? I find it interesting that you believe God failed Paul, but Paul doesn't actually seem to believe that. On what grounds do you reject Paul's testimony about his personal experience in favor of your interpretation of it?

I didn't say God has to work through people. I said that He generally chooses to do so. It's a slight difference, but not an insignificant one.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 22, 2024 at 1:53 pm

And yet you have been doing so every single time.

Oy, more fishing and no answers to my questions. How typical.

"Why was maintaining your faith in that season something of sufficient significance to you that you felt the need to pray for it?"

Because I was taught that being a christian was the right thing to be. Really, Jonathan, you can't grasp that?

I already told you that I doubted since the bible wasn't matching up with reality. Asking the same questions isn't getting you an answer you prefer.

Paul doesn't agree with Jesus. Hmm, dear, who has the truth in your religion? A delusional person won't agree with reality. Like you, Paul feels he must believe, and not question, so he makes up excuses.

You said that this god: "And talking to another person is always a good thing to do in those times because God does most of His work through the ministry of people."

and curious how this god never shows up, so it seems that either, it does do everything through humans, or humans do everything, and your god is imaginary.

PASTORJWAITS April 22, 2024 at 2:26 pm

What do you do with the millions of stories from Christians who think God did show up? Why should your experience be the norm and not theirs?

What about the Bible wasn't matching up to reality as far as you understood at the time? What specifically triggered that thought?

It sounds like you grew up in a faith environment in which many of the people around you weren't equipped to answer tough questions about the faith when you had them. I'm sorry for that. You're not alone and having had an experience like that, nor in deciding the whole thing is junk because of it. At least you're in good company.

If, as it seems, you've already decided the whole thing is nonsense, I'm curious what exactly it is you want from me. You keep insisting that I can't prove things that I don't actually have to prove to you at all. Given that the assertions and challenges you make aren't posing any kind of a meaningful threat to my faith at all, I'm curious: are you looking for reasons to believe that I can provide, or are you simply seeking justification for remaining in your place of unbelief?

We played the game once where I explained what a passage meant that you didn't understand properly, and you basically said that I'm an idiot and that your interpretation is obviously the correct one. I'll confess that I'm not terribly inclined to play that particular game again. That's not because you hurt my feelings at all (you didn't), but because it's just not worth my time to try that again.



So then, what's the goal here? Just to debate? Or are we going somewhere? I'm happy to do either, I just want to know where we're headed.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 23, 2024 at 2:01 pm

It's great how you still have no evidence for objective morality or your god.

What do I think about the millions of stories from Christians? The same as you think about the millions of stories from Muslims, Hindus, etc who claim their gods show up, are the sources of miracles, etc. That they are wrong.

Again, millions of gullible humans who can't do what Jesus promises aren't much of a support for your religion which can't agree on the most basic things. That those millions don't agree with your version show that yet again, there is no one Christianity and no objective morality. You all claim each other are wrong, Jonathan, again, calling each other heretics, apostates, Satanists, etc. Are Catholics Christians, Jonathan? Many other self-professed Christians claim no, so your supposed world majority religion isn't.

ROFL. Still desperately fishing. Nothing in the Bible matches up with reality, Jonathan. The promises in it never come true. There is no evidence for the nonsense of magic creation (either version), the flood, Babel, Exodus fabulous palaces and temples, a guy wandering around being followed by a Roman legion's worth of men and not being noticed in Roman-occupied Judea, or a certain day where there was a major earthquake, the sky darkening and dead Jews wandering around. Even the other Gospel writers didn't notice that last one. No miracles happen.

Then you have to claim that those Christians around me weren't the right ones, which is just hilarious when even you can't answer questions and I've seen so repeatedly here. It's lovely how Christians attack each other, so arrogant in their nonsense of being the only right ones. The whole thing \*is\* junk and you are no different from those Christians I grew up with.

I'm here to show how your claims are false, Jonathan. It would be nice if you could answer my questions, but you can't. I'm here to show how that holds for every Christian and how this religion doesn't deserve the time of day. I may not prove a threat to your faith. But reality is.

We played a game once where you claimed only your interpretation of the Bible is correct and you have yet to show that is the case. I'm sure you aren't inclined to admit that your interpretations are not the only "properly" understood ones.

I'm here to debate and to see if Christianity has anything true about it. So far it does not.

PASTORJWAITS April 23, 2024 at 2:17 pm

You haven't yet managed to show me anything, though, except for a really strong anti-Christian bias that's rooted far more in an emotional experience from your past about which you still seem to hold a lot of hurt than good reason and argument. It's forcing you to take up positions that don't make good historical or philosophical sense. You have a standard of what will count as proving the whole thing true that stems from a common but devastating misunderstanding of the Scriptures. This position keeps you safely insulated from ever having to admit that you could be wrong in your thinking. It's a safe position, to be sure, but not one that will ever make much in the way of debate worthwhile for you except to just rant about how much you don't like it. I'm sorry our conversation couldn't be more productive.

If you don't want to give Christianity the time of day, then why do you keep on engaging with a Christian pastor? Honestly, if your goal is to show people that Christianity doesn't deserve the time of day, you've picked the wrong blog to engage in a comment debate about it. The joke's on you there, I'm afraid. Only a handful of people ever actually read any of this. I checked: a whole 37 people have read this post. You account for several of those 37 views. I know most of the others and they are committed in their agreement with my position. I write because I enjoy the writing. You need to perhaps aim higher than this if that's your goal. I'll wish you well as you seek out.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 23, 2024 at 2:38 pm

Still no evidence of objective morality or for your god.

Yep, I am anti christain since your religion causes harm. You then try to lie yet again and falsely claim that my argument is simply emotional, when you have yet to show that my argument isn't reasonable.

It forces me to do nothing, dear, and you have no evidence for your rather silly claims that my positions somehow don't' make good "historical or philosophical sense." You simply make up that baseless accusation.

You have yet to show that your interpretation of the scriptures are the only right ones. And again, you can't do what jesus promises to his true followers. You have quite a problem.

I'm sure you are sorry your baseless claims didn't work. It's also great that you also choose to lie and claim I "rant", something else that you cannot support.

Again, You seem unable to grasp that I'm the kid who points out that the emperor has no clothes. Few readers don't mean it isn't worth to show your claims are wrong and how Christianity fails. Curious how no one has come to your defense.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 19, 2024 at 9:20 am

No, I don't agree to disagree. That implies that your position is equal to mine and it is not. Christianity is not one thing. It did not affect Europe to the point you claim, and Christianity is not the sole source of morality, etc. You fail on all counts. And appealing to authority doesn't much matter if you don't have the facts.

I am indeed "really interested" in how Christians have discerned whether something is really from the HS or not. That should be quite interesting to see what you offer.

PASTORJWAITS April 19, 2024 at 9:28 am

No, I don't get the sense that you are. All the evidence currently points me toward the conclusion that you've already made up your mind on the matter such that my taking time to do that won't be very worth either of our time. I'll save that conversation for another time.

Have I ever claimed Christianity is the sole source of morality? I'm afraid I don't recall having done so in any of our conversations. And for the sake of my understanding the position you are taking more clearly, what exactly do you mean by that? Whose morality are you talking about? What do you look to as a source of morality?

Christianity is not one thing, no, but Christianity in its various forms were collectively the primary shaping influence on European history over the last 800 years or so. Arguably much more than that. That's just a fact of history. You can keep holding to the contrary position there, but you just don't have the support of...well...history. I'm curious why insisting Western civilization is somehow devoid of any influence from the Christian religion is such a sticking point for you. If Christianity did not play the role that I claim, what do you submit as an alternative explanation of the available historical data?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 19, 2024 at 11:26 am

And you fail on that baseless assumption too. You still have no evidence for your claims. It's nothing new to see a Christian retreat and try to blame me for their lack of evidence.

ROFL. Yes, dear, you have. It's just great when Christians try to play the "I didn't say it literally so I didn't say it". Let me ask you directly: Is Christianity the sole source of morality? Yes or no?

and here you go: ""The moral foundation on which the entirety of Western culture lies is one that was shaped by Christianity and there's really no escaping that." "

and in other posts of yours:

"If we want to enjoy the freedom that comes along with playing by the rules of reality—the freedom of living in the world as God designed it—we have to commit ourselves to the truth. And the most important truth of all is that Jesus is Lord. Everything else flows from there. Knowing the truth of Christ is the only way we can experience freedom. That idea alone provides the foundation strong enough for us to build the structures of our lives that will allow us to live in them and enjoy the process. Knowing the truth of Christ is the only way we can experience freedom. "

It's not hard to grasp, Jonathan. You claim that your god is the source of objective reality. Each Christian claims that their god supports their moral choices, and curious how not one of you can show this to be true.

Since there are no gods, I look to humans as a source of morality, and so do you. Sometimes we get it wrong, sometimes we get it right. As I've pointed out, Christian morality is as subjective as any other human morality.

Christianity has splintered into many contradictory forms over the last couple of millennia. They do not agree on their god since they cannot agree on what this god wants. That many contradictory claims have influenced European history is quite true. That isn't your Christianity, is it? I have complete support from history. Show the data you claim that shows I'm wrong. And I do mean data, not the baseless opinions of your sources.

PASTORJWAITS April 19, 2024 at 11:38 am

Help me out there. How do I look to humans as the source of morality?

So...a whole bunch of different groups all claiming a Christian identity but who disagreed about what exactly that means influenced European history, but Christianity itself didn't? So, then Christians (per their respective self-designations even if they disagreed on what exactly that meant) influenced European history? The people but not the institution? Sure, if you want to frame it like that, I'm okay with that. The Christian religion as practiced by different people in different ways many of which disagreed with one another were the primary shaping influences on European history. I feel like you're

trying really hard to not say the same thing I'm saying even though you're saying the same thing I'm saying.

I made the argument to you that Christianity shaped the moral foundation of Western culture, and stand by that. I also stand by what I wrote in that longer passage you quote. God is the foundation point of reality. Christianity as a religion isn't the foundation of morality, God is. Perhaps that seems like a hair-splitting difference in your view, but I'll stand by the distinction all the same.

So then, you would argue that all morality is subjective?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 22, 2024 at 11:13 am

You already look to humans as the source of morality. You and every other theist, makes up their morality in their image, and then claims some imaginary thing agrees with them to try to make their opinions seem important. You have no god to appeal to.

All we have are the morals humans have invented, evidently based on self-interest and empathy. Some have become common since they help civilization exist and thus are passed along. We've found those by trial and error.

Yep, a whole bunch of people who contradict each other did indeed influence European history. There is no one Christianity, so, no, dear, it didn't influence anything. And since you can't agree, and can't show your imaginary friend exists, claiming christainity influences things is false. Humans with various opinions influenced things.

There is again no one Christian religion, since you contradict each other directly, not just "practice differently". Since those ideas contradicted, we do not see any massive influence since those cancelled each other out. Happily, I am not saying the same thing you are.

You have tried to falsely claim that christianity (which doesn't exist) shaped the moral foundations of western culture, and as I have demonstrated, that is nonsense. There is no god that Christians agree on and thus your claims about your god being a "foundation point of reality" is complete BS.

Yes, as far as I know, all morality is subjective. We have no evidence otherwise. Do show how you would determine if a moral was objective.

PASTORJWAITS April 22, 2024 at 11:38 am

Well, it sounds like further debate on this particular topic probably isn't worth either of our time.

Your last point, though, is of interest to me. If all morality is subjective, can we rightly say that any behavior is morally wrong? For instance, you've made some pretty strong charges about Christians and Christianity in general over the course of our conversations that suggest you think religious belief is bad or wrong or immoral. If all morality is subjective, though, is there really such a thing as immorality at all? What exactly is it that makes religion in generally and Christianity in particular bad if all morality is subjective. Bad according to whom? Does morality become just a numbers game if it is all subjective? I'm curious for your thoughts on this.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 22, 2024 at 1:48 pm

I have no problem continuing. I'm waiting for your rebuttals.

Yep, anyone can say something is wrong, since, yet again, christians can't show that morality is objective. I'm still waiting for you to show how that would be determined.

It seems you can't.

