



**Deism Emails:  
Answers from a 21st  
Century Deist on a  
Variety of Subjects**

**by Jayson X**

**Deputy Director of the World Union of Deists**

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## FORWARD

As of today, March 24, 2013, I have been the Deputy Director of the World Union of Deists (WUD) for approximately nine years. During that time, my main responsibility to WUD—a responsibility that I love to fulfill—is to answer emails from people all over the world. I am extremely grateful to Bob Johnson (the founder, director, and webmaster of WUD) for giving me this opportunity. Before I joined WUD and met Bob, I was an excommunicated priest with no way of preaching the important truths that I had come to understand. Now, as long as I am a Deist, appropriately tactful, and completely rational, I can say whatever I damn well please. What freedom! What honesty! I am extremely glad to preach what I honestly believe to be true rather than the false and sometimes evil teachings of someone else. Thank you again, Bob.

Many of those emails that I have answered over the years are from people who sincerely want to know about Deism or to pick my brain on some particular topic, and many others are from people who want to convert me to their way of thinking. Some emails are incredibly unusual. (For a while, someone emailed me a few times, trying to convince me that the Earth is hollow. He or she even sent me some impressive-looking diagrams. I remained unconvinced, however.) But many emails basically ask or say the same thing.

When I first started out as the “email guy” for WUD, I would type a completely new email every time I responded. Then I realized that there was often a better way: I could save responses that I frequently gave, and electronically copy and paste them when they were applicable. It took years, but this book of email responses has finally reached its present state. I do not believe that the book is finished yet, though. I expect to be answering emails pertaining to Deism for decades to come, and I suppose that at least some of those responses will be worth adding to this book for future use.

In this book, I have kept some of the first names (or other non-identifying names) of those I responded to. I want to remind me of them and to give the readers of this book an idea of the variety of people whom I have corresponded with over the years. You should be told, however, that even when a response seems like a complete email with a greeting, body, complementary close, signature, and WUD title; that does not necessarily mean that it is completely authentic. For example, I often delete portions of my responses that are not likely to be used in the future, and I make changes over time to improve my responses.

Also, some of the writings here have not even been put into emails yet. I just wrote them and thought, *Hey, I should add them to my email book because I probably will email them someday.*

Although the index is in alphabetical order, the topic order of my responses is random. In most cases, the topic order of my responses was determined by when I saved them on the computer file which gradually evolved into this book. Most of the responses near the front of the book are older than most of the responses near the end of the book.

Speaking of the index, let me take a moment to explain why I have put it in the front of the book rather than the back. It's simple. I found the index easier to use that way. My computer automatically opens this book at the front; and, because the index is in the front, I do not have to scroll all the way to the back before I can find what I am looking for.

Some observant readers might notice that I do not perfectly follow the MLA style of documentation. Unless I made a mistake—and there is always a good chance of that happening—I purposefully decided to break the MLA rule or rules because the article in question is usually designed to be emailed by itself to one or more persons, and not to be published as part of a book. For example, I sometimes document sources with a website address rather than with the last name of the author who wrote the article because I am probably not going to send the Works Cited page along with the email.

The final thing that I want to add to this forward are three paragraphs, which include this one. There is much confusion about what Deism is, so I often share in my email responses the most simple, yet precise, definition of Deism that I know. I put this definition at the front of this book along with an accompanying paragraph so that I can easily find, copy, and paste it. Fortunately, this definition doesn't fit too badly in this forward, so I will just keep it here.

Deism is the philosophy that teaches only the following two things: 1) One should base all of one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists.

That's it. Therefore, Deists can believe anything that is reasonable. Some people who claim to be Deists assert that Deism teaches more than just these two things, but I disagree with them. Deism is only a simple epistemological and theological position. Simply speaking, like Atheism, Deism teaches that one should base all of one's beliefs on reason; but unlike Atheism, Deism asserts that God exists or at least probably exists. In short, Deism is both as simple and as complicated as Atheism. I happen to be convinced that Deism is much truer, though.

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## 1. Marxism and My Opinion about Economics

Hello Melis,

I think that Karl Marx was right to demand that those who are very rich should share much of their wealth with those who are very poor. He was also right to criticize "revealed" religions, such as Christianity and Islam, for being tools of social repression. The poor are less likely to have a revolution to get their fair share from the rich, if the poor believe that God wants them to patiently wait and suffer until the next life.

I am not an expert on Marxism, but let's assume that Marx also taught that individual citizens should not be allowed to own property, practice their religion, speak and write thoughts critical of the government or society, or democratically elect their leaders. If so, I think that Karl Marx was wrong. People should be allowed to do those things.

I am in favor of laws that establish a good floor below which no citizen can fall and a good ceiling above which no citizen can rise.

That good floor would be death. No citizen should be allowed to become so poor that he or she dies from lack of oxygen, water, food, shelter, clothing, or decent healthcare. Decent healthcare might be defined as healthcare that costs taxpayers less than \$100,000 (in American dollars in the year 2000 C.E.) a year. Taxpayers should not have to pay more than that to keep some person alive who has an extremely expensive medical condition. Nature is cruel, and unfortunately some people are not designed to live long.

The government of a nation should set up a fund for people who complain that \$100,000 (or whatever the agreed on cost cap is) is too little. The purpose of the fund is twofold: 1) to pay for the medical treatment of individual citizens that costs more than \$100,000 a year in taxpayer money, and 2) to placate the complainers. Basically, the government is saying, "Hey, we are willing to pay A LOT to help keep all our citizens alive and healthy, but we do not have unlimited funds. If you're so upset about the \$100,000-a-year-payment cap because it is too low, then donate all that you want to the Fund for Extremely Sick and Needy Citizens. Thank you for shutting up."

Also, a government should guarantee that even the poorest citizens receive a quality education, as long as they are studying for an occupation that will greatly benefit society and for which there is not a surplus of employees.

The good ceiling in my metaphor is the amount of wealth that one person can earn in a year—a salary cap if you will. Perhaps it should be set at \$10,000,000 (in American dollars in the year 2000 C.E.) a year. That is much money, and hard-working, gifted people deserve to make that much. But no one citizen deserves to make more than that. Every penny a citizen makes more than the salary cap should be given to charitable government programs.

The purpose of this salary cap is to keep some individuals from getting too powerful and to maintain a sense of equality and equal opportunity among all citizens.

Given those two restrictions (the good floor and the good ceiling), I basically support Laissez Faire Capitalism. Laissez Faire Capitalism is the economic system in which people own property and do whatever they want to do with it, prices are determined by supply and demand, employees are hired and fired as their employers wish, and employees can choose to leave their jobs as they wish.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 2. Founding Fathers

To Whom It May Concern:

There is much debate about Washington's private religious beliefs, and despite what many modern American Christians say, he was probably not a zealous Christian. In fact, eminent American historian, James Flexner, wrote the following in *Washington: The Indispensable Man*: "[George] Washington subscribed to the religious faith of the Enlightenment: like Franklin and Jefferson, he was a deist" (New York: Plume Books, 1974, page 216.). For more information about Washington's religion, read [http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/john\\_remsburg/six\\_historic\\_americans/chapter\\_3.html](http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/john_remsburg/six_historic_americans/chapter_3.html).

As for Franklin, he wrote the following in his autobiography: "Some books against Deism fell into my hands; they were said to be the substance of sermons preached at Boyle's lectures. It happened that they wrought an effect on me quite contrary to what was intended by them; for the arguments of the Deists, which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to me much stronger than the refutations; in short, I soon became a thorough Deist" ("Deism." *Wikipedia*. 22 June 2011. 28 June 2011. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deism>>.).

Thomas Paine and Ethan Allen both wrote books promoting Deism and ridiculing Christianity. Respectively, those books are *The Age of Reason* and *Reason: The Only Oracle of Man*.

"The Treaty of Tripoli usually refers to the first treaty concluded between the United States of America and Tripoli, otherwise known in English as the *Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the United States of America and the Bey and Subjects of Tripoli of Barbary*. The treaty was signed at Tripoli on November 4, 1796 and at Algiers (for a third-party witness) on January 3, 1797, finally receiving ratification from the U.S. Senate on June 7, 1797 and signed by President John Adams on June 10, 1797" ("Treaty of Tripoli." *Wikipedia*. 8 Aug. 2010. 8 Aug. 2010. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty\\_of\\_Tripoli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Tripoli)>).

Article 11 of the treaty states: "As the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion,—as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility, of Mussulmen,—and as the said States never entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries."

John Adams, admittedly a Unitarian Christian (which means, among other things, that he probably believed in some of the miracles of the Bible but did not believe that Jesus was divine), was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. He and the Senators who ratified the treaty knew much better the philosophical and religious foundation of the

United States than most (if not all) modern American Christian theocrats, of which there are far too many.

## **QUOTES OF THOMAS JEFFERSON THAT PROVE HE WAS NOT AN ORTHODOX OR FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN**

Note: I define a small-o orthodox Christian as a Christian who believes in the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Second Coming, the General Resurrection, eternal Heaven for the righteous, and eternal Hell for the unrighteous. I define a Fundamentalist Christian as a Christian who believes that the entire Bible is true. All literal assertions of the Bible are literally true, and all figurative assertions of the Bible are figuratively true. Please note that an orthodox Christian can be a Fundamentalist Christian and vice versa. However, an orthodox Christian is not necessarily a Fundamentalist Christian, but a Fundamentalist Christian is probably an orthodox Christian.

(\* The following quotations are taken mainly or exclusively from "Our Founding Fathers on Religion." *Get Enlightened*. 1 Feb. 2013.  
<http://zenhell.com/GetEnlightened/FoundingFathers/>)

I. Jefferson specifically rejected the doctrine of the Trinity.

"It is too late in the day for men of sincerity to pretend they believe in the Platonic mysticisms that three are one, and one is three; and yet that the one is not three, and the three are not one. But this constitutes the craft, the power and the profit of the priests."  
-Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Adams, 1803

"The doctrines of Jesus are simple, and tend all to the happiness of man. But compare with these the demoralizing dogmas of Calvin.

1. That there are three Gods.
2. That good works, or the love of our neighbor, is nothing.
3. That faith is every thing, and the more incomprehensible the proposition, the more merit the faith.
4. That reason in religion is of unlawful use.
5. That God, from the beginning, elected certain individuals to be saved, and certain others to be damned; and that no crimes of the former can damn them; no virtues of the latter save."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Benjamin Waterhouse, Jun. 26, 1822

"The metaphysical insanities of Athanasius, of Loyola, and of Calvin, are, to my understanding, mere lapses into polytheism, differing from paganism only by being more unintelligible."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Jared Sparks, 1820

- II. Jefferson believed that Jesus of Nazareth was a mere human being, not the Only-begotten Son of God. He believed that Jesus was a great teacher of theology and morality. In other words, Jefferson disbelieved in the doctrine of the Incarnation.

