

# Atheism and belief

## The difference Jesus makes



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Unbelief is an accident; faith is the only permanent state of humanity.



...there is an intractably large proportion of the population confident in the existence of a deity.

# A Case for God

1. Mind is the best explanation for
  1. Why there is something rather than nothing
  2. The way the world looks
  3. The possibility of life
  
2. Mind is the best explanation for
  1. Meaning
  2. Values
  3. Purpose

# Atheistic objections

God is unnecessary

But...

God is invisible

But...

God is not good

But...



# God and goodness

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, filiacidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully. *The God Delusion*, p.31

# Terry Eagleton

Christianity believes that a great deal of human wickedness is historically caused, and can be tackled by political action. But it also thinks it wildly implausible, given the scale and persistence of human viciousness, to think that this is all there is to the matter... There has been no human culture to date in which virtue has been predominant. ... Yet at the same time Christian faith is absurdly, outrageously more hopeful than liberal rationalism, with its apparently unhinged belief that not only is the salvation of the human species possible but that, contrary to all we read in the newspapers, it has in principle already taken place. *Reason, Faith and Revolution*, p. 48.

Christianity has functioned for the normative self-understanding of modernity as more than a mere precursor or a catalyst. Egalitarian universalism, from which sprang the ideas of freedom and social solidarity, of an autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, of the individual morality of conscience, human rights, and democracy, is the direct heir to the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of continual critical appropriation and reinterpretation. To this day, there is no alternative to it. And in the light of the current challenges of a postnational constellation, we continue to draw on the substance of this heritage. Everything else is just idle postmodern talk.



Jürgen  
Habermas

Time of  
Transitions, Polity  
Press, 2006

pp.150-151.



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