Yep, I've made quite a few strong charges and backed them up. And again, my morality is subjective, just as yours is.

Morality is a human invention, and I've explained this already. Some morals have become common and we have found they work. Not perfectly but as well as they can.

Yep, morality can be just a numbers game or simply based on what works. No god needed.

again, Jonathan, show how morality is objective. You need to provide evidence, not stories.

PASTORJWAITS April 22, 2024 at 1:58 pm

We can come back to objective morality in a bit. Let's pursue your intriguing insistence that morality is totally subjective a bit further.

The thing is, if your charges against Christianity are just your opinion (which you have acknowledged they are), you can't back them up at all. You can only say what you don't like. That's pretty meaningless in terms of an argument against Christianity.

Was it right or wrong that the rest of the world imposed their morality on Hitler and the Nazis in WWII in order to stop their extermination of the Jews and other people they deemed undesirable in that region?

If might is the only thing that makes right, justice is an illusion. Are you comfortable living in such a world where justice is functionally impossible, and moral improvement is a totally meaningless concept?

Was Martin Luther King, Jr. right or wrong to call for the end of the Jim Crow era and to advocate for equality for black people in the U.S.?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 23, 2024 at 1:47 pm

As usual, you still have no evidence for objective morality or your god, Jonathan.

Yep, my opinions about christainity are that, opinions. My points about how harmful christainity aren't opinions since facts support them. The ignorance, lies and fear that Christianity supports is demonstrably harmful.

And it isn't meaningless at all, but nice try to falsely claim so. Just because something is subjective doesn't mean it has no meaning.

It was right that the rest of the world imposed their morality on Hitler, since again, it is demonstrable that hitler's morality caused real harm. Curious how your "new testament" agrees with hitler and his hatred of the jews. The book of Hebrews is quite a rant. Shall we take that as objective Christian morality?

Justice isn't an illusion, but it is imperfect. It isn't functionally impossible, but nice lies there. Christians love to baselessly claim that there is no justice without their imaginary friend and thir imaginary afterlife. Unsurprisingly, there is no justice \*with\* your god since this vicious failure kills people for things they didn't do and had no control over.

Morals can improve and do. We have evidence of that. It's great how your ignorant cult has had to change to meet the culture and not the other way around.

Yep, Martin Luther King, Jr. was right to call for the end of racism and bigotry. Both of those things cause real harm. Curious how other Christians claimed that there is no problem with racism or bigotry, again showing how Christian morality is entirely subjective, and not one of you can show your god supports your version.

PASTORJWAITS April 23, 2024 at 1:58 pm

How do you know that morals have improved if the whole thing is totally subjective? What is the measuring stick you are using to quantify improvement? What if at some point in the future a majority of people in a nation decide that racism is a right and proper attitude to have toward people who aren't like them? Would that make racism right? On what basis do you argue that racism is wrong in every instance?

As for Hitler, he understood himself to be accomplishing a great good for the world. How do you know that he was indeed causing harm? If he was (as he believed) eliminating the weak from the breeding population of humanity, wouldn't such a thing be a net good for the world? If he was really saving the world from weak genes, wouldn't that have made the rest of the world the bad guys? Should a person be allowed to live and reproduce with a genetic disease that could be passed on to future generations? Or perhaps to put that another way, why is eugenics bad? How do you know?

Speaking of that, in the nation of Iceland, they report zero cases of Down's Syndrome among recent births. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? The reason they are able to report zero cases of Down's Syndrome is because every single child diagnosed with Down's Syndrome in utero is aborted. Is this a good thing or a bad thing? Should those children be put to death simply because they might (it's not a 100% certainty test) contain a genetic malformation? Is this right or wrong and how do you know?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 23, 2024 at 2:32 pm

And still no evidence for objective morality or your god, Jonathan. It seems you are hoping I'll forget about that little problem of yours.

I can know that morals have improved since more people aren't enslaved, aren't considered less because of the color of their skin, etc. Less harm is being done.

Yep, it is possible, though unlikely, that people may indeed decide that racism is a right and proper attitude again, but they'd have to show how that is better than not having that. You assume that this can be done. I see no evidence to support your claim. Morality is subjective, that doesn't mean it can't be judged.

Yep, Hitler did believe that and Christians and other cults have much the same delusions. It's great that you have to question if genocide is causing harm. Again, morals seem to be based on empathy and self-interest. That's how I know. Hitler was demonstrably wrong in his ignorance about eugenics and evolutionary theory. No such thing as "weak genes".

I do find that intentionally passing along harmful genes is wrong and directly harmful, but again, I'm not the one making the decision about my body. Happily, humans are clever and are working on ways for that not to be an issue. Again, my morals are subjective, and I find it wrong. Still no objective morality or god.

If the parents choose to not have a child with a genetic disease that is their choice, and their morality. I find it immoral to intentionally have a child that will suffer based on the belief of some ignorant god. The happy, well behaved down's syndrome child is a myth, and the syndrome presents in various degrees of disability. There are no children being aborted, only potential humans e.g. fetuses, fertilized eggs, zygotes. They are not the same.

And unsurprisingly, Christians are typically ignorant about what Iceland's policy actually is.

"Icelandic pre-natal healthcare services for mothers

All women in Iceland are offered pre-natal care, including regular health check-ups during pregnancy and post-natal assistance from healthcare professionals. During pregnancy a number of screenings are offered for clinical problems, to check for anything which could affect the mother's or child's health during pregnancy.

Screening for chromosomal disorders, such as Down's syndrome, is entirely the decision of the prospective mother, who has an unequivocal right to accept or decline screening. In clinical guidelines, emphasis is placed on having healthcare personnel provide the prospective mother/parents with objective information concerning the advantages and disadvantages of screening on which they can base their independent decision.

Clinical guidelines for healthcare personnel on pre-natal care emphasise the importance of enabling every woman to take an informed decision on the service which she receives during pregnancy and it is the responsibility of healthcare personnel to explain clearly and objectively what options a woman has. The woman's decision is always to be respected. Guidelines are based on the understanding that pregnancy is a normal biological process.

Some 15-20% of women do not want fetal screening

On average, 15-20% of women choose not to have screening of the fetus during pregnancy, while 80-85% undergo such screening. Screening only reveals whether there is an increased probability of the fetus having Down's syndrome, and further tests are needed to confirm this. Some 15-20% of women who are informed of the increased probability of Down's syndrome following screening elect to continue the pregnancy and decline further testing in this regard. On average, during the past ten years 2-3 children have been born each year with Down's syndrome in Iceland.

Rights of the disabled and respect for diversity

For many years the Icelandic government has been working on transposing into Icelandic law provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons. In signing the Declaration in 2007, Icelanders obliged themselves to work towards implementing it and it was ratified in Iceland in 2017. Since 2012, this work has followed a specific strategy and action plan for the disabled adopted by the Icelandic parliament Althingi, based on the UN Declaration. The current strategy and action plan in this field covers the period 2017-2021, and was drafted in close consultation with organisations for the disabled. The objectives of the programme state, for instance: "It is a core principle of Icelandic society to respect people with disabilities as part of human diversity. The full human rights of disabled persons will be strengthened, protected and ensured on equal terms with others, and conditions created enabling the disabled to live an independent life on their own premises."

Curious how anti-abortion christians manage to never support things like universal prenatal services, support for the children they want to force women to have, etc.

the accuracy for the trisomy 21 test is 98.6 percent.

Like

PASTORJWAITS April 23, 2024 at 2:40 pm

Have you ever known someone personally with Down's Syndrome? Do you have any relationships with families who have a child with Down's Syndrome in them?

Are you aware that there about 4000 Christian clinics scattered across the country that encourage women not to abort their babies and which provide prenatal services all the way through the pregnancy and also once the child has been born? These clinics are located in far, far more locations than abortion clinics are. That seems pretty universal to me.

As a point of fact, more people are living as slaves today than at just about any previous point in human history. Perhaps the total percentage is less, but the raw numbers are higher because of a higher population. Seems like perhaps we haven't improved on that score quite so much as you think. How do you measure the amount of harm in order to say less is being done?

Like

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 23, 2024 at 2:58 pm



Yep, I've known several. Unfortunately, it's not that unusual to have people with disabilities in the rural area where I grew up. I'm old enough to have had a special education class in my elementary school, rather than the mainstreaming which is more popular now.

We had a young fellow on our bus who had down's and down's and puberty aren't a good mix with him trying to molest other students. What happens then? What happens when the parents die? Curious how Christians aren't out there removing all of the disabled kids from foster care.

Yep, there are a lot of Christian organizations who lie about being clinics and who try to convince women to not have abortions. That is nothing new. They try to claim they are "pregnancy centers", and unsurprisingly, those that run them want to cut aid to children, families, etc. They spread lies about abortion as a medical procedure. When you have to rely on lies, that is rather amusing when you claim to worship a god that hates lies and liars.

Curious how there are few abortion clinics since Christians have done all they can to eliminate them with their lies.

There are more people today, and that's why there are more people enslaved. So your appeals to false claims fail again. Curious how your god fails to do anything about that, right?

Yes, dear, the percentage is less, so there is less harm being done. That's how you figure it out.

Like

PASTORJWAITS April 23, 2024 at 3:09 pm

So, you are willing to stereotype an entire group of people on the basis of the limited experience you've had? What do you do with the huge number of families of a downs syndrome individual who report that, even though there are undoubtedly challenges associated with the condition, the person has brought more joy to their family because of the unique perspective downs syndrome children have than they could have possibly imagined? The kind of eugenic thinking you are demonstrating here is what lied at the heart of the Nazi efforts in the 1930s. When you reject an objective basis of morality, which in this case includes an objective value for all human life, these are the kinds of rabbit holes you can slip down into frighteningly easily.

And, when it comes to the matter of pro-life clinics across the country, with respect, you don't know what you're talking about. I'm curious exactly what lies you think crisis pregnancy centers spread about abortion. When it comes to the matter of abortion generally, there is only one question that matters: what is the unborn? If the unborn is not a human, then abortion is fine in all respects. if, on the other hand, the unborn is a human, then abortion is wrong and all respects.

Like

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 24, 2024 at 1:35 pm

Jonathan, you're great. You ask if I've interacted with folks with down's and then you disregard my experiences since I dare not agree with your false claims, now insisting that I have to interact with all down's sufferers to have a valid experience. Nothing like watching a Christian move the goalposts.

Those families have no choice to say what they do since if they said what actually happens, they would suffer. You pick and choose what you want to believe. There is no "unique perspective" that is yet again one more myth, the nonsense that people with down's innocent perfect ideal. Again, that is not true.

It's great that you now lies about me wanting to kill people when I have simply shown the truth about people with disabilities. It isn't the joy you claim. Your slippery slope fallacy is just one more false thing you've tried, Jonathan.

And still no evidence for any objective morality at all. You are a failure. No evidence for your god either.

I do know what I am talking about since these "pregnancy centers" repeatedly lie to their customers. Anti-abortion liars, like you, have repeatedly claimed that abortions cause people to become sterile, that they cause breast cancer, etc etc. Christians are quite the liars when they want to be. Alas, Romans 3 say lying for your god will get you damned too.

A fetus, etc is a potential human. And since your god has no problem at all with abortion, killing kids, etc it's great to see how Christians lie about how concerned their imaginary friend is when it comes to this issue.

Like

PASTORJWAITS April 24, 2024 at 1:51 pm

So, now you know why those families say the things they do. What insider track of knowledge do you have for that? Or, are you just framing out the entire issue based on your personal experience? You haven't actually shown the truth about anything. You've had some experiences and are using those as your frame of reference to determine the "truth" for everybody else. That's quite a position to hold. I have gentlemen in my church with Down's Syndrome. I have had several conversations with his parents about their experiences with him. They will be openly honest about the challenge it has been,

especially as they are getting older. But they have also both told me without batting an eye that he has been the source of more joy in their lives than they could have possibly imagined experiencing without him. Did they lie to me in saying that? Who forced them to this if they did? I didn't question the legitimacy of your experience at all. What I questioned was the legitimacy of using your experience as the lens for understanding everybody else's experience, assuming that only your experience is normative, and questioning the honesty of anyone who has ever reported a different experience with the issue.