"But the greatest of all reformers of the depraved religion of his own country, was Jesus of Nazareth. Abstracting what is really his from the rubbish in which it is buried, easily distinguished by its lustre from the dross of his biographers, and as separable from that as the diamond from the dunghill, we have the outlines of a system of the most sublime morality which has ever fallen from the lips of man. The establishment of the innocent and genuine character of this benevolent morality, and the rescuing it from the imputation of imposture, which has resulted from artificial systems, invented by ultra-Christian sects (The immaculate conception of Jesus, his deification, the creation of the world by him, his miraculous powers, his resurrection and visible ascension, his corporeal presence in the Eucharist, the Trinity; original sin, atonement, regeneration, election, orders of the Hierarchy, etc.) is a most desirable object."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to W. Short, Oct. 31, 1819

"The office of reformer of the superstitions of a nation, is ever more dangerous. Jesus had to work on the perilous confines of reason and religion; and a step to the right or left might place him within the grasp of the priests of the superstition, a bloodthirsty race, as cruel and remorseless as the being whom they represented as the family God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, and the local God of Israel. That Jesus did not mean to impose himself on mankind as the son of God, physically speaking, I have been convinced by the writings of men more learned than myself in that lore."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Story, Aug. 4, 1820

"The truth is, that the greatest enemies of the doctrine of Jesus are those, calling themselves the expositors of them, who have perverted them to the structure of a system of fancy absolutely incomprehensible, and without any foundation in his genuine words. And the day will come, when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the Supreme Being as his father, in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Adams, Apr. 11, 1823

- III. Jefferson believed that orthodox Christians, such as Saint Paul, have changed the religion of Jesus for the worse by adding miraculous nonsense to it.

"In every country and every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot . . . they have perverted the purest religion ever preached to man into mystery and jargon, unintelligible to all mankind, and therefore the safer engine for their purpose."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Horatio Spafford, March 17, 1814

"But a short time elapsed after the death of the great reformer of the Jewish religion, before his principles were departed from by those who professed to be his special servants, and perverted into an engine for enslaving mankind, and aggrandizing their

oppressors in Church and State."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to S. Kercheval, 1810

"It is not to be understood that I am with him (Jesus Christ) in all his doctrines. I am a Materialist; he takes the side of Spiritualism; he preaches the efficacy of repentance toward forgiveness of sin; I require a counterpoise of good works to redeem it. Among the sayings and discourses imputed to him by his biographers, I find many passages of fine imagination, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others, again, of so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same being. I separate, therefore, the gold from the dross; restore him to the former, and leave the latter to the stupidity of some, the roguery of others of his disciples. Of this band of dupes and imposters, Paul was the great Coryphaeus, and the first corruptor of the doctrines of Jesus."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to W. Short, 1820

IV. Jefferson was theologically a Deist, and he was morally a Christian at least to an extent.

"When we see religion split into so many thousands of sects, and I may say Christianity itself divided into it's thousands also, who are disputing, anathematizing, and where the laws permit, burning and torturing one another for abstractions which no one of them understand, and which are indeed beyond the comprehension of the human mind, into which of the chambers of this Bedlam would a man wish to thrust himself. The sum of all religion as expressed by it's best preacher, 'fear god and love thy neighbor,' contains no mystery, needs no explanation—but this wont do. It gives no scope to make dupes; priests could not live by it."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to George Logan, November 12, 1816

"Shake off all the fears of servile prejudices, under which weak minds are servilely crouched. Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call on her tribunal for every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Peter Carr, Aug. 10, 1787

Note: Deists base all their beliefs on reason, even their belief in the existence of God. Orthodox and Fundamentalist Christians base many (if not all) their theological beliefs on faith, which is the opposite of reason.

V. Jefferson thought that at least part of the Bible is nonsense.

"It is between fifty and sixty years since I read it [the Book of Revelation], and I then considered it merely the ravings of a maniac, no more worthy nor capable of explanation than the incoherences of our own nightly dreams."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to General Alexander Smyth, Jan. 17, 1825

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 3. My Long Religious Biography

Hi Gail,

Here is part of my story. I was raised an Eastern Orthodox Christian, graduated with a B.A. in English, and then went to seminary to become a priest. My faith got tested greatly in seminary, but I still believed enough to honestly get ordained. I was even very eager to do so. To be completely honest, though, it also did not hurt that I did not know what other job to get and I had signed a contract with my archdiocese that if I did not become ordained a priest, I would have to pay back tens of thousands of dollars to that organization.

My secret plan was to be a good priest for seven years and then reevaluate whether I should keep going or not. Since I did not want to be celibate, I married a church music director, who had to convert and quit her job so that I could be ordained. Neither the converting nor quitting were well received by her Evangelical Lutheran family, especially her mother.

For the record, I loved my wife and we got along well for many years.

To make a long story short, if you ever want to learn something well, teach it well. After teaching Christianity well for several years, I concluded that it, along with the Bible, is approximately 50% true, 50% false, 90% good and neutral, and 10% evil. I also concluded that people can and should embrace a better philosophy than that.

That having been said, I still would have completed my secret goal of being a good priest for seven years, but the bishops of my archdiocese transferred me to Canada, where I said that I did not want to go because my wife could not legally work there. The bishops were probably trying to force my wife and me to become a standard priest's wife and priest, which was not how we wanted to be. So instead of going to Canada, I collected my last paycheck and moved with my wife to Texas; and that is where I have lived ever since.

My wife has since left me for a man who believes in the miracles and theology of the Bible, or so it seems. I am glad to be a freethinking Deist and Utilitarian though. My girlfriend seems to like me just how I honestly am.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

#### 4. Becoming a WUD Contact Person

Hi Graeme,

Unfortunately, we do not have a contact person in South Africa yet. You could become one, though. It's easy, fun, and meaningful work.

All you have to do is email Bob Johnson, the director of the World Union of Deists, at bob@deism.com, telling him that you might want to be the contact person for South Africa. Then you will answer some questions; and if you answer those questions well, you will become the contact person.

All you have to do as the contact person is answer emails. You can do more if you want. For example, you can organize a meeting of Deists to discuss whatever you want, maybe even form a type of Deist support group.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 5. Levels of Belief

The truth is that we know very little with absolute certainty. Knowing with absolute certainty means that we cannot be sane and doubt what we know. At most, I can only think of three things that I know with absolute certainty: 1) I exist; 2) I perceive, feel, and think; and 3) mathematics remains constant. These facts alone belong to The Absolutely Certain Level of Knowledge.

Everything else can be doubted. I am real, but the whole universe beyond myself might be my hallucination. For example, I can doubt that the keyboard I am typing on exists. Perhaps some scientist is prodding my brain in a laboratory somewhere and making me think that I am typing on a real keyboard. Any doubt, whether probable or not, is enough to disqualify something from the category of what is absolutely knowable. I do not absolutely know the keyboard exists or that I am typing on it.

Obviously, you absolutely know something I do not. You absolutely know that you exist. However, you cannot absolutely know that I exist. Perhaps you have made yourself believe that someone else wrote this essay, but the truth is that you wrote it in your imagination. Maybe you are the only existent being—God Itself—and you want to believe others exist so that you will not be bored and lonely.

Having defined the first level of knowledge, The Absolutely Certain Level, it is time to define the second level of knowledge, The Deductive Level. Into this category belong all things we accept as true because we perceive them and/or they logically explain known facts. Either way, we use deduction to accept things as true which might not be true. I deduce that this keyboard is real because I can see it, touch it, hear its keys click when I press them, and this belief is not an extraordinary claim.

We have to believe in things in The Deductive Level in order to enjoy life and cope well with its challenges. We can't just be small "a" agnostic (not knowing) about everything. As far as I know, we have to have theories and hypotheses about every assertion we know of to deal with them wisely, or at least relatively wisely. These theories and hypotheses do not have to be well-developed and articulated, but they do have to be there, somewhere in our brain.

The third level of "knowledge" is The Faith Level. The Faith Level of "Knowledge" does not have knowledge at all. It only has unproven and unlikely beliefs that are accepted as knowledge (known truths) by the believer, even though these beliefs are probably false. However, one can still believe an assertion in The Faith Level of "Knowledge" and still be sane. The assertions of this level can be accepted as true by sane people who were indoctrinated to believe them and/or want to believe them. Unfortunately, many (if not most) humans are often skilled at finding false reasons to support their cherished beliefs.

The fourth and final level of "knowledge" is The Insane Level. The assertions in this level are so obviously wrong that one cannot be sane and believe them.

On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the most, how much credulity does it take to believe certain assertions? (Here, I define credulity as one's willingness to believe and one's lack of skepticism. This definition is somewhat different than most people's definition, but credulity is the closest word that I know to the idea I am discussing.) The following is my estimation. The number to the left is the assertion level, and the number to the right is the credulity level. The lower the assertion level, the less credulity it takes to believe.

1. Oneself exists: 0.
2. My keyboard exists: 1.
3. The stranger walking outside my window exists: 2.
4. The Great Wall of China exists: 3.
5. God exists: 4.
6. God does not exist: 5.
7. The Loch Ness Monster exists: 6.
8. The Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, Ascension, and Second Coming are all true: 7.
9. The Flying Spaghetti Monster exists: 8.
10. We all live in a yellow submarine: 9.
11. Oneself does not exist: 10.

So, where should I draw the line between reasonable and unreasonable beliefs? I draw it between Assertion Level 6 and 7. Although not as reasonable as Deism, Atheism is a reasonable belief for at least one reason: God has never, to the best of my knowledge, come out of hiding and spoken to all mortal humans in an obvious and direct way. However, believing that the Loch Ness Monster exists is an unreasonable belief because it is an extraordinary claim without extraordinary proof.

The Loch Ness Monster is supposed to be something like a large species of dinosaur trapped for millions of years in a lake in Scotland. There have been supposed sightings and photographs of it, but there has not been a Loch Ness Monster captured alive or even found dead for that matter. A live Loch Ness Monster or a relatively fresh Loch Ness Monster corpse would be extraordinary proof that the creature does exist, yet such proof will almost certainly never be found. For decades if not for centuries, many people have spent much time trying to find such proof and failed. Searching for the Loch Ness Monster in Scotland is like searching for a leprechaun in Ireland. It won't be found because it does not exist.

With all this in mind, Assertion Level 1 belongs to The Absolutely Certain Level of Knowledge; Assertion Levels 2 through 6 belong to The Deductive Level of Knowledge; Assertion Levels 7 and 8 belong to The Faith Level of "Knowledge"; and Assertion Levels 9 through 11 belong to what I will call The Insane Level of "Knowledge," because, simply speaking, one has to be insane to believe an assertion from this level.

A. The Absolutely Certain Level of Knowledge

Assertion Level 1: Oneself exists.

B. The Deductive Level of Knowledge

Assertion Level 2: My keyboard exists.

Assertion Level 3: The stranger walking outside my window exists.

Assertion Level 4: The Great Wall of China exists.

Assertion Level 5: God exists.

Assertion Level 6: God does not exist.

C. The Faith Level of “Knowledge”

Assertion Level 7: The Loch Ness Monster exists.

Assertion Level 8: The Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, Ascension, and Second Coming are all true.

D. The Insane Level of “Knowledge”

Assertion Level 9: The Flying Spaghetti Monster exists.

Assertion Level 10: We all live in a yellow submarine.

Assertion Level 11: Oneself does not exist.

## 6. Evil/Suffering

Dear Abie,

Let me give you some simple answers to some difficult questions.

1) Does God exist? Simply speaking, yes, because the universe seems purposefully made.

2) Is God completely good? Simply speaking, yes, God is completely good for at least two reasons: One, either directly or indirectly, God creates everything that is good. And two, God is almost certainly morally superior to all creatures, and some creatures are very good.

3) Why isn't a creature likely to be morally superior to God? God is probably superior to all creatures in whatever is excellent. Wisdom, power, understanding, and virtue are excellent things. Therefore, God probably makes more perfect decisions, can do much more, knows much more, and does more good and less evil than any creature.

I try to be a good person all the time, but I highly doubt that if I have a face to “face” conversation with God, I will be able to prove that I am morally superior to God.

4) Then what is the purpose of suffering? Deists are allowed to believe whatever they want about suffering, but here is what I believe. First, I will talk about pain.

I believe that the purpose of pain is to make creatures change. For example, when I put my hand on a hot stove, I feel pain in my hand, and this causes me to change. Specifically, I move my hand. In this instance, pain is desirable because it saves my hand from being destroyed by excessive heat. Now, I will talk directly about suffering.

Suffering is undesirable pain. If I am feeling pain but I can do nothing about it, that is suffering. An example of suffering might be putting up with an illness or a personal situation for which there is no cure but death or dishonor.

It seems to me that the purpose of suffering is to teach us, make this life more worthwhile, make things more interesting, and test us.

5) What is evil? Evil is suffering, and suffering is evil. No more and no less, at least to a large extent. The reason that something is considered evil is that it causes suffering.

6) How does suffering teach us? Suffering teaches us virtues such as humility, thankfulness, and bravery. Suffering makes us realize that we are weak compared to God. If we were as powerful as God, we would stop our own suffering and probably the suffering of others. Suffering makes us thankful because we and/or others are not suffering more than we already are. Suffering enables us to be brave because it gives us great difficulties to overcome.

7) How does suffering make this life more worthwhile? Without suffering, this life would be like a video game in which things happen but no one really gets hurt. It takes no sacrifice to be relatively good without suffering; and it is not evil to act like one is harming a creature that cannot suffer, just like it is not evil to do harmful-looking things to a video game character. Because there is suffering, rational creatures have to make choices with important consequences.

8) How does suffering make things more interesting? Suffering adds another aspect to this life, one—perhaps the only one—that most creatures hate. Suffering helps make stories more interesting because stories are boring unless their characters have problems to overcome, and suffering creates problems to overcome more easily than anything else. Every creature's life and every group of creatures' history are a type of story because they are one related event after another. Without suffering, the stories of individual creatures and groups of creatures would be boring or at least much less interesting.

9) How does suffering test rational creatures to determine if they deserve to be saved or disciplined? One cannot be relatively good unless one at least occasionally chooses to suffer for the benefit of someone else, and one cannot be relatively evil unless one at least occasionally chooses to make someone else suffer unjustly.

10) What do saved and disciplined means here? Saved means being completely sane, good, and happy forever immediately after one dies; and disciplined means not being completely sane, good, and happy forever immediately after one dies.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 7. Life After Death

### a) The Short Answer

Hi Arbie,

Deism teaches just two things: 1) We should base all of our beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads us to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists. That is it. Thus, Deists have a variety of reasonable opinions about the afterlife. Some Deists believe it exists, some don't, and others simply admit that they are not sure what to believe about the issue.

The following is some of my thinking about conscious existence after death:

1) Does God exist? Simply speaking, yes, because the universe seems purposefully made.

2) Is God completely good? Simply speaking, yes, because God created many good things and no creature is likely to be morally superior to God. God is more just and kind than the most just and kind human who ever lived.

3) Would the most just and kind human who ever lived let a creature that has suffered unjustly cease to consciously exist after it died? Simply speaking, no, because that creature deserves much happiness to compensate for its suffering. Moreover, life, personalities, and consciousness are things to be treasured, so it is a shame to waste them.

4) While they live, do all humans unjustly suffer and do all humans have life, personalities, and consciousness? Simply speaking, yes.

5) So will God eventually make all humans consciously and happily exist after they die? Yes.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### b) The Long Answer

Hi Kayla,

Deism teaches just two things: 1) We should base all of our beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads us to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists. That is it. Thus, Deists have a variety of reasonable

opinions about the afterlife. Some Deists believe it exists, some don't, and others simply admit that they are not sure what to believe about the issue.

This is how I think.

Does the universe seem created to me? Yes.

Then does a Creator exist? Yes.

Is this Creator completely good? Yes, we know this for at least two reasons: 1) God creates everything that is good and/or allows everything that is good to exist. And 2) God is not likely to be outdone by any of God's creatures in anything excellent. Thus, God is more good than even the most virtuous human who ever lived. That is very good indeed!

If the Creator is completely good, is there life after death? Yes, for at least two reasons.

1) This life is full of unjust suffering. The Creator must balance the unjust suffering of this life with much just pleasure in another life to be completely good. 2) Life, personalities, and consciousness are things to be treasured, so it is a great shame to waste them. The Creator must value and promote these three things as much as possible in order to be completely good. The Creator has the ability to continue the life, personalities, and consciousness of all creatures that die. Therefore, the Creator should, and almost certainly will, do so.

From this point on, the Creator will be referred to as God for the sake of convenience.

How can there be life after death? Creatures can consciously exist after they die in one of four ways: bodiless spirits, reincarnation, resurrection, or replication.

If creatures are really only spirits trapped in physical bodies, then, after they die, they can live as bodiless spirits or they can be reincarnated. However, if creatures are really only physical bodies, then they cannot live as bodiless spirits or be reincarnated; they must be resurrected or replicated. The same is true if creatures are really both spirits and bodies.

In the last case, death is the separation of the spirit from the body. The separated spirit is only a ghost, and the separated body is only a corpse; neither is truly a living creature. Therefore, for the creature to live again, the spirit must be recombined with the body, and the body must be resurrected or replicated, because a dead and decomposed body will not function well.

So far, I have used many technical terms that should be defined before we proceed further. A spirit is a non-physical and immortal thing that, at least in many cases, is conscious. Physical means something that is material, that is something that, in this life, can be truly seen with eyes, heard with ears, felt with body parts, tasted with a tongue, and/or smelled with a nose. Someone might object here that, supposedly, ghosts sometimes can be seen and heard with physical eyes and ears. I respond by saying that if ghosts can truly be seen with physical eyes and truly heard with physical ears, then they have, at least temporarily and to an extent, become physical.

Bodiless means existing without a physical body. Reincarnation means a spirit is put into

a completely different body, possibly the body of a different species. Resurrection means a creature is made to live again because someone (probably God) reassembles all the parts that composed the original body. Replication means someone (probably God) makes a replica of the dead creature. As long as the memory and personality of the replica are basically the same as the dead creature, then the replica of the creature is that creature.

Please allow me to explain the Replication Theory better through an analogy. Suppose that your best friend was giving a speech to a large crowd in an auditorium in New York City, and you were among the crowd, carefully watching and listening. Then, all of a sudden, your best friend vanished without a trace. Suppose further that at the precise moment when your best friend vanished, someone appeared in front of another large crowd in an auditorium in Sydney, Australia. That person looked and sounded exactly like your best friend. She or he even had all of your best friend's memories, acted like your best friend, and claimed to be him or her. The question is, Who is this person? The answer is that it is not a new person; it is your best friend.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, when we die, we might be replicated on another planet in another universe (realm of existence). Yes, our old bodies would be decomposing in this universe, but our new bodies would be alive and well in another universe. Simply speaking, our new bodies, rather than our old bodies, would be us.

The bottom line is that there are four main good theories of life after death: the Bodiless Spirit Theory, the Reincarnation Theory, the Resurrection Theory, and the Replication Theory. All of them can be reasonable, compassionate, and hopeful; so believe whatever one you want. It matters little what theory of life after death is true, as long as there is life after death and true justice.

If I had to put my money on it, I would bet on the Replication Theory because I do not believe in spirits and resurrection seems so unlikely for at least three reasons: 1) The planet Earth would become very overcrowded if all dead creatures were resurrected at the same time. 2) Many creatures share the same molecules. For example, my body probably has some of the same molecules that were once part of the bodies of now-dead dinosaurs, fish, chickens, cows, and humans. 3) This universe seems destined to end in utter cold and darkness when all the stars lose their heat and light. It will be a horrible, if not impossible, place to live.

Some people, such as many Hindus, believe what I call the Absorption Theory: The goal of this life is to be absorbed by God to the extent that the one being absorbed has no individual existence. His, her, or its separate personality, memory, and will vanish forever. This state seems more like a punishment than a reward to me. It might be good for God, but it does not benefit the creature, because there is no creature to benefit. The creature is basically obliterated, not saved. Therefore, the Absorption Theory probably should not be believed.

All that having been said, I will now directly address the issues of Heaven and Hell. I

believe that because God is completely good, all creatures will live after they die, and rational creatures will be either rewarded or disciplined according to what they did in this life. Thus, relatively good people will be rewarded with something heavenly forever and relatively evil people will be disciplined with something hellish until they truly repent. True repentance means that the relatively evil person chooses to permanently become a relatively good person. After the relatively evil person in the hellish circumstance chooses to become a relatively good person forever, she or he then joins all the relatively good people in the heavenly circumstance.

Please note that I do not believe in eternal damnation as most Christians and Muslims do.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

<sup>1</sup> John Hick, "Theology and Verification," *Body, Mind, and Death*, ed. Antony Flew (New York: Macmillian Publishing Company, 1964), 271-273.

## 8. The Pyramid Symbol

Dear Abie,

Although certain philosophical ideas are associated with Deism, Deism teaches just two things: 1) One should base all of one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists. Anyone who believes these two things is a Deist; anyone who does not, is not.