What makes someone a human? Is a dog in utero a potential dog? How about an elephant in utero? Is that a potential elephant? Is a baby chick just before it hatches a potential chicken? When does it become an actual chicken? When it first cracks open its shell or after it's all the way out? In the same vein, at what point in the birthing process does a "potential" human become fully a human? Also, I never said anything about what God's position on abortion is.

I also didn't say anything about your wanting to kill people. I said the kind of eugenic logic you are using is what ultimately led to the Nazi program. I don't know anything about your desires except that you've expressed your approval for the idea that killing an unborn child who might have some sort of disability is a morally appropriate thing to do. What I do know is that the abortion rate with Down's Syndrome diagnoses is reported in some places to be 80% and higher. If black babies were aborted 80% of the time for being black, would you be okay with that? How about if scientists discovered a genetic marker that determined whether or not a child was going to be homosexual. Would you be okay with potential humans (to use your phrase) who were believed to be homosexual on the basis of a prenatal genetic test being aborted 80% of the time? For the record, I'm definitely not okay with any of those situations, the real one or the two hypotheticals I proposed, but I'm curious about your position.

Like

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 24, 2024 at 2:16 pm

- And still no evidence for objective morality or your god. How typical. You are quite a fraud.

Yes, I know why they say what they do because it is what anyone in a bad situation says to make the best of it. So, Jonathan, tell me why you haven't adopted any kids with Down's. It should be just great, shouldn't it? Or are you just one more hypocrite?

Yep, I use my own experiences since they aren't only limited to me. You also use your own experiences to determine your reference of truth too. Yep, you had conversations with the parents of a person with Downs. Not him. I'm sure they did tell you that everything is just fine, since if they didn't, they'd be admitting that this god of yours is a failure. You did question the legitimacy of my experiences when you claimed that all families have only good experiences. That's a lie.

What makes someone human? Genetics. Just like an acorn has the genetics of an oak tree, but is not an oak tree. Yep, an fertilized chicken egg is a potential chicken. What always amuses me is that Christians will try to claim that an egg is not a chicken when they want to eat it during lent. But when they want to claim a fertilized human egg is a human, that has to be accepted from them.

When the fetus can live on its own without the mother. And yes, that is changing thanks to human invented medicine. No god needed. ROFL. It's hilarious to see you lie and claim that you never mentioned what your god's position on abortion is. You have, dear, since you claim that this god finds abortion wrong. Here "Are you aware that there about 4000 Christian clinics scattered across the country that encourage women not to abort their babies and which provide prenatal services all the way through the pregnancy and also once the child has been born" and "If the unborn is not a human, then abortion is fine in all respects. if, on the other hand, the unborn is a human, then abortion is wrong and all respects."

Yes, you said that what logic I use will lead to genocide, aka that I want to kill people. You try to walk back your false claims as usual when called on them. I don't approve of that idea, so you fail yet again. I find it that it is the choice of the parents, not your cult's.

Then you offer baseless nonsense of "80% of abortions" etc etc, and nothing to show that's true and you were already wrong about Iceland. Curious how being black isn't remotely the same as having down's syndrome. Of course I wouldn't be okay with that. One is a genetic defect that can cause many other problems (Ear infections or hearing loss, Vision problems or eye diseases, Dental problems, Being more prone to infections or illness, Obstructive sleep apnea, Congenital heart disease.), and the other is a variation on human physiology that evolved thanks to the various environments humans have lived in. That you would even think to claim they are the same really shows your ignorance and need to make false claims about others. The same with homosexuality, and curious how Christians, and their bible, think that homosexuals deserve death and worse, so it certainly seems you would have no problem at all with killing people for being homosexuals. There is nothing defective about homosexuals either.

Like

PASTORJWAITS April 24, 2024 at 2:30 pm

So then, they did lie to me? On the basis of what evidence beyond your own biased assumptions do you make that assertion?

I've not felt led to adopt any child, Down's or otherwise. That's an irrelevant point to our discussion here.

If genetics is what determines whether or not someone is a human, then to speak of a person as a "potential human" doesn't make sense. A person is either a human or not a human. Is an acorn anything

other than an oak tree? No. Genetically speaking, it is an oak tree in embryonic form. On the eating eggs and calling something a chicken part, I have no idea what you're talking about.

When in that quote of mine did I say that God finds abortion wrong? For the record, I think He does and have now made that point, but I didn't say anything about that there. I talked about Christian clinics and my own position on abortion.

And, once again, I did not say you want to kill anyone. I said your logic leads to that end. I assume you don't want to go to that, but it's the direction where your logic is pointing. The same logic was used toward a more extreme end in this other setting.

On Down's Syndrome, the number mentioned in the study cited in this ABC News report (not a Christian news source by any stretch of the imagination) is that 92% of Down's Syndrome diagnoses result in abortion. ([https://abcnews.go.com/Health/w\\_ParentingResource/down-syndrome-births-drop-us-women-abort/story?id=8960803](https://abcnews.go.com/Health/w_ParentingResource/down-syndrome-births-drop-us-women-abort/story?id=8960803)) You're right. My number was wrong. It turns out it's much higher than that. Down's Syndrome is a genetic condition. So is being black. Genes determine the outcome in both cases. In one instance there is a deviation from what human society has collectively determined to be "normal." That's the only difference. So, you are okay with 92% of individuals with Down's Syndrome being put to death before they are born? Incidentally, was the woman in the ABC News report lying about the joy her Down's Syndrome child has brought to her life as well?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 24, 2024 at 2:46 pm

Yep, they seems to have. But humans can convince themselves of many things that aren't true.

Ah, convenient how your god never has you do anything you don't want. What a fraud you are. It isn't irrelevant at all. You don't want to adopt a disabled child.

And yep, genetics does make someone what they will become, not what they are at a certain moment. So it makes perfect sense. An acorn isn't an oak tree. And it's hilarious you try to claim it is. Yep, an acorn is a potential oak tree. And it's hilarious that you suddenly just don't grasp things when a fertilized egg isn't a chicken when a Christian wants to eat it for lent, where you can't eat chicken/meat.

Jonathan, your continued attempts to claim you didn't say something if you didn't literally say it are amusing and false. Yep, I know you think your god finds abortion wrong, you've already said so. I've shown how. Your opinion about what god thinks is just your opinion foisted on your imaginary friend.

You lie when you claim my logic leads to genocide, so yes, you do claim I want to kill people. Again, your lies about my logic fail.

Yep, the article says that. So? I do love how you claim that a genetic disability is the same as being black. No, dear it isn't the same, and that you claim so shows you to be quite an ignorant racist. There is no defect in the genes when someone is black, aka coming from ancestors who were living within 20 degrees of the equator. We know what genetic defects and what normal genes are, so your ignorance shows you to be a complete failure. Normal is a known quantity in this instance.

it isn't up to me to be okay with someone else's personal decision. Again, you and your fellow Christians aren't out there adopting these kids.

Yep, again, dear, people in bad situations try to make the best of it.

PASTORJWAITS April 24, 2024 at 2:17 pm

For what it's worth, here are a couple of summaries of some of the research on the physical effects of abortion on women.

<https://aacc.net/2020/09/08/abortions-effects-on-physical-and-mental-health/>

<https://www.deveber.org/womens-health-after-abortion/>

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 24, 2024 at 2:35 pm

Hmm, did you think I wouldn't notice the source of these "studies"? One is from The Association of Christian Counselors, and it is not research at all. It is an opinion piece written by an organization called Save the Storks, a typical group of ignorant Christians.

Same with the DeVeber institute, another pro-life organization based on Catholic nonsense.

And gee, they both lie.

This from the American Cancer Society:

"In 2003, the US National Cancer Institute (NCI) held a workshop of more than 100 of the world's leading experts who study pregnancy and breast cancer risk. The experts reviewed human and animal studies that looked at the link between pregnancy and breast cancer risk, including studies of induced and spontaneous abortions. Some of their findings were:

Breast cancer risk is increased for a short time after a full-term pregnancy (that is, a pregnancy that results in the birth of a living child).

Induced abortion is not linked to an increase in breast cancer risk.

Spontaneous abortion is not linked to an increase in breast cancer risk.

The level of scientific evidence for these findings was considered to be “well established” (the highest level).

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Committee on Gynecologic Practice also reviewed the available evidence in 2003 and again in 2009. In 2009, the Committee said, “Early studies of the relationship between prior induced abortion and breast cancer risk were methodologically flawed. More rigorous recent studies demonstrate no causal relationship between induced abortion and a subsequent increase in breast cancer risk.”

In 2004, the Collaborative Group on Hormonal Factors in Breast Cancer, based out of Oxford University in England, put together the results from 53 separate studies done in 16 different countries. These studies included about 83,000 women with breast cancer (44,000 in prospective studies and 39,000 in retrospective studies). Although the results of the retrospective studies showed a small increase in risk, the prospective studies found a small decrease in risk. After combining and reviewing the results from all of these studies, the researchers concluded that “the totality of worldwide epidemiological evidence indicates that pregnancies ending as either spontaneous or induced abortions do not have adverse effects on women’s subsequent risk of developing breast cancer.” These experts did not find that abortions (either induced or spontaneous) cause a higher breast cancer risk.”

A lovely claim from DeVeber with no evidence backing it up ““The American Medical Association (AMA) relies on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for its statistics concerning abortion-related deaths and, given that the CDC uses hospital and clinic records (which underreport maternal deaths from abortion) for its data, the AMA does not recognize the full extent of abortion-related deaths.””

Funny how there is no evidence at all for any underreporting.

Curious how the first article tries to claim that there is an association between poor mental health and abortions. They even cited a paper, which is amusing since that paper also cited another paper, and that paper directly said that there is no correlation. The paper claiming mental health problems directly lied about other research. This is the paper they claimed supported their claims “Abortion and long-term mental health outcomes: a systematic review of the evidence” and this is what this paper says

“We rated the study quality based on methodological factors necessary to appropriately explore the research question. Studies were rated as Excellent (no studies), Very Good (4 studies), Fair (8 studies), Poor (8 studies), or Very Poor (1 study). A clear trend emerges from this systematic review: the highest quality studies had findings that were mostly neutral, suggesting few, if any, differences between

women who had abortions and their respective comparison groups in terms of mental health sequelae. Conversely, studies with the most flawed methodology found negative mental health sequelae of abortion.”

Again, christians lie.

PASTORJWAITS April 24, 2024 at 2:43 pm

No, and I didn't try to hide that either. Data is data whether it's a Christian group presenting it or a non-Christian group. Is it factually incorrect to say that Scandinavian women who had an abortion reported a suicide ideation rate 6 times higher than women who carried their pregnancies to full term? Is it the incorrect to conclude that suggests a mental health impact from those abortions? And the sites I shared specifically noted that major sources don't report on or handle this particular issue well. Citing a major source in defense of your position doesn't really help much after that.

None of this, though, makes abortion a moral thing to do.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 24, 2024 at 2:50 pm

Again, those links showed how christians lie, and I was quite happy to demonstrate that with real research, and not lies from christians.

Again, that claim about mental health is contradicted by actual research. So yes, it is incorrect to lie about the affects of abortion if they aren't true. And

Yep, the sites you gave made baseless claims about how the research that shows them lying is wrong. No surprise there at all. Curious how they can't show anything evidence to back up their accusations.

PASTORJWAITS April 24, 2024 at 2:55 pm

Except they did cite actual research. You simply found research making a counter claim. That by itself proves exactly nothing. It was actual research that led to the data about Scandinavian women reporting higher suicide ideation after abortions than women who carried to full term. As much as you accuse me of it, you don't like research that doesn't back your point either.



CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 25, 2024 at 4:15 pm

Yes, and that means the research is at best questionable that they used. That research was also questioned in its validity in the paper I found. You have nothing yet again,

and still no evidence for your objective morality or your god.

PASTORJWAITS April 25, 2024 at 5:56 pm

So, because the research doesn't agree with the position you've decided is right it's questionable? If I find a study that questions the validity of the research you found, would that be legitimate? Or because it doesn't support the side you've decided is correct, would it also therefore be questionable?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 26, 2024 at 2:50 pm

The research is all over the place, and the research you refer to is considered less than meaningful by actual peer reviewed researchers.