What do the pyramid and bright light on the slogan mean? The following comes from *Deism: A Revolution in Religion, A Revolution in You* (pages 8-9) by Bob Johnson, the founder and director of the World Union of Deists.

"The Deist emblem pictured on the back cover is not a Masonic emblem.

"The words at the bottom of the pyramid, 'A New Cycle of the Ages—Deism' are to point out that we are in a new cycle that will see negative unreasonable elements of the old cycle, such as fear and superstition based religious belief, vanish as the natural and reasonable religion/philosophy of Deism rises.

"The uncompleted pyramid represents all the work and progress made by previous generations, and the fact that it is an incomplete pyramid shows us we still have important work to do. The top and separated portion of the pyramid represents humanity's potential which we're working and striving towards.

"The bright light burst represents the light of reason and the Designer of both life and reason, God.

"The motto, 'In Nature's God We Trust' differentiates Deism from the 'revealed' religions in that we trust Nature's God, we don't have 'faith' in what men tell us of God through their 'holy books' that they themselves wrote."

To Bob's thoughts, I would like to add that the pyramid symbol also reminds many people, including myself, of America's Founding Fathers—great men like Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Paine, Madison, and Allen. That symbol was put on some of the first money that the United States ever printed, and it is still on the back of the American \$1 bill today. Thinking of America's Founding Fathers encourages many people to think of Deism and embrace it. I know that one of the reasons I became a Deist is because I respect the religious opinions of the aforementioned men so much.

Symbols are important, but even if you do not approve of the symbol of the World Union of Deists, you should consider becoming a Deist anyway and joining our organization. Beliefs and actions are much more important than symbols.

Lastly, I invite you, or anyone else, to propose a better symbol for the World Union of Deists. If I like your symbol more than I like our current symbol, I will gladly suggest that your symbol replace our current symbol.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 9. The Goodness of God

Hi Kyle,

Here are at least three reasons to believe that God is completely good: 1) God creates everything that is completely good; 2) God is almost certainly morally superior to all creatures, and some creatures are very good; and 3) God might allow some evil to promote much more good.

However, it is honest and helpful to keep an open mind on the topic. Even if a Deist chooses to believe that God is completely good, he or she should be open to the possibility that God might be at least a little evil. Why? Because it is possible. (That's the honest part.) God lets every creature in this universe suffer and die, in some cases very horribly.

One reason it is helpful to keep in mind is that it helps us to understand why some people honestly believe that God is evil or have rejected the idea of God. This helps us to deal with them better. For example, we can like them more, empathize with them more, and help them more because we understand them.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 10. Why Is There Only One God?

Dear John,

Why is it more likely that there is only one God rather than two or more Gods? One reason is that everything came from something except the first cause.

Consider a human—me—for example. What caused me to exist? Here is the probable chain of events as I understand them: I am a human who came from other humans, and the first humans came from apes, and the first apes came from some other kind of mammal, and the first mammal came from a reptile, and the first reptile came from an amphibian, and the first amphibian came from a fish, and the first fish came from some other kind of multi-celled aquatic creature, and the first multi-celled aquatic creature came from a single-celled aquatic creature, and the first single-celled aquatic creature came from the Earth, and the Earth came from a nebula, and the nebula came from the galaxy, and the galaxy came from the Big Bang, and the Big Bang came from . . . something. Eventually, there had to be one thing that always existed, and from that one thing came all other things. There had to be a first cause because it seems impossible for the process of cause and effect to have gone on forever in the past. This fact indicates that there is just one God. God is the first cause.

A second reason to believe that there is only one God is this: Simply speaking, we know that at least one God exists because the universe exists, and it should only take one God to create the universe. Since we have much evidence that one God exists but do not have much, if any, evidence that two or more Gods exist, we should believe that just one God exists.

A third reason to believe that there is only one God has to do with the answer to the question, Where did God come from? Some Atheists argue that it is not very likely that the first thing that existed was a being who was capable of creating the universe. I have a response to this objection. Probably many Deists would disagree with my hypothesis, but it is still consistent with Deism. I hypothesize that the first thing that existed was some inanimate stuff—perhaps matter, perhaps energy, perhaps both. I don't know for sure, so I will call it stuff. Then, through a process similar to evolution on this planet, this stuff evolved life, then intelligence, then virtue, and then extreme intelligence and virtue. Once it reached this stage, it was capable of creating the universe. This stuff was and is God. So God always existed, but God has also evolved.

A likely objection here is that Atheism implies that plant and animal life evolved by itself from inanimate stuff. We know that plants and animals exist, but we do not know that God exists. So why should we believe that God just evolved from inanimate stuff when we can just believe that plants and animals evolved by themselves from inanimate stuff? I admit that it is very unlikely that the first thing that existed was an all-powerful being who could create the universe, but I also insist that it is equally unlikely that the universe, which includes all the creatures in the universe, created itself. The universe consists of more than a quadrillion amazing things. God is just one amazing thing—for lack of better

words. It is much more likely that the one amazing thing developed naturally and then created the quadrillion-plus amazing things, than the quadrillion-plus amazing things developed naturally by themselves.

God probably evolved and created life on planet Earth to evolve like God did, not in the exact way but a similar way. We humans might never create a universe. However, we did evolve from lifeless stuff and, later, creatures with little or no intelligence and virtue. Compared to many of our ancestors, we humans are much more like God. And if our species keeps evolving as it has been, our distant descendants will be much more like God than us. A work of art always teaches us something about its artist, and God is the artist of the universe. The universe teaches us that God is dynamic and likes evolution.

If my hypothesis that God evolved from lifeless stuff is correct, then the development of one God was unlikely. It was just an extreme coincidence like a lightning bolt haphazardly hitting a target in the bull's-eye. The development of two or more Gods within the same amount of time, thus, seems even more unlikely, like two or more separate lightning bolts hitting a target in the bull's-eye at the same time. This indicates that there is probably only one God.

At this point, you might be thinking, *Well, maybe one God developed from the lifeless stuff and then waited a trillion years or so for another God to develop from lifeless stuff. After that, the two Gods created the universe together.* It is possible, and I guess that one could be a Deist and a polytheist. However, what is a better analogy concerning the relationship between God (or the Gods) and the universe: a brain and a thought, or a sculptor and a clay vase? The brain and thought analogy represents Panentheism, the doctrine that the universe is part of God. The sculptor and clay vase analogy represents the doctrine that the universe is not part of or equal to God. The universe and God are completely separate, except for the fact that God made (or is making) the universe.

If it is a brain and its thought, there probably is only one God because each brain that I know of works separately to think its thought. If it is a sculptor and a clay vase, maybe there is more than one God because a clay vase may have more than one sculptor.

I favor the brain and thought analogy because, as far as I know, more things are created by brains than by hands. In other words, we humans, and perhaps all thinking creatures, create more ideas than creative objects. We create many ideas and then use just some of those ideas to make creative objects.

An object is something that can be perceived by at least one of the five senses: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. So a creative object is an object that a creature purposefully makes that expresses a creature's idea. An idea is that which comes into existence in a mind as a product of mental activity. Paintings, sculptures, and written poems are examples of creative objects.

Everyday, I imagine what it would be like if I did this or that, or if this thing or that thing happened. Yet, I sometimes go whole days with producing an object that shows any

creativity.

Well, let me know what you think.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 11. Different Types of Deists

Dear Hendrik,

Thanks for the compliment and the constructive criticism. I understand your reaction because it was like my reaction when I first discovered the World Union of Deists website. I thought to myself, *Just about everything stated on this website seems true and important, but it is unnecessarily offensive.* Then I thought about how boldly many "Revealed" Religionists proclaim their false beliefs, how much misery "Revealed" Religions have already inflicted upon humanity, and how much more misery "Revealed" Religions are likely to inflict upon humanity in the future.

For example, Fundamentalist Christians in the United States and Jews in Israel might start World War III with Fundamentalist Muslims in the Middle East. Albert Einstein, who was theologically a Deist, said something to this effect: I don't know what type of weapons will be used in World War III, but I know what type of weapons will be used in World War IV: sticks and stones.

I am strongly in favor of people having the right to believe and practice whatever religion they want as long as they do not obviously hurt someone else, but I am strongly opposed to "Revealed" Religionists dragging my planet and my loved ones into a disastrous world war over their false religious beliefs.

Reasonable people have to work together to make reason prevail over destructive myths and traditions. I checked around, and, despite its shortcomings, I finally joined the World Union of Deists because it seemed like the best way for me to serve humanity and the creatures whom humanity impacts. That process took a few years, but I do not regret my decision.

There are three general types of Deists: Confrontational Deists like Thomas Paine, Non-confrontational Deists like Benjamin Franklin, and Closet Deists like George Washington. (I made up the names for these types, so do not be surprised if few people have ever heard of them.) These three types complement each other and work together to make the world a better place, just like the American Revolution might have failed if there was no Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, or George Washington.

The World Union of Deists (WUD) is a Confrontational Deistic organization. That means that WUD works to prove that Deism is good and true, and to prove that Deism is superior to "Revealed" Religions, Atheism, and Agnosticism. To employ a common metaphor in a slightly different way, it uses both the carrot and the stick to help people embrace a better way of thinking and acting.

There are other Deist organizations that have more of a Non-confrontational and, perhaps even, Closet approach. I am glad that such organizations exist. Different strokes for different folks!

Let me take this opportunity to explain to you that the people who belong to WUD generally strive to be humble despite our bold stances. We want all human beings, regardless of their religious background, to be as sane, good, and happy as possible. The reason that we use strong language is to wake people from their philosophical and religious stupor. Humanity must greatly question its philosophical and religious assumptions to be the best it can be.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 12. Agnosticism and Atheism

Hello Again, Tim,

Neither Atheism nor Agnosticism bother me too much for two reasons: 1) Both beliefs can be reasonable conclusions, and I want reason to prevail; and 2) neither Atheism nor Agnosticism teach anything blatantly evil. Atheists and Agnostics can easily be very rational and virtuous people. Believing that God exists does not make one virtuous. Doing good deeds and not doing evil deeds make one virtuous.

I admit that Atheism might be correct and Agnosticism can be very wise, but I am a Deist because of at least two reasons: 1) the First Cause Argument and 2) the Argument from Design.

If you want to read more about why I am convinced that Deism is the best theology, please read the essay that I have attached to this email. It is called "What Is the Best Theology?"