So, do find a study that questions the research I found. Your problem is that you can't. And nice to see you still have no evidence for morality being objective or your god being real.

Trying to blame me for your failure is typical.

PASTORJWAITS April 29, 2024 at 9:50 am

It's considered less than meaningful by actual peer reviewed researchers whose positions you agree with. Those are two different things.

And since you keep beating this particular drum, whether or not morality is objective isn't an evidentiary question that could be somehow determined one way or the other by the disciples of science. It is a philosophical question answered with argument and reason. So is, for that matter, the question of the existence of God. There are certainly lines of evidence that support the reasonableness of the position, but the kind of evidence it sounds like you are insisting I produce (if I'm understanding you correctly; and if I'm not, please help me better understand what it is you are seeking here) doesn't exist. To demand it is to be guilty of a category error.

Personally, I am persuaded by the arguments both for and against that the philosophical position that all morality is totally subjective is a wildly irrational position to hold. Not only does this not make sense generally, but the position when pushed to its logical conclusions yields horrible consequences for the people who fall under the umbrella of cultures that have tried to live that way. When you hold to the position that all morality is subjective, you lose the ability to meaningfully declare any behavior to be wrong. You cannot do more than to express your opinion. And even if a critical mass of people in one culture decide one thing to be wrong, that still doesn't make it wrong, and they could later change their mind in the opposite direction at which point this other thing would be wrong instead. Sure, subjective morality can be made to sound appealing in small circumstances. That's fairly easy to do. But if it doesn't work on a large scale, that means its philosophical nonsense on a small scale too. It just has an appealing disguise on a small scale such that it doesn't appear fully as it truly is.

In the end, though, if you want to hold to the position that morality is all subjective, that's a decision you can make. If you actually live consistently with such a position (few who hold to it really do, though you very well could be the exception to that general rule; I don't have knowledge as to whether or not that's the case), it will eventually create victims of the bad ideas you are holding out of the people who are closest to you, and that's something both you and they will have to live with. But again, that'll be your problem (and theirs). I can hope and pray you'll see the reasonableness of the alternative position at some point, but I don't get a vote on that, so our debating this back and forth doesn't make a whole lot of sense. It makes more sense given the positions we respectively and apparently intractably hold for me to wish you well and bid you adieu.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 29, 2024 at 11:13 am

What is considered less than meaningful?

I'm not the one beating this particular drum. You are the one who claimed he has evidence for objective morality and for his god. You have yet to show that these claims are true. I have asked you repeatedly. "Do show how you would determine if a moral was objective."

And here we see you trying to get out of supporting your claims "We can come back to objective morality in a bit. "

and your claims: "When you reject an objective basis of morality, which in this case includes an objective value for all human life, these are the kinds of rabbit holes you can slip down into frighteningly easily."

"That's because I'm not trying to make that case right now. Honestly, given the position that you've demonstrated to hold, I'm not all that interested in making that case."

“We can perhaps come back to the question of objective morality at some point. My interest right now is exploring the philosophically ridiculous nature of the concept of a totally subjective morality.”

“the moral foundation on which the entirety of Western culture lies is one that was shaped by Christianity and there’s really no escaping that. The moral assumptions of modern, more explicitly secular nations in the cultural West are still ultimately grounded in the Christian worldview.”

Now, you have to claim that objective morality can’t be shown to exist, and that it is a “philosophical question”, which doesn’t work, since objective morality can be shown to exist. IF the christain claim of the *sensus divinitatus* are true, if we have this god’s words on our “heart”, this should be easy enough to show by simple experimentation. Do people have the same morals? If they do not, your religion lies. The existence of god is also not just a philosophical question, since we should be able to find evidence for your god in the supposed events it causes per the bible. Curious how we can’t find that either.

All you’ve done is try to move the goalposts, Jonathan. This god of yours, per the bible, made personal appearances, give direct evidence, etc, and like all myths, those claims now fail. The “lines of evidence” you claim, you can’t show exist, and those few lines can be used by any theist, with the same results, still no evidence for their gods.

You made the positive claim, and thus the burden of proof is yours, Jonathan. There is no category error either: “A category mistake (or category error, categorical mistake, or mistake of category), is a semantic or ontological error in which things belonging to a particular category are presented as if they belong to a different category,[1] or, alternatively, a property is ascribed to a thing that could not possibly have that property. “ You’ve tried to change the category, and you’ve fails miserably.

IT’s great that then you have to claim that it is “irrational” to consider morality subjective, when again, your claim that it is objective is unsupportable by \*you\*. It’s also rather fun that you can’t show that “morality is objective” is a true claim. All you have is an opinion.

No horrible consequences either, just you repeatedly lying to try to scare people to agree with your baseless opinion. There are plenty of secular cultures and yep, you still haven’t shown that morality is objective at all, only a baseless opinion.

Then you try to repeat the same baseless claims, that somehow we magically can’t declare behavior go be wrong if we have subjective morality. Again, you’ve yet to support that claim. Humans have been declaring things right and wrong since we were able to think and yep, it does come down to opinion. We see that in Christian morality too since you poor dears can’t agree on what morals this god wants.

and you can’t show your god exists at all. You are simply returning to your prior baseless claims like a dog to its vomit. Subjective morality works fine on large scales too, since that is what it does right now.

You again try to claim that you have evidence that subjective morality doesn't work on large scales. Support that claim.

But you can't, can you?

Yep, in the end, you have nothing, dear. I do have subjective morality and so do you. You have shown nothing else. There is no evidence for your nonsense about the eventual creation of victims, just your poor chicken little lies.

You have offered no reasons to believe your baseless claims at all, and now have to simply whine that hope and pray I'll agree with you. I've had hundreds of Christians praying to their imaginary friend that I would agree with them over the last 30+ years. They are as impotent as you.

Again, still nothing to show your morals are objective or your god exists. You've failed yet again and of course you run away like all cultists when confronted on how your cult fails.

PASTORJWAITS April 29, 2024 at 11:18 am

Well, as I said before, if that's how you need to interpret my comments to declare yourself the winner, there's really nothing I can do to stop you. I really am sorry we couldn't find more common ground.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 29, 2024 at 11:21 am

I'm sure you are sorry your baseless claims have fails miserably, just like your god and your prayers.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 23, 2024 at 2:59 pm

still no evidence for objective morality or your god.

PASTORJWAITS April 23, 2024 at 3:13 pm

That's because I'm not trying to make that case right now. Honestly, given the position that you've demonstrated to hold, I'm not all that interested in making that case.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 24, 2024 at 1:37 pm

Yep, you hope I will forget about your claims, dear, and this is nothing new for a Christian.

Unsurprisingly, you keep claiming objective morality and yet you are unable to show it exists. You just did so in your nonsense about abortion.

I'm sure you aren't interested in making the case since you can't. I do enjoy how you lie to try to excuse your false claims, Jonathan. It's a shame your god hates lies and liars.

PASTORJWAITS April 24, 2024 at 1:56 pm

We can perhaps come back to the question of objective morality at some point. My interest right now is exploring the philosophically ridiculous nature of the concept of a totally subjective morality.

I do find it increasingly humorous that whenever I have either disagreed with you myself or have pointed out where someone else might disagree with a position you have taken your only response is to accuse me or them of lying. It must be tough to be surrounded by so many liars all the time. I'm sorry for how much you seem to feel the weight of that burden.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 24, 2024 at 2:19 pm

ROFL. Yep, you have nothing to support your claims, Jonathan. You desperately want to pretend you have an answer and you don't, so you hope I will not ask you for one.

Still no evidence for objective morality or your god. All of your other questions here depend on your lie that morality is objective. Your premise fails so all of your other claims fail. Funny that until you can show morality is objective, anything you say about subjective morality is false.

Yep, I accuse you of lying when you do. it's rather amusing that you think that trying to gaslight me about that will suddenly make your false claims true and I won't point them out.

No burden at all, but again, nice false claims.

PASTORJWAITS April 24, 2024 at 2:34 pm

The trouble is that you keep staking out positions rooted in a relativistic morality in response to my questions that strike me as horrible. You really aren't making a strong case for your point.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 24, 2024 at 2:47 pm

Yep, and here you are trying to claim objective morality again and having no evidence for it. How sweet of you.

Still no evidence for your morality being any less subjective than mine. Still no evidence for your god.

I'm making a very strong case. Still wanting for you to make a case for your claims of objective morality.

PASTORJWAITS April 24, 2024 at 2:58 pm

My friend, if you are making a strong case, I'd really hate to see a weak one.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 25, 2024 at 4:16 pm

It's rather amusing when you can't even rebut my supposed "weak" case. Still no evidence for your claims of objective morality or your god.

and thus your entire argument fails.

PASTORJWAITS April 25, 2024 at 5:57 pm

Honestly, you're just not making arguments that are worth my time to engage with. If that allows you to conclude my "entire argument fails," I guess that's a risk I'll have to take. So be it.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 26, 2024 at 2:48 pm

ROFL. I do love how you make excuses to try to avoid showing how morality is objective and your god is real. I am making arguments that you can't rebut.

PASTORJWAITS April 26, 2024 at 3:07 pm

Can't and don't have interest in doing are two different things.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 29, 2024 at 10:42 am

Yep, they are. In your case, you can't. You have repeatedly claimed that you can show your god and objective morality exist, and you have yet to support your claims. All of your arguments depend on those things being true.

Your premise fails and thus do your claims.

PASTORJWAITS April 29, 2024 at 11:08 am

If that's how you need to interpret my comments to feel like you've got a "win" in this debate, you are welcome to do that. Again, the back and forth here isn't advancing either of us anywhere. Your arguments haven't demonstrated anything to me. Of the 43 views this post has now received, most of which are from you, I can personally account for most of the rest, and your arguments aren't convincing to them either. That means I'm really your only audience and, again, you've yet to raise a point that has been convincing in even the remotest sense.

Again, I'm not sure what you're trying to accomplish here beyond rhetorically jumping up and down on a series of philosophical positions that in spite of your insistence otherwise I have yet to see evidence in any of your comments that you really understand very well. And for all of your insistence that I haven't managed to show anything to you, I haven't honestly tried, and I don't have the time to put much more into this than I'm currently giving it. We're perhaps both better served by dropping the point and moving on.

An alternative explanation is, as a member of my congregation who did take the time to read some of our back and forth observed, you really want all of this to be true and that's why you keep coming back. From what I've observed over a few months of back and forth, though, what you need if that's really your aim is not reason and argument. You need the love of Christ and the church. I can offer you the first, but not the second. But if you won't receive either, there's not much else I can do for you in this kind of a format.

Either way, we are back to the conclusion that both of us are best served by simply moving on. Happy Monday to you.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 29, 2024 at 11:20 am

Curious way to bid me "adieu". I don't need to feel like I've got a win. Your failure to provide evidence for your claims is all I need.

I find it advancing my points quite well since you cannot support your claims. There is no “them”, Jonathan. I see no one saying I’m wrong, but you. Your false claims are amusing, but that’s it. I do wonder, do you think your god believes your false claims about me?

I’ve repeatedly told you why I stand against the false claims of Christians: those claims do real harm. You have made claims and cannot support them. ROFL. Oh dear, now you have to lie and claim that you really do have answers, but you haven’t “honestly tried”. Do you realize how pitiful that sounds? Imagine a Muslim telling you that when you discussed your respective imaginary friends with them.

Sorry, I’m not dropping the points I’ve made and it is notable you have yet to support yours. I am certainly not better served by ignoring how you’ve failed.

Your “congregation member” is wrong, which is amusing since that congregation member is no other than you. I don’t want any of your lies to be true dear. I don’t need a ignorant genocidal failure, who kills people for things they didn’t do to be real.

Love has nothing to do with your imaginary friend, dear. Hell isn’t love. Hell is just the sadistic fantasies of petty tyrants.

PASTORJWAITS April 29, 2024 at 11:29 am

I’ll just respond here to both of your comments to bring us back to one thread instead of two.