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 13. Biblical Communism

Dear Leon,

I am glad that you found our website helpful. Let me try to explain the Christianity/Communism article better. It all depends on one's definition of Communism.

communism: 1843, from Fr. communisme (c.1840) from commun (O.Fr. comun; see common) + -isme. Originally a theory of society; as name of a political system, 1850, a translation of Ger. Kommunismus, in Marx and Engels' "Manifesto of the German Communist Party." The first use of communist (n.) is by Goodwyn Barmby, who founded the London Communist Propaganda Society in 1841. Shortened form Commie attested from 1940 (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=communism>).

common: 1297, from O.Fr. comun, from L. communis "in common, public, general, shared by all or many," from PIE \*ko-moin-i- "held in common," compound adjective formed from \*ko- "together" + \*moi-n-, suffixed form of base \*mei- "change, exchange" (see mutable), hence lit. "shared by all." Second element of the compound also is the source of L. munia "duties, public duties, functions," those related to munia "office." Perhaps reinforced in O.Fr. by Frank. descendant of P.Gmc. \*gamainiz (cf. O.E. gemæne "common, public, general, universal"), from the P.Gmc. form of PIE \*ko-moin-i- (see mean (adj.)). Used disparagingly of women and criminals since c.1300. Commons "the third estate of the English people as represented in Parliament" is from 1377. Common sense is 14c., originally the power of uniting mentally the impressions conveyed by the five physical senses, thus "ordinary understanding, without which one is foolish or insane" (L. sensus communis, Gk. koine aisthesis); meaning "good sense" is from 1726. Common pleas is 13c., from Anglo-Fr. communs plets, hearing civil actions by one subject against another as opposed to pleas of the crown. Common prayer is contrasted with private prayer (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=common>) .

Thus, Communism can be defined as the economic system of a society or group which shares all things in common. That sure sounds like the early Church according to Acts 2:44-45 NKJV: "Now all who believed [in Jesus Christ] were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need."

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 14. Education

Hi James,

I am a public school teacher by trade, and like most public school teachers, I have strong opinions about how the public school system should be. I would like to see a handful of American public schools try what I call the Three Group System. Based on placement tests from the previous spring, students from sixth through twelfth grade would be put in one of three groups for math, English, science, and foreign language classes. I chose only these four subjects, because they are the most academically challenging of all subjects and I do not want to completely separate students on the basis of intellectual ability. Students with different intellectual abilities should be mixed together in all the other classes so that they can become friends, help each other, and get used to people who are different than themselves.

Group One would be students who get a high grade on the placement test for the subject in question (perhaps the top 10%), Group Two would be students who get a medium grade, and Group Three would be students who get a low grade (perhaps the bottom 10%). This solution would allow teachers to teach students at the fastest pace students can learn. Group One students would be taught at a faster pace than students in Group Two or Group Three, and Group Three students would be taught at a slower pace than students in Group One or Group Two.

As it is now, too many math, English, science, and foreign language classes have students who are not learning everything that they should. Either the pace is too slow for them, so they are able to learn much more information than is being presented; or the pace is too fast for them, so they cannot understand all the information that is being presented. Furthermore, when students are too smart or not smart enough for a class, they tend to misbehave more, which upsets teachers and makes learning difficult for all the students in the class. Students who are too smart get bored because they are not being challenged enough, and students who are not smart enough get bored because they do not understand everything that is being taught. Yet no matter what the cause of boredom, bored students often misbehave to entertain themselves.

Now that the subject of classroom behavior has been mentioned, I want to say that almost all public schools should do a much better job of having fair and user-friendly rules with fair and user-friendly consequences for breaking those rules. Sadly, as it is now in most American public schools, students can misbehave so much that they learn very little and even greatly disrupt the education of their peers. Every public school should tell its teachers something like this: "These are the rules that you are expected to enforce, and here is how you are expected to enforce them." Instead, currently there is much guesswork involved for both teachers and students when it comes to rules and consequences. The result is much confusion, chaos, unease, frustration, and anger.

Education is extremely important. The more people are educated in both academics and virtue; the more sane, good, and happy they, their nation, and the world is. The American

public school system does more right than wrong, but it could do much better. I am convinced that the Three Group System and better rules and consequences would greatly improve it.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 15. Intelligent Design

Dear Ms. White,

Simply speaking, there are four different kinds of philosophies/religions: Atheism, Agnosticism, Deism, and “Revealed” Religions. The first three are based on reason, and the last one, “Revealed” Religions, is based on faith, which Mark Twain correctly defined as "being convinced that what you don't believe is true."<sup>1</sup> (You've got to love Mark Twain!)

Christianity is a “Revealed” Religion, and for years many Christians in the United States have been trying to trick the American public into teaching doctrines from the Bible as if they were proven facts, doctrines such as the Earth is only approximately 6,000 years old, the Earth was created in six days, and humanity did not descend from animals. Fortunately, they have generally failed since the beginning of the twentieth century. Now, though, many of them have masked their Creationism movement with a new, more scientific-sounding name: Intelligent Design.

As Deists have known for centuries, God (the Creator of the universe) probably exists because the universe looks like it was intelligently designed. So, Deists are not opposed to the statement, "God probably exists because the universe looks like it was *intelligently designed*." In fact, Deists largely base their beliefs on that truth.

What Deists strongly oppose is Biblical mythology (or any other mythology) being taught in non-religious institutions as scientific or historical truth. We even dislike it when it is called Intelligent Design.

Non-religious institutions, such as American public schools, should teach scientific facts and the scientific method, not wishful Fundamentalist Christian thinking.

Although I believe that the whole of scientific facts does support the belief that God exists, it does more harm than good at this time to use those facts in a public school science class to even suggest that God exists. There is enough science to teach students to keep them busy without bringing up the controversial subject of God. I say that we should make public school science classes teach science that open-minded and educated Atheists, Agnostics, Deists, and “Revealed” Religionists can all agree on. I support the separation of Church and State, and I support the separation of mythology and science.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

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<sup>1</sup> The actual quote is “Faith is believing what you know ain't so” and comes from *Following the Equator*, Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar (<http://www.twainquotes.com/Faith.html>).

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 16. Deism and Abortion

Dear Dorothy,

As you probably know, Deism is the philosophy that one should base one's beliefs on reason, and that reason leads us to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists. This is both a simple and profound philosophy, but it also leaves much room for freethinking.

Let's briefly consider the issue of abortion using pure reason. The Pro-life side makes at least one good point, specifically that conception seems to be when human life begins. And the Pro-choice side likewise makes at least one good point: A person has the right to do with his or her body as he or she chooses. The question is, What should one do when these two truths conflict?

I do not believe that Deism (or pure reason for that matter) provides one obvious answer to this question. In short, a Deist of good conscience can be either Pro-life or Pro-choice. You are not the first person to write to me about the abortion article. I believe that it would be best to drop it from the website because abortion is a very contentious issue that is not directly related to Deism. However, Bob Johnson is the founder, director, and webmaster of the World Union of Deists; and he wants to keep the article up. I am mainly the email guy.

I advise you to be a Deist and proudly call yourself a Deist, if that is what you are. You can be a Deist whether you join the World Union of Deists or not, just like you can be a Deist if you are Pro-choice or Pro-life. You are welcome to join the World Union of Deists even if you do not completely agree with all the articles on its website. You can also surf the Internet and try to find a better Deistic organization for you to join.

In case you are wondering how I would handle the issue of abortion, this is what I would do. Each state or province would have a referendum on the issue. The first vote would be to determine if all abortions should be illegal or not. If not all abortions were outlawed, the next vote would determine if all abortions should be legal or not. If not all abortions were legalized, there would be at least one more vote to determine when abortions should and should not be legal.

This method is fair because it is democratic and it allows the majority of voters to have the type of state or province that they want. If the majority of voters want a Pro-life one, that is what they would get. If the majority of voters want a Pro-choice one, that is what they would get. And if the majority of voters want something in between, that is what they would get. There is no need to physically hurt the opposition because one can use democratic means to promote one's cause.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 17. What Do We Know about God?

Hi Alex,

A question that everyone should ask him or herself is, How do we know anything? We know anything by using our five senses (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling) to gather data and then using our reason to explain that data. For example, I see my black keyboard that I am touching right now. Therefore, my reason tells me that my black keyboard exists. Not only that, but I see letters form on my computer screen when I press the keys down. So I know that my keyboard works.

Now, let's address the issue of God. What do we know about God using our five senses and reason? I can think of at least five things:

1. God exists because the universe seems purposefully created.
2. God likes diversity because God's creation, the universe, is full of diversity: hot and cold, big and small, beautiful and ugly, etcetera.
3. God is very powerful because God created the universe.
4. God is very good because God created everything that is good; God is almost certainly morally superior to all creatures, and some creatures are very good; and God might allow some evil to promote much more good.
5. God is one person, without gender or human form, who purposefully made the universe.

We know that God is one because everything that exists comes from something, with one exception. That exception is the source of all reality. An appropriate name for that source is God.

Consider me, for example. I came from other humans, and the first humans came from apes, and the first apes came from some other kind of mammal, and the first mammal came from some kind of reptile, and the first reptile came form some kind of amphibian, and the first amphibian came from some kind of fish, and the first fish came from some other kind of multi-celled aquatic creature, and the first multi-celled aquatic creature came from a single-celled aquatic creature, and the first single-celled aquatic creature came from the Earth, and the Earth came from a nebula, and the nebula came from the galaxy, and the galaxy came from the Big Bang, and the Big Bang came from God.

Well, maybe some of my scientific assertions will one day be proven to be a little incorrect, but the gist of what I am saying is true. Ultimately, everything had to come from one thing, because the chain of cause and effect cannot go on forever. Something or someone first caused everything else. God was it. Thus, there can only be one God, because there is only one source of all reality.

A person is one thing that is alive and very intelligent. Very intelligent means about as intelligent as or more intelligent than an average human. Simply speaking, a human is a person, but a plant is not, because, although the plant is alive, it is not very intelligent. We know that God is a person because we know that God is alive and very intelligent. We know that God is alive and very intelligent because God creates all Creation. Creation is everything that God creates, which at least includes the universe.

The universe is a masterpiece—the inspiration of every book, sculpture, musical composition, theory, building, painting, et cetera in the universe. God must be alive and very intelligent to make such a masterpiece. Mark Twain wrote *Huckleberry Finn*, Michelangelo sculpted *David*, George Frederick Handel composed *Messiah*, Albert Einstein created the General Theory of Relativity, Ustad Isa primarily designed the *Taj Mahal*, and Leonardo da Vinci painted *Mona Lisa*. The point is that only persons make masterpieces. Thus, God is a person.

Aristotle believed that God was a person but that God accidentally created the universe. Although Aristotle is generally considered a genius and he was probably more intelligent than me overall, his conception of God is absurd. How can a person accidentally make or create a masterpiece? *Huckleberry Finn*, *David*, *Messiah*, the General Theory of Relativity, the *Taj Mahal*, and *Mona Lisa* could not have been made or created by accident. They required persons purposefully acting to make or create them.