It’s hard to convey tone properly digitally, so I’ll preface this by saying I don’t mean this in even the smallest way to sound sarcastic. I am mean it very genuinely. I sincerely hope that you are able to find some peace one day from whatever lies in your past that has created such an animus in you against the Christian faith and Christians. I’m sorry you have had to carry it for however long you have. Blessings to you.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 30, 2024 at 10:14 am

Happily, for me, I’ve already found peace, and your attempts to gaslight me to claim that I haven’t is simply amusing.

Christianity, all of its many versions, and christians have caused real harm in this world, and deserve to be called out and stood against. I’m not carrying anything I don’t want to. Standing up against harmful nonsense is a honorable and good thing.

Your god doesn’t even bless Christians, so why would I expect it to bless me?



PASTORJWAITS April 30, 2024 at 10:15 am

I'm glad you've found the peace you need then.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE April 30, 2024 at 10:17 am

Sure, Jonathan, sure you are.

PASTORJWAITS April 30, 2024 at 10:20 am

Oh, I most definitely am. I still think you're wrong, but I'm certainly glad you have the peace you need. I am still sorry, though, that you don't seem to be able to see Christianity and Christians through anything other than a negative and very cynical lens. I hope you are able to free yourself from that someday.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 1, 2024 at 10:16 am

ROFL. It's great that you try to lie to me that you agree with me that I have peace, but then try to claim that I'm not free from something.

Why should I see christians and christianity through any favorable light when you have failed to show me any evience for your claims, evidence you claimed to have. You've shown me that christianity and christians have no problem with lies.

You've also repeatedly made false claims about me, agian showing that you and your religion, aren't anything to be impressed by.

Where is your evidence that morals are objective and your god exists?

PASTORJWAITS May 2, 2024 at 8:53 am

Well, believe it or not, I really am sorry that you carry such cynicism about and a strong animus toward Christians and Christianity. As much as it would be nice to believe otherwise, carrying those kinds of strongly negative feelings about much of anything for long will not prove to be a good thing in the long run. Even if you remain persistent in your rejection of Christianity as a religion, I hope for you that will you come to see it in a more balanced light than just a negative one.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 2, 2024 at 4:36 pm

Hmm, curious how you bid me “adieu” and are still responding to me.

It’s not cynicism that makes me consider your claims false. IT’s your utter lack of evidence for your god and for objective morality.

You are quite a fraud, Jonathan. It’s great how you then try to gaslight me by trying to claim that something bad will happen to me if I don’t agree with your baseless claims.

Yep, more evidence that your cult depends on ignorance and fear.

PASTORJWAITS May 3, 2024 at 12:48 pm

I’m still responding because you’ve continued to engage and I believe in showing my commenters the respect of a response. I don’t like being ignored, and so I don’t want to ignore someone else. As for the other part, I stand by my observation that carrying the kind of animus for a whole group of people isn’t healthy. It doesn’t matter who the group is. It happens to be Christians and Christianity for you, but it could be another group entirely. That level of hard feeling doesn’t really affect the group of people at all, but it can, over time, begin to color the lens a person uses to see everything else in his life. That can cause headaches and heartaches down the road if you keep it in place for long. I hope you can find freedom from that before it becomes problematic later on down the road for you. I’ll continue to show you the respect of engagement, but I’m also content for us to part ways as further engagement doesn’t seem like it will really get either of us anywhere. Have a good weekend.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 3, 2024 at 4:14 pm

You’ve done a great job of showing how morality works and how your god has nothign to do with it. Still no evidence for objective morality or your god.

That you stand by nonsense means little. You have no evidence for your claims any more than you do for your god or objective morality.

Sorry, your baseless claims are still not impressive, or true. All you have is little more than a slippery slope argument, which fails.

My standing up against Christianity and Christians has caused no headaches or heartache at all. You again try to use fear to convince me of nonsense. It doesn’t work

I already have freedom, Jonathan, so again, your gaslighting and false claims fail.

PASTORJWAITS May 3, 2024 at 4:36 pm

And indeed, I could be wrong. As a matter of fact, in this case, I hope I am. But I don't think so, so I give the warning all the same.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 6, 2024 at 4:40 pm

And still no evidence for your god or objective morality.

Your gaslighting fails, Jonathan. You warn about nothing.

PASTORJWAITS May 6, 2024 at 6:15 pm

You know, you keep repeating that refrain. I can't tell if it's supposed to be a taunt, or if you really do want to believe and are hoping I'll furnish something that finally gives you reason to come back to the faith again.

I'm sorry you can't see me as doing anything but gaslighting. That's that cynicism I've been talking about. I've not been anything other than genuine in anything I've said to you and I won't ever aim lower than that. If you feel the need to keep engaging as you have been, hopefully you'll come to see that. Happy Monday.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 7, 2024 at 3:47 pm

Yep, since you claimed you had evidence for these things. Surprise, you don't.

"We can come back to objective morality in a bit. Let's pursue your intriguing insistence that morality is totally subjective a bit further."

"When you reject an objective basis of morality, which in this case includes an objective value for all human life, these are the kinds of rabbit holes you can slip down into frighteningly easily."

“Personally, I am persuaded by the arguments both for and against that the philosophical position that all morality is totally subjective is a wildly irrational position to hold. ”

I am indeed mocking you for your failure and your attempts at deceit.

I see you only have hope now, since your prayers don't work.

Did you lie, Jonathan, or not? Simple question, and rather important for someone who claims to worship a god that hates lies and liars.

Nope, no cynicism at all, just your very own actions. You've not been genuine at all, with your repeated baseless claims about me. You've already aimed much lower than that.

PASTORJWAITS May 7, 2024 at 4:37 pm

None of those quotes was deceitful in the slightest. I meant every word and I still do. Let's try this: what would you consider as positive evidence in favor of the argument that morality is an objective matter and not a subjective one; that there are some behaviors which are objectively wrong in every circumstance, and some which are objectively wrong in every circumstance?

That being said, if your only goal is to mock, it would seem that further engagement won't really be a fruitful endeavor, does it not? I'm clearly not persuading you of anything, and I can assure you that you haven't come anywhere in the universe of close to that line with me. Given that, what's the point of our continuing?

As for lying, no, I haven't said anything to you that I have considered to be untrue in even the slightest amount. You very obviously don't agree with that, but why ask the question if you already know you are going to disagree with the answer? And, let's do be clear in our language: I don't merely claim to worship the God of the Bible, I do in fact worship Him. Also, definitionally speaking, you have demonstrated a clear and obviously cynicism toward not just me and the positions I have taken, but toward Christianity and Christians more generally. Unless you are staking out the rather arrogant position that you understand my motivations better than I do, to continue to accuse me of not being genuine when I have assured you repeatedly that I have not been in any way disingenuous at any point in our debate can only be the result of cynicism.

So, once again, I'm still unclear on what you hope to accomplish by continue to engage with me other than perhaps providing more fodder for your own blog.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 10, 2024 at 1:28 pm

And yet again, still no evidence for objective morality or your god. Why are you asking what I would accept as evidence? It's great that you now are fishing around to try to guess what your claim should be. Give evidence, and then we'll discuss how it works out.

Nope, my only goal isn't to mock your lies and incompetence, Jonathan. It's to show others how this cult is worthless. You've done a great job of that.

Lying is making claims that benefit you that aren't true. I don't hold with the "but but they aren't lying if they are ignorant" nonsense. You have made repeated false statements and I've corrected you on them. Unsurprisingly, I don't know that I will have to disagree with what you say, I only know that when you say something.

Yep, you worship a being that you cannot show exists. You claim that only your version of the religion that it is part of is the right one, and again you cannot show that is true. You claim that this being gives morality but yet, Christians don't agree on what morality this god wants. I'm distrustful, with reason, of \*your\* motives and claims. Happily, not all humans are like you and your fellow christians.

PASTORJWAITS May 11, 2024 at 8:20 am

When you're willing to lay out what you would actually consider as positive evidence in favor of the argument that there are objective moral truths we can continue to wrestle through the issue. Until then, I won't waste either of our time any further. Have a good weekend.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 13, 2024 at 12:01 pm

I have repeatedly, dear. And funny how you keep asking the same questions, desperate for a different answer. How wonderfully desperate.

You have no evidence for your lies so you keep asking me to give you hints on how you should answer. Sorry, dear.

You claimed to have evidence that objective morality exists and your god exists weeks ago. And you still can't provide it. You are quite an incompetent liar.

"God is the foundation point of reality. Christianity as a religion isn't the foundation of morality, God is."

funny how you can't support this at all.

PASTORJWAITS May 13, 2024 at 12:13 pm

Then do me a favor and jog my memory since we've been racing around in circles for a while now. What, for you, would qualify as positive evidence that there are objective moral truths? Because if the ultimate answer is that there isn't any, we're wasting our time.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 14, 2024 at 10:28 am

Again, you claimed to have evidence for objective morality and your god. I do not need to tell you what I would accept if you have this evidence.

Do you have evidence or not, Jonathan? If so, then we can consider it together on its validity. It seems you have nothing.

let's look at what you and I have said throughout this discussion:

"Again, Jonathan, your Jesus promises certain abilities to his true followers quite literally. Neither you or any other self-professed Christian can do these things. That seems valid evidence that you are either doing something wrong, e.g. your interpretation is wrong, or your Bible is simply making false claims." – Vel

"I've offered Christians the chance to do an altar challenge à la Ezekiel to see who the real ones are but they are all strangely adverse to that. The Bible offers another method, since Jesus promises various things to his true followers, e.g. getting prayers answered, doing miracles like him, healing people, but unfortunately, not a single Christian seems to be able to do those things." – Vel

""The moral foundation on which the entirety of Western culture lies is one that was shaped by Christianity and there's really no escaping that." "" – Jonathan

""If we want to enjoy the freedom that comes along with playing by the rules of reality—the freedom of living in the world as God designed it—we have to commit ourselves to the truth. And the most important truth of all is that Jesus is Lord. Everything else flows from there. Knowing the truth of Christ is the only way we can experience freedom. That idea alone provides the foundation strong enough for us to build the structures of our lives that will allow us to live in them and enjoy the process. Knowing the truth of Christ is the only way we can experience freedom." "" – Jonathan

“Do show how you would determine if a moral was objective.” -Vel

“And since you keep beating this particular drum, whether or not morality is objective isn’t an evidentiary question that could be somehow determined one way or the other by the disciplines of science. It is a philosophical question answered with argument and reason. So is, for that matter, the question of the existence of God. There are certainly lines of evidence that support the reasonableness of the position, but the kind of evidence it sounds like you are insisting I produce (if I’m understanding you correctly; and if I’m not, please help me better understand what it is you are seeking here) doesn’t exist. To demand it is to be guilty of a category error.” – Jonathan

“Personally, I am persuaded by the arguments both for and against that the philosophical position that all morality is totally subjective is a wildly irrational position to hold. Not only does this not make sense generally, but the position when pushed to its logical conclusions yields horrible consequences for the people who fall under the umbrella of cultures that have tried to live that way. When you hold to the position that all morality is subjective, you lose the ability to meaningfully declare any behavior to be wrong. You cannot do more than to express your opinion. And even if a critical mass of people in one culture decide one thing to be wrong, that still doesn’t make it wrong, and they could later change their mind in the opposite direction at which point this other thing would be wrong instead. Sure, subjective morality can be made to sound appealing in small circumstances. That’s fairly easy to do. But if it doesn’t work on a large scale, that means its philosophical nonsense on a small scale too. It just has an appealing disguise on a small scale such that it doesn’t appear fully as it truly is.

In the end, though, if you want to hold to the position that morality is all subjective, that’s a decision you can make. If you actually live consistently with such a position (few who hold to it really do, though you very well could be the exception to that general rule; I don’t have knowledge as to whether or not that’s the case), it will eventually create victims of the bad ideas you are holding out of the people who are closest to you, and that’s something both you and they will have to live with. But again, that’ll be your problem (and theirs). I can hope and pray you’ll see the reasonableness of the alternative position at some point, but I don’t get a vote on that, so our debating this back and forth doesn’t make a whole lot of sense. It makes more sense given the positions we respectively and apparently intractably hold for me to wish you well and bid you adieu.” – Jonathan

Curious how you again can’t show evidence, evidence you have claimed you have. You also haven’t answered me on how you would go about showing morality objective.