Gender means being either male or female. The main purpose of different genders is to combine the genes of two creatures to make a new and unique creature. A creature is anything that God creates that is alive. Genders allow for genetic variety, which generally makes a species better able to survive and evolve. God does not belong to a species, though. There is only one who makes all Creation come into existence. Therefore, God has no other God to combine genes with to create a third God, so God is neither male nor female.

We know that God is without human form because God has no need for things like hands, feet, eyes, ears, lungs, a heart, or a stomach. God moves things without grabbing; is everywhere without walking; knows what everything looks and sounds like without seeing and hearing; and can live without air, blood-flow, and food. God probably just lives and cannot stop living.

Please let me know if you have any further questions or comments.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 18. Why I Believe That God Exists

Dear John,

Let me tell you why I believe that God exists. There are at least three reasons.

The first reason that I believe that God exists is that the universe seems purposefully created. The universe is complex, magnificent, and balanced. If it were an accident rather than a work of God, it would almost certainly be homogeneous, bland, and chaotic. For example, a haze of gray gas is likely to exist without being created but not all the complex, magnificent, and balanced galaxies, stars, planets, and creatures of the universe. Therefore, God probably exists.

This assertion is especially obvious when we realize that our universe seems fine-tuned for life. For instance, it has all the things to create and sustain life as we know it, including energy, water, and elements like carbon. It also has the proper amount of gravity. The gravitational constant is a physical constant involved in the calculation of the gravitational attraction between objects with mass. If the gravitational constant were stronger, the universe would have collapsed on itself by now. If it were weaker, the stars would have died out by now because they need much mass to burn.

Here is another example. A scientific paper by Heinz Oberhummer of the Vienna University of Technology and others, called "Fine-Tuning Carbon-Based Life in the Universe by the Triple-Alpha Process in Red Giant Stars," concludes that "[e]ven with a change of 0.4 percent in strength of the N-N force, carbon-based life appears to be impossible, since all the stars then would produce either almost solely carbon or oxygen, but could not produce both elements." N-N force "denotes the strength of two nucleons in the formation of carbon, an element upon which all life on earth is based" (Haisch, Bernard. *The God Theory*. Newburyport, MA: Weiser Books, 2006, p. 63.). A nucleon is a proton or a neutron, especially one that is part of the nucleus of an atom.

For more cosmological constants that support the existence of God, read the article "Is There Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God?: How the Recent Discoveries Support a Designed Universe" by Dr. Walter L. Bradley. This article can be found at <http://www.leaderu.com/real/ri9403/evidence.html>.

Some physicists assert the Multiverse Theory to explain why our universe seems so fine-tuned for life without resorting to belief in God. They argue that there are probably many universes, maybe more than a trillion of them, and our universe is one of them. At least one of those universes should be perfect for life because each (or at least many) of the universes is at least a little different. So, suppose that there are a trillion universes in the Multiverse, and just one, our universe, is able to create and sustain life. "Big deal!" such Atheistic scientists would say. "That still leaves 999,999,999,999 without life."

The main reason that I reject the Multiverse Theory is that there is basically no evidence

for it. No other universe has been scientifically proven to exist. Therefore, until such evidence is convincingly presented to me, I will continue to believe that this universe is the only universe that exists.

Furthermore, even if countless universes exist, that does not completely disprove the existence of God. God might have chosen to create many universes instead of just one. Perhaps God created countless universes “for the purpose of experiencing Itself in . . . infinite diversity. . . . Through creation, an Infinite Consciousness provides a kind of playground for Itself. Having done that, It incarnates as individual beings—plants, animals, humans, extraterrestrials—thereby experiencing diversity and enormous ranges of complexity.” Thus, perhaps God creates the universe, or the universes, “for Its own evolution, Its own growth, and . . . Its own amusement” (Haisch, Bernard. *The God Theory*. Newburyport, MA: Weiser Books, 2006, pp. 66-67).<sup>2</sup>

The second reason that I believe that God exists is that everything came from something except the first cause, because there cannot be an infinite regression. Consider me for instance. What caused me to exist? Here is the probable chain of events as I understand them: I am a human who came from other humans, and the first humans came from apes, and the first apes came from some other kind of mammal, and the first mammal came from a reptile, and the first reptile came from an amphibian, and the first amphibian came from a fish, and the first fish came from some other kind of multi-celled aquatic creature, and the first multi-celled aquatic creature came from a single-celled aquatic creature, and the first single-celled aquatic creature came from the Earth, and the Earth came from a nebula, and the nebula came from the Milky Way Galaxy, and the Milky Way Galaxy came from the Big Bang, and the Big Bang came from . . . something. Was that something God or an accident? Because the universe seems purposefully created, I believe that that something is God.

Many Deists find that these two reasons, the Argument from Design and the First Cause Argument, are enough for them to believe in God, and they would strongly disagree with my third reason, which, as you will see, is soon to follow. Their disagreement is just fine with me. I will give you the answer that makes the most sense to me, not the answer that makes the most sense to a certain type of person who is not me.

The third reason that I believe that God exists is that human existence has an artistic quality to it. Call it the Argument from Being Part of a Work of Art. We experience great joys and sorrows, and sometimes coincidences can be so meaningful that they seem planned by something supernatural like God. Shakespeare seemed to have noticed this artistic quality of human life too, as illustrated in Act II, Scene vii, Lines 139-166 of *As You Like It*.

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<sup>2</sup> I have changed some of the capitalization of this paragraph’s quotations to emphasize that Haisch is writing about God, and I have changed the words *human beings* to *humans* because I believe that the latter sounds better.

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages.  
At first the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school.  
And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow.  
Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth.  
And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And so he plays his part.  
The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,  
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound.  
Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."

If all the world is a stage and we are merely players, then Someone (God) created the stage and players for some reason. The universe in general and one's life in particular probably follow some kind of plot, which was also created by God. I am not saying that we do not have free will or that everything is predetermined. I believe that we do have free will to a large extent and most things happen by pure chance. However, I believe that God has established the general way that the universe, including humanity, will work and occasionally tinkers around with the universe to get the desired result.

Human history is so much like a play. Art imitates life, and life imitates art. People do much good and accomplish great things. People also do much evil and accomplish many horrible things. There are amazing heroes, incredible villains, and lots of people in

between.

There is also a fascinating balance between progress, regress, and repetition. Humanity has progressed from the Stone Age to the Space Age. It has also progressed from savagery to decent civilizations in many nations. However, it seems that for every two steps humanity takes forward, it takes one step back. For example, Western Civilization has largely escaped the superstition of the Dark Age; but religious fundamentalism, bigotry, and ignorance were recently on the rise in the United States of America. (Yet one more reason to promote Deism!)

And, of course, the old saying has much truth: "The more things change, the more things remain the same." People are basically the same now as they were when humanity first migrated from Africa. We still create and destroy, love and hate, progress and regress, promote life and destroy it, etcetera. Life is one heck of a play, and God is one heck of a playwright!

In conclusion, at least in my mind, the Argument from Design, plus the First Cause Argument, plus the Argument from Being Part of a Work of Art equals the fact that God almost certainly exists.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 19. What Will I Tell God If I Am Wrong?

Hi Mannix,

What if the Bible is much more true than false? I will probably burn in Hell forever.

What will be my defense to God if the Bible is much more true than false? I will say something like the following:

"My Creator, I was conceived and born knowing basically nothing. I learned much after that time, tried to accept reality as it was, and tried to be the most virtuous person I could be. You remained hidden and silent, so I did not have very much help from you to know the truth. If you wanted me to remain a Christian, you should have gotten off your divine ass, come out of hiding, and explained the facts to me in a convincing way. You plainly should have explained to me why Christianity was the best religion and philosophy in the universe, and you should have explained to me that all the contradictions, factual errors, and evil moral teachings in the Bible really didn't matter; neither did all the evils done by Christians such as witch hunts, genocides, enslaving, inquisitions, and stifling of science.

"I was an imperfect creature in an imperfect universe, and the best method that I had to determine truth and falsehood/good and evil seemed the ability to reason which you gave me. I used my reason to the best of my ability, hoping to make my life and the life of all the creatures I impacted much better. It seems to me most unfair that you would burn me alive forever after I did the best that I knew how and because I picked the wrong religion, a seemingly irrational religion amongst a host of irrational religions at that. I tried to believe the true doctrines that Christianity taught and live the good teachings, because I tried to believe every true assertion and live according to every good teaching that anyone or anything taught. The rest of Christianity, though, seemed false and evil to me; so I rejected it, just like I tried to reject all other false and evil teachings that were presented to me by non-Christian sources.

"It makes no sense to me that anyone should have to believe in some unproven miracles to go to Heaven, and it makes much sense to me that everyone should be judged according to how good or evil he or she tried to be. If you reward people just for believing in nonsense and punish people just for disbelieving in nonsense, I think that I would rather go to Hell. The quality of people is likely to be better there than Heaven, and you are not the type of person I want to spend much time with. Amen."

Now, Mannix, I have questions for you. 1) What if God judges us according to how well we accept reality and how virtuous we try to be? In other words, what if God prefers reason to faith and doing what we honestly believe is good rather than what a religion teaches is good? 2) You believe that you are created in the likeness and image of God, so you can sort of understand God by understanding yourself. In your honest opinion, should a human be rewarded or punished in the afterlife based on accepting or rejecting the Bible in this life; or should a human be rewarded or punished in the afterlife based on

how relatively good or relatively evil he or she chose to be in this life?

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 20. Morality

Hi Ian,

How do Deists sort out the idea of right and wrong? First of all, Deism has less to do with morality than theology. Deists base their beliefs on reason and conclude that God probably exists; whereas Atheists base their beliefs on reason and conclude that God does not exist, and Agnostics base their beliefs on reason and conclude that they cannot decide if God exists or not. Thus, Deists are free to choose whatever moral system they want. Even if God exists, that does not necessarily mean that God cares what we do.

That having been said, I believe that Deists in general are probably more virtuous than most (if not all) other types of people. Why? Because they believe in both God and reason. Back when I was a Christian boy, I thought to myself, *I wonder if it is possible to have all the good teachings of the Gospels without the teachings that probably are not true*. The answer is yes. I can base my beliefs on reason (which is the best foundation for one's beliefs) and still conclude that God exists. Not only that, but I can find honest reasons to believe that God will reward those who are relatively good and punish those who are relatively evil.

For example, if I were God, I would rather bless people with Heaven if they have based their beliefs on reason, been honest, and tried to be good; rather than bless people with Heaven just because they believed some nonsense and/or performed some ritual(s). Furthermore, if I were God, I would rather punish relatively evil people until they became relatively good, and then let them into Heaven. This policy of mine is contrary to the Christian and Muslim idea of God and damnation, which is that God will burn people alive forever just because they have not believed or done certain things that have nothing to do with virtue.