““We can perhaps come back to the question of objective morality at some point. My interest right now is exploring the philosophically ridiculous nature of the concept of a totally subjective morality.”” – Jonathan

which means you need to show that objective morality exists and simply just say it doesn’t.

“And for all of your insistence that I haven’t managed to show anything to you, I haven’t honestly tried, and I don’t have the time to put much more into this than I’m currently giving it. We’re perhaps both better served by dropping the point and moving on.”

and you admit you haven’t tried. Well, try now.

objective morality, if it exists, should be able to be shown by having no other morals evinced by humans. Can you do that? Evidently not. Can you show how human innately know morality? So far, no, and the cases of feral children show this to be completely wrong.

Again, Jonathan, you made the positive claim, “morality is objective and morality comes from my god”. Where is evidence for both? I have made the positive claim that “morality is subjective and there is no god”. I’ve provided evidence to support my claims. You have not.

PASTORJWAITS May 14, 2024 at 10:40 am

What you have provided so far is lots of ranting, lots of accusing me of lying, and very little evidence that you have given much in the way of serious or understanding thought to the philosophical issues at play here and their full implications.

Let’s try this:

Do you have evidence that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice? Or, to put that another way: is murder ever a morally good action? How do you know? What circumstances would justify it? Why those circumstances?

Let’s also try this:

Premise 1: Whatever begins to exist has a cause.

Premise 2: The universe began to exist.

Conclusion: The universe has a cause.

The logic of that argument is sound. I hold to the position that the cause of the universe is an intelligent designer. To what cause do you attribute the existence of the universe?

And one more just for fun:



A DNA molecule contains vast amounts of organized, complex, and specified information. The only source we know of that is capable of producing organized, complex, and specified information is a mind. If you reject the premise that the information in DNA came from a mind, then where else did that organized, complex, and specified information come from?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 14, 2024 at 1:19 pm

Unsurprisingly, you choose to make false claims about “ranting” as well. I’ve shown how you’ve made false claims for your benefit. I’ve also shown that I have considered your baseless claims and have rebutted them, Jonathan. You keep on with the baseless nonsense of the “implications” of atheism, and my mere existence shows that your “sky is falling” nonsense fails.

It’s notable that yet again, you have no evidence for objective morality or your god.

Cultures have their own ideas of human justice, which are demonstrably not the same. So your nonsense about one culture not killing someone who is innocent by their subjective ideas is meaningless. All cultures do this, and all cultures have different ideas about what is justified and what is not. Again, what would be murder in one culture would not be in another. You’ve done a great job of showing how morality is subjective.

Your premise 1 fails since we do not know if that is true. Thus the rest of your argument fails since the premise fails. Your presupposition fails and as usual your house of cards fails with it. You also cannot show an “intelligent” being is required. But if you want to claim that, then you need to explain if your god is just stupid or malicious when it “designs” the sun to give humans cancer, the human body to guarantee thousands of humans choke to death every year, the vast majority of this planet being deadly to humans, etc. I don’t need to attribute any cause to the existence to the universe, since there may be no cause.

You still have no evidence for your god. And I do mean your god, not some vague nonsense that could be applied to any cult.

A DNA molecule has vast amounts of information in it. It often fails horribly. Again, is your god simply stupid or malicious when supposedly “designing” DNA? We don’t know that only a “mind” is able to make such a thing, and your presuppositions fail miserably again. DNA has no problem in simply coming from the laws of physics, which can be just as “eternal” as you claim your god to be.

Again, still no evidence for objective morality or your god.

PASTORJWAITS May 14, 2024 at 1:29 pm

You didn’t answer my question. It was a fairly simple question too. I didn’t question the fact that different cultures define murder differently. That’s beside the point right now. Just focus on one

question at a time. Do you have evidence of a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice?

You reject the first premise of my argument about causes. Do you have evidence of something that began to exist without a cause?

You said “there may be no cause” to the universe. How do you know? On what grounds do you make such a claim? Do you have evidence for such a claim? Again: do you have evidence of something ever coming into existence without a cause?

As for question of DNA, I didn’t say a single thing about the eloquence or not of its design. You brought that up and it is a red herring to the argument. Stay focused. You argue that DNA could have simply come from the “laws of physics.” Which physical law exactly is capable of producing information? Do you have evidence of a single law of physics ever producing the kind of organized, complex, and specific information we find in DNA?

You did a lot of hand waving there, but you didn’t actually address any of my questions very meaningfully. Let’s try that again...

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 15, 2024 at 10:30 am

I did answer your question. You just don’t like the answer I gave you and you still have no evidence for objective morality or your god. You often try to lie and claim that something is “beside the point” or that you’ll get back to something.

Sorry, dear, you are stuck with the answer I gave, and you still fail miserably. Again, your silly question “Do you have evidence that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice? Or, to put that another way: is murder ever a morally good action? How do you know? What circumstances would justify it? Why those circumstances?”

fails since you assume that morality is objective. That cultures don’t go against their own morals does not show morals are objective or are anything special. All you have done, again, is show how morality is subjective.

Yep, I rejected a baseless presupposition as a premise to your nonsense. Per the evidence, the universe appears to have come into existence without your god or any other god being needed. So your claim fails. And you still have no evidence for your god, or for objective morality from this god.

It’s sweet that you keepo asking the same questions desperate for a different answer.

You really are a poor liar. This is what you said “A DNA molecule contains vast amounts of organized, complex, and specified information. The only source we know of that is capable of producing organized, complex, and specified information is a mind. If you reject the premise that the information in DNA came from a mind, then where else did that organized, complex, and specified information come from?”

So, yes, you have claimed that your god created DNA and I have shown how your lies fail. No red herring, just a desperate cultist who has nothing to show his god exists. All physical laws are able to produce information, dear, that’s what they do when those laws allow chemistry to work. And now let’s see you try to move the goalposts once again.

Since you have no evidence for your god or for objective morality, all we have is that the laws of physics have created DNA. You cannot show otherwise. Like all theists, you claim your god is the “creator” and not one of you theists can show that is true.

PASTORJWAITS May 15, 2024 at 11:06 am

It’s not so much that I don’t like your answers as it is that they are mostly incomplete and evasive.

Let’s go through my questions one more time, though, just in case you decide to change your mind.

Do you have evidence that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice? A simple yes or no will suffice.

The second question was do you have evidence of something that has come into existence without a cause?

You argue that the universe “appears to have come into existence without your god or any other god being needed.” By what other mechanism do you propose the universe came into existence? You note there is evidence for this. What specific evidence would you cite to give credence to this “appearance”? To perhaps put that another way, what do you consider as evidence that the universe began to exist without a cause? And, to get back to my question that you still have not answered: Do you have evidence of something that began to exist without a cause?

Getting back finally to the question of DNA to round things out, you brought up the issue of apparent failures in the design of DNA. I didn’t raise that point. I didn’t talk about its design at all in fact. I simply observed the widely accepted scientific fact that DNA contains vast amounts of organized, complex, and specified information, and went on to make the assertion that in the sum total of human experience,

the only source we know of that is capable of producing “vast amounts of organized, complex, and specified information” is a mind. Do you know of another source for such a thing?

You state that physical laws can produce information. Can you site an example of organized, complex, and specified information a particular law of physics has produced? If “all physical laws are able to produce information,” what are some examples of information each different physical law has produced? What exactly is the mechanism by which the “laws of physics” created DNA? Which specific laws of physics can you identify that accomplished this feat? Can you point to a single example in nature (other than DNA) where a physical law has been responsible for the volume of organized, complex, specified information we find in DNA?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 15, 2024 at 11:38 am

And yes more baseless claims from you accusing me of things you can't show. How nice for a Christian to do that.

It's hilarious how desperate you are with your need for a different answer. You are desperate to tell me how to answer too! How nice. That shows that you don't like my complete answers and only want me to tell you what you want to hear.

Thanks for showing just how christianity does not make someone a honest human being, Jonathan.

PASTORJWAITS May 15, 2024 at 12:12 pm

I'm sorry, then, that we couldn't have a more productive dialogue. When you are ready to engage further on the questions I've asked, I'll be glad to continue.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 15, 2024 at 2:36 pm

Still waiting for your evidence for objective morality and your god. It's nothing new that you have nothing yet again, Jonathan. I've already answered your questions. Nice to see you choose to lie yet again. It's always curious when a christian seems to think his god won't notice.

PASTORJWAITS May 15, 2024 at 2:45 pm

You haven't actually answered my question. You have given me bluff and bluster instead.

Let's take just my first question as an example. We'll come back to the others once we've resolved this one. I asked very simply: Do you have evidence that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice?

You have blustered about what my moral assumptions are and insisted I'm only succeeding in demonstrating that all morality is subjective. But you have yet to say very simply whether the answer is yes or no. Do you have evidence of such a culture, yes or no?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 15, 2024 at 4:43 pm

ROFL. I have. It's hilarious how you choose to lie, Jonathan.

here is my answer to that first question:

"Cultures have their own ideas of human justice, which are demonstrably not the same. So your nonsense about one culture not killing someone who is innocent by their subjective ideas is meaningless. All cultures do this, and all cultures have different ideas about what is justified and what is not. Again, what would be murder in one culture would not be in another. You've done a great job of showing how morality is subjective."

"Again, your silly question "Do you have evidence that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice? Or, to put that another way: is murder ever a morally good action? How do you know? What circumstances would justify it? Why those circumstances?"

fails since you assume that morality is objective. That cultures don't go against their own morals does not show morals are objective or are anything special. All you have done, again, is show how morality is subjective."

Sorry, dear, I answer the way I want. The question deserves a better answer than yes or no. Your demands are worthless, dear.

Still no evidence for objective morality or your god. you really are doing a lovely job at showing how christianity fails.

PASTORJWAITS May 15, 2024 at 5:13 pm

Yes, those are the things you said. I hadn't forgotten. All I'm looking for is a yes or a no. Do you have evidence, or don't you? It's a pretty simple question. The fact that you steadfastly refuse to provide an answer (can't provide an answer perhaps?) is starting to suggest that you don't actually have any evidence of this. Is that the case?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 16, 2024 at 8:09 am

I don't care what you are "looking" for, since all you are looking for is an excuse to believe in your imaginary friend, Jonathan. IT's not a simple question at all, but do answer your own question. Yes or no? Of course, then you'll have to explain why it is yes or no. I took care of that in my response rather than play a game.

I haven't refused to provide an answer, but again nice lie. I've repeatedly shown you the answer I gave.

Again, still no evidence for your god or objective morality. How not surprising.

PASTORJWAITS May 16, 2024 at 8:33 am

Once again, the question is very simple. Why you are choosing to complicate it and jump ahead to what may or may not be coming next is beyond me. Do you have evidence that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice? You have not answered that question yet. You've shared lots of other thoughts attacking where you assume I'm going by asking this question in the first place, but until we settle on an answer to this one, we can't go on to those. So, I'll just keep on bringing us back to this question until you finally share your answer. Once we settle this one, we can go back to universal origins and the information in DNA.

One more time then, just to make sure you haven't forgotten: Do you have evidence that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice? Yes or no.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 16, 2024 at 2:06 pm

Why wait, Jonathan? What is your reason to have me answer "yes or no"? Answering the question completely complicates nothing. It seems you think you have some advantage from me only saying yes or no. My answer does not depend on what is coming next, it depends on the question you asked. It seems nothing is coming next from you since you can't rebut my points.

I have indeed answered that question, and it does get tiring to see you repeatedly lie, even though it shows I am correct about your religion.

Still no evidence for your god or objective morality.

PASTORJWAITS May 16, 2024 at 2:24 pm

I'm really just curious why you won't answer the question. Do you have evidence of this, yes or no? You've answered several other questions I haven't asked, but you haven't yet answered the one I actually have. The fact that you continue to do little more than bluster in response is suggesting to me more and more strongly that you don't actually have any evidence of this. Either you do or you don't, though. If you do, great, share it with me. If you don't, just be honest about that instead of blustering about so much about why you either won't or somehow already have (even though you haven't).