I could continue writing about morality and theology for hours, but basically I would be giving you my opinion. We Deists are Freethinkers. If you want to know more of my thoughts, please just ask me. I would like to know some of your thoughts.

Here is a thought for you: Perhaps God put us in this life to teach and test us, and the teaching and testing works much better if God remains hidden and silent. This way, we will not be as likely to do good and avoid evil to earn a reward and avoid a punishment. We will be more likely to do good and avoid evil because doing good is good and doing evil is evil.

Before I say goodbye, I want to share a YouTube video with you. It features Richard Dawkins talking about the origins of morality:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSYosM2ZhzY>. Yes, he is an Atheist, but I completely agree with what he says here about morality.

Well, I hope to hear from you again. Perhaps we can enlighten each other a little.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 21. Homosexuality

### a) The Short Answer

Hi Larry,

Deism teaches just two things: 1) One should base all of one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists. That means that Deists can believe anything that they want which is reasonable, including the teaching that homosexuality and homosexual acts between consenting adults is fine.

My belief about homosexuality is as follows. Adults should be allowed to do whatever they want as long as they obviously do not hurt anyone else. Most homosexual acts do not obviously hurt anyone else. Therefore, they are fine.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### b) The Long Answer

Hi Larry,

Deism teaches just two things: 1) One should base all of one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists. That means that Deists can believe anything that they want which is reasonable, including the teaching that homosexuality and homosexual acts between consenting adults is fine.

My belief about homosexuality is as follows. Adults should be allowed to do whatever they want as long as they obviously do not hurt anyone else. Most homosexual acts do not obviously hurt anyone else. Therefore, they are fine.

I will even take this one step further. Homosexuality is a widespread, natural phenomenon, so it must have somehow helped our ancestors successfully reproduce. Why and how? I am not certain. Let's suppose, however, that our ancestors were like many other species are today. Dominant males had much sex with a large number of females, and males who were not dominant seldom had sex with a female. Yet, whether dominant or un-dominant, most males had an extremely strong sex drive so that they would try to be the dominant male. What were such men to do when they were unable to mate with females yet had extremely strong sex drives? They would mate with each other. That is they would be gay for awhile.

That accounts for the gays. What about the lesbians? Well, having females with extremely strong sex drives also helped the cause of increasing the human population. Yet the dominant male of the caveman group was biologically programmed to hoard all (or at least most of) the females to himself. What were the women supposed to do when they wanted sex but the dominant male would not have it with them? They would satisfy each other, at least to an extent.

We humans have evolved since that time, yet we still have traces of our caveman ancestors in our psyches, just like we still have traces of our caveman ancestors in our more obvious physical structures. Take our appendixes for example. We no longer need appendixes, but we still have them. Likewise, we no longer need to be promiscuous bisexuals, but we still have the ability, some more than others.

I should mention here that someone might mistakenly believe that I am arguing that gay men are weaker than straight men. To paraphrase someone with whom I shared the above hypothesis, "I don't subscribe to your theory because you're implying that it was the weaker, less-masculine male that was forced to engage in homosexual activity. That way, the weakling could still orgasm even though the big jock would not let him screw the girls. It seems you're just implying I'm gay, because in the evolutionary chain somewhere, my DNA was a wimpy little bitch that couldn't get pussy. It says that we gays are truly weak and less masculine strains of humanity."

To this argument, I respond that I do not mean that gay males are weaker than non-gay males. What I mean is that all (or almost all) humans are at least a little homosexual and some are more homosexual than others. The reason that all, or almost all, humans are at least a little homosexual is that somehow being homosexual was useful for the survival of our ancestors.

I should also add that, just because a male was unable to successfully mate one day, that does not mean that he was forever unable to mate. Dominant males often grow old, get sick, and/or die; and non-dominant males often grow stronger, stay healthy, and/or out-live their competition. When the only criterion for mating is being the physically dominant male, success or failure in winning the opportunity to successfully mate with females has nothing to do with how homosexual a male is. It has to do with how strong, determined, and cunning a male is. Many of our ancestors were probably very gay, strong, determined, and cunning males. Boys are usually weaker than men. But men grow old and die, and boys grow into men.

All this is just a hypothesis, and I hope that it does not offend you. I would like to hear your thoughts on the matter.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 22. Where Did God Come From?

Hi Ransom,

Some Atheists argue that it is not very likely that the first thing that existed was a being who was capable of creating the universe. I have a response to this objection. Probably many Deists would disagree with my hypothesis, but it is still consistent with Deism. I hypothesize that the first thing that existed was some inanimate stuff—perhaps matter, perhaps energy, perhaps both. I don't know for sure, so I will call it stuff. Then, through a process similar to evolution on this planet, this stuff evolved life, then intelligence, then virtue, and then extreme intelligence and virtue. Once it reached this stage, it was capable of creating the universe. This stuff was and is God. So God always existed, but God has also evolved.

A likely objection here is that Atheism implies that plant and animal life evolved by itself from inanimate stuff. We know that plants and animals exist, but we do not know that God exists. So why should we believe that God just evolved from inanimate stuff when we can just believe that plants and animals evolved by themselves from inanimate stuff? I admit that it is very unlikely that the first thing that existed was an all-powerful being who could create the universe, but I also insist that it is equally unlikely that the universe, which includes all the creatures in the universe, created itself. The universe consists of more than a quadrillion amazing things. God is just one amazing thing—for lack of better words. It is much more likely that the one amazing thing developed naturally and then created the quadrillion-plus amazing things, than the quadrillion-plus amazing things developed naturally by themselves.

God probably evolved and created life on planet Earth to evolve like God did, not in the exact way but a similar way. We humans might never create a universe. However, we did evolve from lifeless stuff and, later, creatures with little or no intelligence and virtue. Compared to many of our ancestors, we humans are much more like God. And if our species keeps evolving as it has been, our distant descendants will be much more like God than us. A work of art always teaches us something about its artist, and God is the artist of the universe. The universe teaches us that God is dynamic and likes evolution.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 23. Nonprofit Status

Hello Steve,

The World Union of Deists (WUD) was founded by Bob Johnson. In Bob's words, "the WUD is not a nonprofit . . . because we don't want to be beholden to anyone. Also, personally I see the tax-exempt status of religious organizations as a sign they are more concerned with cash than with ideals, which makes them hypocrites. Especially Christians since the Bible claims that Jesus himself paid taxes."

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 24. Original Languages

Hi All,

I find Christians and Muslims very similar when they start saying that "If one only understood the original language/languages in which our holy book was written, one would know it was from God."

Let me see if I understand this correctly. If the Muslims are correct, I have to learn ancient Arabic to realize that the Koran is so beautifully written that it must be from God; and if the Christians are correct, I have to learn ancient Hebrew and ancient Greek to understand the Bible as it should be understood. Then I will know that the Bible correctly asserts the soul-saving truth and can join the correct version of Christianity, whatever that denomination might be.

This reeks of falsehood. (I would have said bullshit, but I don't like to cuss.) If God wants me to believe a bunch of farfetched assertions, God can visit me in the comfort of my own home and talk to me in my native tongue, which is modern American English. I shouldn't have to learn ancient Arabic, Hebrew, or Greek. I would hate to waste years of my life learning those dead languages only to conclude even more that both Christianity and Islam are false.

Not only that, but I have written a book about some of the contradictions, factual errors, and evil moral teachings in the Bible. I have attached this book to this email in case you care to understand my thinking further and why it will be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for me to be a Christian again.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 25. Evolution

Hi Anthony,

The Theory of Evolution is true, not false. Just like the Theory of Gravity is true, not false. There are countless examples of both evolution and gravity. The question is not, Do these things happen? But how do these things happen?

Charles Darwin gave us much insight in *The Origin of Species*, but his mostly-true and carefully-researched explanation needed some refinement, which is what evolutionary biologists have been doing ever since. Likewise, Sir Isaac Newton started to explain gravity with his theory, but, centuries later, Albert Einstein revolutionized physics by coming up with a better theory. Newtonian physics explains gravity well in regular circumstances, but Einstein's Theory of Relativity explains gravity much better when objects are extremely heavy or moving extremely fast.

If you want a simple proof of evolution, look at your own feet. Don't they look like hands that have been evolved to walk on? Aren't you aware that most (if not all) species of primates sometimes walk on the ground from tree to tree? Doesn't it make sense that some primates would start using their feet to walk on the ground more and more, and that, due to natural selection, the feet of those primates became more and more like the feet of us modern humans? The obvious answer to all these questions is yes, and you are deluding yourself to think otherwise.

In case you are more open to the evolution of a non-human species than the evolution of us humans, here is another example of evolution through natural selection. Suppose that there is a species of deer-like creatures that like to eat the leaves off trees. The more leaves they can reach, the more likely they are to survive. That gives the deer-like creatures with longer necks an advantage.

Now suppose further that a million years pass with short-necked deer-like creatures tending to die before they can reproduce and long-necked deer-like creatures tending to live long enough to reproduce. What is going to happen to that group of creatures over time? Will they tend to inherit short or long necks? Obviously, they will tend to inherit long necks. In fact, their necks will become so long compared to their ancestors that they will become a distinct species. Ta-da! Now we have giraffes!

I will end with a summary of the sources of scientific evidence for evolution. The following comes from [http://wiki.answers.com/Q/List\\_four\\_types\\_of\\_evidence\\_that\\_support\\_evolution](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/List_four_types_of_evidence_that_support_evolution).

"There are much more than four types of evidence for evolution, but there are four major fields it can be derived from, followed by a brief explanation. You can find much more detailed and comprehensive explanations if you do some research . . .

**"Paleontology** - *the study of fossils and prehistoric life*

Evolutionary change is clearly documented in the fossil record. Fossils are well ordered within rock layers, the oldest ones being at the bottom and youngest being at the top. Paleontologists have found transitional forms for many lineages, including humans, showing progression as we move up through the rock layers. A transitional fossil is one that contains anatomical similarities with two groups of organisms. It is possible to see how organisms evolved by arranging their fossils in a chronological sequence.

**"Biogeography** - *the study of the geographic distribution of organisms*

Data about how species are distributed throughout the world and why they are present or absent in certain areas can provide evidence of common descent and shed light on patterns of speciation. Questions such as: Why are most marsupials concentrated in Australia? Why are organisms that live on islands so different from organisms that live on mainland continents? Why are some organisms endemic to certain regions? Why do animals that live in similar habitats still have fundamental differences? and so on can only be reasonably answered in light of evolution.