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 16, 2024 at 4:43 pm

I have answered your question, and it's sweet to see you try to lie I haven't. Hell will be so full up with christians that an atheist won't be able to get in.

and dear, you admitted I answered you since you are whining about me adding things that may not apply to whatever is next. You shot yourself in the foot on that one.

Why are you desperate for just a yes or no answer? what would your response be if I answered yes or no? Oh yes, you have nothing.

still no evidence for your god or objective reality.

PASTORJWAITS May 16, 2024 at 5:19 pm

So. Much. Bluster. Let's stay focused on the substance.

I feel like you aren't really reading very carefully. I did indeed say you have given some answers...to questions I haven't asked. Which means it's been all irrelevant bluster.

Please understand, there's no desperation on my part. I'm actually more humored by your steadfast refusal to answer the simple question than anything else.

The question is: do you or do you not have evidence that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice? That's the one question you have not answered. We'll just keep going back and forth until you are finally willing to give your answer. It really is easy: yes or no.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 17, 2024 at 9:28 am

No bluster, just an answer to your question that you don't like. It's great when a christian lies and tries to gaslight me. I'm quite focused on the substance.

Thanks, Jonathan, you show just how much you depend on false claims to support your nonsense.

No one cares what you feel, Jonathan, when you make up nonsense to try to lie yet again. I have read your questions very carefully and have answered them. Again, you try to gaslight me. Unsurprisingly, you have yet to show that I have answered questions you haven't asked. As always, you never have evidence for your accusations or your god or objective morality.

If you have to keep asking the same questions I've answered, there is plenty of desperation to see in your actions.

I've answered that question, dear. Sorry to say but this recording medium supports me on that, no matter what lies you choose to tell.

Here are those answers:

““Cultures have their own ideas of human justice, which are demonstrably not the same. So your nonsense about one culture not killing someone who is innocent by their subjective ideas is meaningless. All cultures do this, and all cultures have different ideas about what is justified and what is not. Again, what would be murder in one culture would not be in another. You've done a great job of showing how morality is subjective.”

“Again, your silly question “Do you have evidence that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice? Or, to put that another way: is murder ever a morally good action? How do you know? What circumstances would justify it? Why those circumstances?””

and curious how you can't show how you would answer if I did say “yes” or “no”. Why not, Jonathan? So again, your whining about how dare I give a complete answer seems to show that you have no answer no matter what I would say.



PASTORJWAITS May 17, 2024 at 9:47 am

It's not at all that I don't like the responses you've given me. It's very simply that you haven't answered the question. I asked a yes or no question and you've given me every answer in the world except that. At this point, am I safe to assume that you don't have any evidence that there has ever been a human culture in history that has supported the killing of an innocent person according to that culture's grasp of human justice?

Let's look at the answers you have given since you quote yourself as having given two of them.

"Cultures have their own ideas of human justice, which are demonstrably not the same." Yes, that's true. I don't dispute that to a point and even allowed for that in my question. I asked if you have any evidence of a culture that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent BY THE STANDARDS OF THEIR GRASP OF HUMAN JUSTICE. Whether or not there are different standards is irrelevant to my question.

Again you said, "all cultures have different ideas about what is justified and what is not." Yes again. I assumed as much in my question.

"Again, what would be murder in one culture would not be in another." Yes for the third time. I assumed that in my question.

As for the second answer of yours you cite here, you simply say, "again, your silly question," and then go on to quote me. How do you construe that as an answer in any sense?

The fact that you responded three times to something I assumed in the question is what leads me to wonder whether or not you have really understood or read the question carefully. With that in mind, let's take one more look at the question. Do you have any evidence of any kind that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice. Either you have evidence of this, or you don't. That's the question. We can even settle for something more than a simple yes or no if that's proving to be a sticking point for you. "Yes, I have evidence of this," for example, would be just fine. Or, if you don't, a simple, "no, I don't have evidence of this," would be equally honest if that happens to be the case.

Let's simplify things even further then just to make sure things are as clear as they can be: Do you have evidence or not?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 17, 2024 at 3:58 pm

Jonathan, you've claimed the responses I have given you are "bluster" and "bluff" so your nonsense now about that you don't not like the answers I have given you is ridiculous. I've answered your question, period. I don't care if you want a yes or no answer. I give the answer \*I\* want to give. And unsurprisingly, you can't even tell me what your response would be if I said "yes" or "no", despite your claiming shouldn't have given a complete answer when I had the chance.

Now you try to lie and claim I've said what I've not. Way to go, Jonathan. You again show just how you make up false nonsense to satisfy yourself. ROFL. Yes, dear, I've given those answers and I will still give them. Your desperate need to somehow force me into saying something doesn't work.

It is not irrelevant at all, and again you can't support your accusations with facts. It's also great that you intentionally lie about the second part of my answer. This is it, not what you falsely claimed "Sorry, dear, you are stuck with the answer I gave, and you still fail miserably. Again, your silly question "Do you have evidence that there has ever been a culture in human history that supported the unjustified killing of a person considered innocent by the standards of their grasp of human justice? Or, to put that another way: is murder ever a morally good action? How do you know? What circumstances would justify it? Why those circumstances?"

fails since you assume that morality is objective. That cultures don't go against their own morals does not show morals are objective or are anything special. All you have done, again, is show how morality is subjective."

You now again try the same nonsense about me not understanding or reading the question. I have and my response shows it. Your repeatedly asking the same question again and again shows a rather amusing desperation. You'll get no other answer from me. I consider it settled. It seems that whatever trap you wanted to try failed, Jonathan.

PASTORJWAITS May 17, 2024 at 4:54 pm

Well then, I suppose we're done. When you decide you want to actually answer the question I asked rather than all the other things you have blustered about, by all means let me know. Remember, it's simply this: do you have evidence for it or not? I'll assume the answer is no until you tell me otherwise. But, our conversation can't advance until you give me a real answer because it wouldn't be fair for us to take the next step on this line of thinking (and thus finally allowing you to find out what my response to your yes or no would be) on the basis of an assumption, so we'll just stop for now. Until then, have a good weekend and beyond if I don't hear from you.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 17, 2024 at 9:07 pm

My husband just reminded me why your nonsense of "just yes or no" fails.

Have you stopped beating your wife yet, Jonathan? Surely you can answer that with a simple yes or no.

I've answered the question, and you choose to lie again. How nice.

Curious how your assumption is a lie too. I've not said no and I've not said yes. You pick what you want to hear. Thanks for admitting that.

you can't even answer what you would say if I said either yes or no, dear, so there is no fairness involved.

PASTORJWAITS May 17, 2024 at 10:35 pm

That isn't even in the universe of relevant. For some reason that I can't figure out you are absolutely committed to doing everything but simply answering the question. Maybe it's a won't. Maybe it's a can't. Either way, we're stymied until you do.

The answer is simple: I don't and have not ever laid a hand on my wife. The answer to my question is equally simple. Either you do have evidence of such a culture or you don't. And, for what it's worth, you keep saying I can't tell you what my response to your answer would be as if that's supposed to be some kind of a taunt. I will be delighted to go there...as soon as you answer the question. The ball is in your court as it has been since we start off down this path. You just keep refusing to play and then blame me for your not wanting to play. It's odd, but here we are.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 20, 2024 at 10:11 am

And still no evidence for your god or that morals are objective. I've answered your question, and all you have been doing is trying to falsely claim I haven't. You notably have no response, no matter how I might answer. Yep, it is a taunt and the truth. You demand that I answer as you want, but when I ask you how you would answer if I would say simply "yes" or "no", you have nothing.

I've played, dear, and I don't have to follow the rules of your game. You are still a failure, like your religion.

PASTORJWAITS May 20, 2024 at 11:36 am

With all due respect, no, you still have not. You won't. I don't understand why you won't, but you won't. And then you keep insisting otherwise or trying to deflect the question like it's somehow my fault that you won't answer, or else just making up excuses for not ever actually answering. As I said before, the

whole thing is strongly suggestive that you don't actually have any such evidence. If you did, I simply cannot fathom why you haven't just shared it instead of putting on the show you've been giving.

The question was very simple: Do you have evidence of a human culture in history that supported the unjustified killing of an innocent person according to their grasp of human justice. Either you have such evidence, or you don't. That's not complicated at all. For the life of me, I can't understand what's preventing you from simply sharing the evidence you have or merely acknowledging that you don't. It really is a simple thing.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 20, 2024 at 4:44 pm

You've had no respect for me since you starting lying, Jonathan. It's great when you evidently think your god won't notice.

Again, I've answered, and you still have no evidence for your god or objective morality. You have no possible answers no matter how I answer your question.

I don't care what you claim as "suggestive", you have nothing to support your accusations.

PASTORJWAITS May 20, 2024 at 4:51 pm

So then, still no answer to the question. I really would like for our conversation to move forward, but we can't until you are willing to say whether or not you have evidence of a human culture that has supported the unjustified killing of an innocent person according to their grasp of human justice. You have yet to say whether you do or do not.

And what supports my assumption (which is not the same thing as an accusation) that you do not is the fact that you continue to refuse to say whether or not you have the evidence I've asked for. If you had such evidence, that would greatly support the case you are trying to make that human morality is totally subjective. My natural assumption is that if you had such evidence, seeing as it would help your case, you would have long since produced it.

The fact that you have still not done so along with all the bluster you've produced instead, is suggestive that you do not in fact have such evidence. If I'm mistaken in that assumption as you have insisted, then by all means, produce the evidence and prove your case. I'll be most intrigued to see it.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 20, 2024 at 4:55 pm

Yep, more lies from the christian. How not surprising. And it's great that you lie and claim you aren't accusing me when you make your false "assumption". Again, you show how christians need to make false claims.

I've already made my case. You claimed to have evidence that morality is objective. You have failed to support that claim. I have shown that human morality is subjective, by showing how christian morality is just that.

You still fail, Jonathan, to have evidence for your god or objective morality. And then now you are back to the usual lies that my responses are "bluster", when you again can't show that to be true.

PASTORJWAITS May 20, 2024 at 6:07 pm

Once again, I haven't accused you of anything. I've alerted you to the fact that I am feeling more and more justified in making a particular assumption about whether or not you really have evidence for a human culture that has supported the unjustified killing of an innocent person according to their grasp of human justice on the basis of the fact that you have yet to produce such evidence after my having repeatedly made a request for it and given you numerous opportunities to do so. Instead of producing it, you've continued to bluster about a number of other things. However, I have given you the option of not only correcting my assumption, but of demonstrating it to be false by producing your evidence. If I were to accuse you of not having the evidence, I would have made a categorical assertion of the fact. I have pointedly not done that. I don't plan on it. You deserve the opportunity to furnish your evidence or not before I come to any kind of a firm conclusion.

So, once again: do you have evidence of a human culture that has supported the unjustified killing of an innocent person according to their grasp of human justice. Either you do, or you don't. If you do, I really would like to see it. If you don't, then just come clean and acknowledge that you don't. You really don't have anything to lose here unless you are looking to save face owing to the fact that you don't have any (again, the assumption I am operating under because of your persistent refusal to produce the evidence while insisting you have nonetheless answered the question) and fear that would weaken your case for a purely subjective human morality. But again, if that isn't the case, great. Just produce the evidence and let's continue forward in our conversation.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 21, 2024 at 9:39 am

yawn, still no evidence for your god or objective morality. It's so sweet how Jonathan chooses to lie and ignore his god.

Your assumption is still that, nothing more than something you made up. Why would I care to correct something you can't show true?

PASTORJWAITS May 21, 2024 at 10:22 am

I haven't made anything up. You haven't been willing to say whether or not you have evidence of a human culture that has supported the unjustified killing of an innocent person according to their grasp of justice. Why is that exactly? The longer you refuse, the more I naturally start to wonder why you persist in refusing. The truth of my assumption that the answer is no is so far borne out by the fact that you just won't answer the question. Do you have the evidence or not? For the life of me, I haven't been able to come up with a good reason you haven't answered so far. Cowardice? Ignorance? Stubbornness? A love of arguing combined with the fear that the answer you actually have could end the argument or otherwise result in your losing it? What else is there? Do you have evidence of a human culture that has supported the unjustified killing of an innocent person according to their grasp of justice?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 21, 2024 at 3:26 pm

And still no evidence for your god or objective morality.

Again, I've answered as I chose. Your assumptions no more than baseless claims, made to try to pretend I have answered the way you demanded.

it's great to see you make more baseless accusations, dear. I do enjoy when christians choose to lie.

PASTORJWAITS May 21, 2024 at 4:18 pm

Are you equating questions and accusations? Those are two different things. I asked lots of questions in my last response seeking to understand your puzzling refusal to answer the question, but I didn't make any accusations. What exactly do you feel like I accused you of?

And, yes, you answered as you chose, you just haven't yet answered the question I actually (and repeatedly) have asked. Why is that? Do you have evidence that there has ever been a human culture that supported the unjustified killing of an innocent person according to their grasp of human justice? At this point, surely I am right to assume you simply don't have any such evidence. Is that the case? Shall we go on to discuss the implications of your apparent lack of evidence?

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 22, 2024 at 9:47 am

Wow, way to go to ignore what I wrote. Your assumptions are baseless accusations. Lovely how you can't support them.

Still no evidence for your god or for objective morality. It's great to see you keep lying.

PASTORJWAITS May 22, 2024 at 11:40 am

Interesting. So, in the process of accusing me of ignoring what you wrote, you ignore what I wrote. It's kind of like the pot calling the kettle black.

Let's be fair then: What specific concerns that you expressed in your last post do you feel I ignored?

While we're at it, though, I am still waiting for you to produce evidence that there has ever been a human culture that supported the unjustified killing of an innocent person according to their grasp of justice. I remain convinced that you do not actually have any such evidence. I will remain so convinced until you actually furnish it. Until then, all your complaints of baseless accusations and assumptions will continue to fall flat because you haven't done the one thing you've needed to do in order to demonstrate their baselessness, namely, furnish evidence for a human culture that has ever supported the unjustified killing of an innocent person according to their grasp of justice.

Since we're on the subject, and since you seem incapable of producing any such evidence, let's go ahead and ask a follow-up question: Why do you suppose this is? Why do you suppose that is? Could it be that the reason is that no human culture has ever supported the unjustified killing of an innocent person according to their grasp of justice? In other words, could it be that no human culture has ever supported murder? Well, why is that? What is it about the unjustified killing of an innocent person that every single culture across all the ages of human history has understood to be wrong? I mean, there have been a lot of different human cultures, some much more inclined toward and supportive of violence than others. Yet none of them that apparently either of us knows of has ever supported murder. Even allowing for a wide variety of definitions of murder, however a particular culture has defined murder, they haven't supported what they understood to be murder. It seems like we are standing on increasingly philosophically solid ground to be able to make the tentative observation that murder is objectively wrong. Your apparent inability (although it could only be an unwillingness, granting it would be a puzzling unwillingness) to furnish evidence of such a human culture is suggestive of the fact that you don't actually have evidence that the position we are staking out here is in error. And if we have the existence of one apparently objective moral law, then there is a powerful case to be made that there are others.

Ball's in your court now if you want to play. Just furnish the evidence to show I'm in error here. Or, you can continue accusing me of lying and making baseless accusations rather than actually engaging meaningfully in what is increasingly becoming a one-sided conversation. If you opt for the latter, though, and word of this conversation somehow leaks out, your position starts to look pretty weak and maybe even false. Shall I look for your posting the unedited transcript of this conversation on your blog like you have segments of our previous conversations where you felt like you were somehow winning a point so that I can enable the link? I do hope you've noticed that I never have taken something down just

because it might make me look better by doing so. I want to be sure I'm being fair and not hiding anything.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 23, 2024 at 8:58 am

So, where have I ignored what you have written? Considering what you've written is no more than false accusations about me, it seems I've covered it all. Again, I've answered you and you've falsely claimed I have not.

And still no evidence for your god or objective morality. I don't care what a liar is "convinced of", Jonathan. You have no evidence and thus you fail.

And again, all you have are baseless claims.

ROFL. "And if we have the existence of one apparently objective moral law, then there is a powerful case to be made that there are others."

Funny how you have no evidence for any objective moral law at all. It's so sweet that you falsely claim that you do. Your assumptions still fail miserably. No god, no source, no objective morality.

It's lovely that you now add the lie that I've not engaged "meaningfully". Thanks! I'll be happy to post your lies on my blog. Thanks for the permission.

CLUBSCHADENFREUDE May 16, 2024 at 8:07 am

BTW, all of your questions are attempts at trying to use your imaginary friend to fill the gaps. They all fail. You have yet to show your god exists at all.

or that objective morality exists.

Pingback: Not So Polite Dinner Conversation – more attempts at gaslighting – Club Schadenfreude

ARK May 1, 2024 at 7:24 am

Why is it that when someone expresses utter disgust for religion their defenders automatically assume that there is psychological or emotional baggage because of a bad church experience?

Or that a particular sect is false.



After all, Christians are forever ragging on each other over whose doctrine is right and who is a real Christian and who is not.

They have even fought wars over such nonsense.

With this in mind, could it rather be that the upon closer examination the religion in question is not only unsupported by any evidence, it truly is abusive, disgusting and deserving of all the scorn and derision heaped upon it?

PASTORJWAITS May 1, 2024 at 8:30 amREPLY

I assume you've read through most of the conversation you're jumping in on here. When someone expressed such utter disgust for anything else one of two things are almost assuredly true.

The first is that this other thing is irredeemably evil and unquestionably deserving of all the disgust and hatred and disdain that can be directed its way. Hitler and the Nazi regime come most quickly to mind here as they are pretty much the worldwide standard for things that are universally condemned as utterly morally reprobate beyond all argument to the contrary. Anyone who would take a stand with such things should also be the recipient of this disgust and disdain.

The second is that the person feeling such utter disgust has had some kind of a bad experience with this other thing and has allowed that experience, whatever it was, to become the only lens through which they see it. The result of this is that everything about this other thing and everyone involved with it in some capacity is understood by this person to be horrible in every respect. This jaded and fractured lens gradually becomes the one through which the person sees not only the particular thing in question and with which that bad experience was originally encountered, but also everything that could be placed into the same general category as the original thing whether they are the same or not.

Religion in general and the Christian religion in particular has been the source of much that is not good over the course of the last 2,000 years. I've never denied that fact. At the same time, though the Christian worldview and people operating on the basis of its truthfulness in particular has been the source of things which have been and are good and which have contributed to human flourishing far more than any other worldview, religious or otherwise. Pick something that you consider to be a good thing about the world today and there's a high likelihood that its roots lie in work originally started by someone operating from out of the Christian worldview. In addition to that, the thought that more than a quarter of the world's population has been so blinded by indoctrination (to use your word) that they cannot see or understand that they are committing their lives to something that is irredeemably evil is a pretty hard one to countenance as true. This is especially the case when those same people by sociological survey tend to be the most generous, the most involved in service to their communities, the most invested in non-religious mediating institutions that contribute to the well-being and flourishing of their communities, the quickest to go to places that have been devastated by disasters of various sorts in order to bring relief and help, and so on and so forth.

To not be able to see the good that religion and specifically the Christian religion has and continues to contribute to the world requires a kind of willful blindness that is often, though perhaps not always, caused by having had a bad experience with it in some form or fashion. Or, to harken to our conversation in another comment thread, to look at the Christian religion and not be able to see anything good it has done or accomplished is suggestive of a persistent state of delusion whose origins are worth being explored. When you look at something and can only see the bad about it, there's a good chance that says a whole lot more about you than about the thing itself. And, when such a vast number of people have committed their lives to it, it is perhaps worth pausing for a moment to ask the question: What am I missing here? What am I not seeing that all these other people see? And in that moment if your only answer is that they're all delusional and indoctrinated, that once again would seem to say more about you than about everyone else or the thing itself.

ARK May 1, 2024 at 10:29 am

Truthfulness? Regarding Christianity? If that is not an oxymoron then I really don't what is.

The blindness is all yours, Jonathan.

Christianity gained its global prominence through conquest and bloodshed. Rule by divine right.

Convert or die.

If one considers the make believe tales in the Old Testament Christians enacted them for real as they slaughtered each other and millions of non – believers.

They raped Africa literally and figuratively, enslaving your god knows how many Africans and then after centuries developed a conscience and pushed for slavery to be banned, claiming moral superiority along the way.

Any defense of Christianity is nothing but gross hypocrisy of the first order.

It gained a modicum of respectability by hand-waving away much of the filth and excrement it is coated in,

Yes, there are good people within the religion, this I will never deny. However, the religion itself is heinous.

And if the only reason said people are motivated to do good is because of their religion then it isn't worth spit.

PASTORJWAITS May 2, 2024 at 8:50 am

You're kind of making my point here. That you can't see anything good about it at all and focus all your attention on the parts that are unquestionably troublesome says a great deal more about you and your particular perspective on the matter than it does about the Christian religion itself.

ARK May 2, 2024 at 9:05 am

Let's test the waters.

You would obviously be thrilled if I converted to your religion.

Give me one or more reasons why it would be the best decision of my life to convert.

All yours...

Away you go.

Like

PASTORJWAITS May 3, 2024 at 2:05 pm

Of course I'd be thrilled. I'm thrilled when anyone makes a profession of faith in Christ. That's kind of the whole point of my entire career :~)

As for why you should decide to follow Christ. Here are two reasons (I think there are more, but those speak more to personal benefits than ontologically significant reasons):

1. It's true. Jesus really did rise from the dead. He really is the Messiah of prophecy. He really is able to help you get into a right relationship with God. Because of all that alone, He's worth following. As long as you remain convinced it's not true, however, you should reject it. There is absolutely no reason to give your life to something that isn't true. I hope you know me as a reasonably intelligent, at least somewhat rational guy. I am absolutely convinced that the Gospel is true. Therefore, I think you should give your life to it.

2. Because you are a sinner just like everyone is apart from Christ. But while God is patient with your sin and doesn't leave you to face the full weight of its consequences here and now because of His love for you, that patience won't last forever. There will be a day when everyone has had the chance to hear and respond to the Gospel. When that day comes, so will the end. And death isn't going to separate anyone from sin's consequences either. One day God is going to judge everyone for their decisions in life. Everyone. No one will be exempt from that. For those folks who have chosen to stick with their sin in whatever form, however benign-appearing, that happened to take, they will be allowed to stick with that decision. They'll be separated from God and will spend eternity separated from the only source of life in an existence that will thus be characterized only by death. Exactly what form that death happens to take we don't know, but it won't be good. In fact, it will be a place devoid of goodness because God is

also the only source of good in the world. Those folks, however, who decide to accept that Jesus' sacrifice really was effective on their behalf and to place their faith in Him as Lord, will be judged on the basis of His works instead of their own. By throwing in their lot with Him, they'll get the reward for faithfulness that He received, namely a right relationship with God and eternal life in His perfect kingdom. This is all the result of God's great love for you. As John put it, quoting Jesus, "God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." In short, you are someone who needs saving even if you don't realize it, and Jesus not only can, but will, do that saving if you'll let Him. He thinks you're worth saving no matter how you've thought about or talked about Him in the past because He loves you.

Of the two, the second reason is obviously more theologically significant. The first, though, besides being more philosophically significant is, I think, maybe the more important of the two on the whole. Maybe another pastor would give emphasis to the second, but I think the first matters more. If it isn't true, don't bother with it. If it is, there's literally not a good reason not to convert and follow Jesus. I could talk about other things like hope or peace or a motivation for good works or something like that, but as you rightly said somewhere else, if the only reason someone is doing good things or feelings good things is because of their religion, they aren't a very good person to start with and their religion isn't worth spit. If you are going to adopt a religion, do it because it's true. If I don't ever convince you it is, then don't. We can still banter back and forth, and you can still tell me why I'm wrong, because I am enjoying your company even if you are a devil worshiping, baby eating, Led Zeppelin playing backwards atheist. But I'll understand perfectly well why you're doing it.