**"Comparative anatomy** - *the study of how anatomical structures between organisms are similar and different*

Comparative anatomy involves things like homologous and analogous structures, and also reveals a nested hierarchy among all life on Earth. Taxonomy is based on relationships between organisms and starts with broad groups having fundamental similarities and separates them into smaller groups based on specific differences. The nested hierarchy of organisms shows strong evidence of common descent. Embryology is also part of comparative anatomy. Comparing embryos of different animals shows similarities and relationships.

**"Genetics** - *the study of DNA and genetic traits*

The study of genetics is only a relatively recent development, yet it has provided some of the most powerful pieces of evidence for evolution. One of the strongest confirmations of common descent comes from the study of gene sequences. Comparative sequence analysis examines the relationship between the DNA sequences of different species. If the hypothesis of common descent is true, then species that share a common ancestor will have inherited that ancestor's DNA sequence and mutations unique to that ancestor. More closely-related species will have a greater fraction of identical sequence and more shared substitutions when compared to more distantly-related species. The sequencing of the human [genome] . . . has provided much insight into human evolution and our relatedness with other species. Much more evidence of evolution can be found in genetics that is too much to fit here."

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 26. The Incarnation Did Not Happen

According to most Christians, Jesus of Nazareth was and is both fully God and fully human. Is that even possible? You might say, "Of course, it is possible. God can do anything." To that, I say, "Can God make a rock so big that God cannot lift it?" If you say yes, then God is not all-powerful, because God could not lift the rock. If you say no, then God is still not all-powerful, because God cannot create such a rock. Either way, God is not all-powerful.

What is the way out of this dilemma? It has to do with speaking simply about a fact in order to make a point.

When we say that God is all-powerful, what we really mean is that God is very powerful. God can make the biggest rock ever created, but God almost certainly cannot make a rock so big that God cannot lift it. God can make the biggest rock ever created because God made the universe, and the biggest rock ever created is already somewhere in the universe, assuming that there are no other universes (i.e. realms of existence). God almost certainly cannot make a rock so big that God cannot lift it because whatever God makes is almost certainly within God's control.

Therefore, there are things that God cannot do. God cannot make a circular square because circles have no corners and squares have four corners. Even God cannot create something that contradicts itself at the same time and place.

God is very knowledgeable, very ancient, and very powerful. Compared with God, humans are very ignorant, very transitory, and very weak. Therefore, it is impossible for Jesus, or anyone else, to be both fully God and fully human.

Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof. Simply speaking, here are some extraordinary claims of orthodox Christianity: 1) The universe was perfect until humanity sinned, 2) after humanity sinned, all creatures have had to suffer and die, 3) God became a human to undo at least some of the damage caused by sin, 4) Jesus's death on the cross was a sacrifice to atone for all sin, and 5) to be forgiven and go to Heaven, humans have to believe that Jesus is the Only-begotten Son of God. What is the extraordinary proof that any of these assertions is true? The answer is that there isn't any. Therefore, I should not believe these assertions, and neither should you or anyone else.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 27. The United States Should Be a Secular Nation

To Whom It May Concern,

I am convinced that the ideal nation is a secular democratic republic that allows its sane adult citizens to do whatever they want as long as they do not obviously hurt someone else. The United States was not necessarily designed to be such a nation at its conception, yet, compared with other nations at the time, it certainly was a major step in the right direction.

The United States was founded on some excellent ideas, but sometimes these ideas had to be expanded to be as good as possible. For example, the Declaration of Independence declares "that all men are created equal." What does that mean? It originally meant that all white American men who own property and pay taxes are created equal, and, thus, should be allowed to vote. Later on, this idea was rightfully expanded to include black male citizens. Later on, this idea was rightfully expanded again to include female citizens. Later on, this idea was rightfully expanded yet again to include all 18-year-old citizens. And somewhere along the way, the requirement to own property and pay taxes to vote was dropped. Thus, the seed of a great idea was planted in the Declaration of Independence but had to grow into a mighty oak of inclusiveness to become completely just and good.

The same can be said of America's secular seed. The Declaration of Independence does mention "Nature's God." (Which, by the way, refers to the Deist conception of God, not Yahweh or the Trinity. Remember that the writer of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, was an outspoken Deist.) Yet the Declaration of Independence mentions Nature's God in passing, so it is by far more of a secular document than a religious one. Deism is also a far more secular philosophy than Christianity. Furthermore, the United States Constitution does not refer to any deity. If the United States was supposed to be a very religious nation, its constitution should have at least mentioned a deity!

The closest that the Constitution comes to mentioning a deity is near the end: "Done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven . . . ." That statement means that the original Constitution was finished on September 17, 1787 A.D. Thus, "in the Year of our Lord" was just the common way that English-speaking people kept track of time. It was not (and still is not) necessarily a proclamation by the speaker or writer that Jesus of Nazareth is his or her Lord and God

From these largely-secular beginnings, the United States will hopefully develop into a purely secular nation in the same way it developed from a pro-white-rich-male-citizen nation into a pro-adult-citizen nation. May the United States government favor no religion—not Deism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Satanism, Atheism, Agnosticism, et cetera. That way, Americans can practice their religions without interference from their government and no religion will have a governmental advantage

over another. Americans will be much more likely to embrace or reject a religion based on its merit (or lack thereof), rather than because their government backs it. This allows more freedom, and freedom is the core value of the United States of America.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 28. My Radio Interviews and Podcasts

Hi Bob,

The following are my radio interviews and podcasts:

A. <http://ia350639.us.archive.org/3/items/carmmedia/rec0826-200024.mp3> was my *CARM* interview on August 26, 2009.

B. <http://ia301504.us.archive.org/2/items/carmradio11/Fnr091809.mp3> was my *CARM* interview on September 18, 2009.

C. <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/god-discussion/2009/09/24/what-is-deism> is my *God Discussion* interview on September 23, 2009.

D. On July 29, 2010, I had an interview on *The National Collective Consciousness Show*. Follow the instructions below to hear it.

Click this link <http://www.talkshoe.com/talkshoe/web/tscmd/tc/48335> if it works then skip 2-5 and do #6

Go to <http://www.aunetwork.tv/>

Click on <http://www.talkshoe.com/>

Enter 48335 in the keyword or cal ID search window (or aunetwork)

When the box for Natl. Coll. Consciousness Conf. Call click on the link or the listen button

Find episode 34 and right click on the down BLUE button and then SAVE AS or SAVE LINK AS

E. <http://deist.info/deist-life-podcasts-what-is-the-best-theology.html>

F. <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/god-discussion/2011/11/11/deism--the-faith-of-the-founding-fathers> or

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BWA4aNQFHM&feature=youtu.be>

G. <http://www.deism.com/deismpodcasts.htm>. It is the “Second WUD Deism Podcast— July 11, 2012.”

H. I also have an audio recording of my essay “What Is the Best Theology?”. If you want that, let me know and I’ll email it to you.

I. <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/god-discussion/2013/01/26/the-clergy>.

J. The following shows are found at <http://www.goddiscussion.com/god-discussion-show/>:

a) “Thomas Jefferson and Deism” (February 4, 2013)

b) "Why I Believe That God Exists" (March 4, 2013)

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 29. Definitions

- 1) A Unitarian is a person who believes that God is just one person, not three or more. A person who believes that God is three persons is a Trinitarian.
- 2) A Deist is a person who bases all of his or her beliefs on reason and concludes that God exists or at least probably exists.
- 3) God is the being whom many people believe purposefully created the universe.
- 4) A Radical Deist is a Deist who wants many (if not all) "Revealed" Religionists to reject "Revealed" Religion in favor of Deism. Ethan Allen and Thomas Paine were Radical Deists.
- 5) A Non-radical Deist is a Deist who does not want many (if any) "Revealed" Religionists to reject "Revealed" Religion in favor of Deism. Benjamin Franklin was a Non-radical Deist.
- 6) A "Revealed" Religion is a system of beliefs that includes one or more doctrines that can only be proven through a miracle. Religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are called "Revealed" Religions because most of their fundamental doctrines were supposedly revealed to them in a miraculous way. For example, God supposedly revealed a bunch of commandments to the Jews on Mount Sinai, God supposedly revealed His plan of salvation as Jesus of Nazareth to the Christians, and God supposedly revealed the Koran to Muslims through Mohamed.
- 7) A philosophy is a system of beliefs that is supposedly completely based on reason. This system attempts to explain why creatures live, why the universe is as it is, and what one should do about these truths.
- 8) A Theist is someone who believes that God or the gods exist, or at least probably exist.
- 9) An Atheist is someone who believes that God or the gods do not exist, or at least probably do not exist.
- 10) An Agnostic is someone who believes that he or she does not have enough intelligence and/or information to determine for certain whether God or the gods exist or not.
- 11) An Active-God Deist is a Deist who believes that God is active in the universe. An active God might only be keeping the universe running as it usually does. It might not be someone who works miracles such as saving people from death or causing Communism to collapse.
- 12) An Inactive-God Deist is a Deist who believes that God is not active in the universe.

\* For the definitions of Pantheists, Panentheists, Pandeists, and Panendeists, see Email Response 65.

### 30. Human Evolution

Dear Angela,

You seem like a very considerate and relatively open-minded person. I hope you stay that way. It's a great way to be!

Why do people act like animals? You say Original Sin. I say because people are descended from animals.

What is my proof? Humans share much DNA with other primates. I read a book called *The Third Chimpanzee* that taught me that humans and chimpanzees are more closely related than chimpanzees and gorillas.

That's not all. Our feet look like they have evolved from hand-like feet such as chimpanzees have. The purpose of our lower hands is now to walk on, not to grab branches.

Furthermore, like other mammals, we are conceived by a mother and a father; develop in the womb; have hair, red blood, two eyes, two ears, white bones, a heart, two lungs, etcetera; care about our offspring; make some foolish decisions; suffer; die; and decompose.

There is nothing completely different between animals and humans. The only difference is in degree. Dolphins talk, otters use rocks for tools, leaf-cutter ants farm, birds build homes, etcetera. Humans just seem to have much more advanced languages than dolphins, make and use much more sophisticated tools than otters, grow more crops than leaf-cutter ants, and build more sophisticated homes than birds.

You believe that human beings started perfect and then became sinful. I believe that human beings started as animals and evolved into cavemen. My position is informed and supported by scientific evidence. Yours is not. Yours is based on Bronze Age theology.

Don't be afraid to give up superstition. Reason is a much better thing to base your beliefs on. Simply speaking, you can have all the advantages of Christianity without any of the disadvantages. You can believe in God, true justice, and life after death without believing in Original Sin, Noah's Flood, the Atonement, and Eternal Damnation. You should trade falsehoods for truth and intellectual slavery for intellectual freedom.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 31. Nazism and Communism/Hitler's Religion/Secularism/Religious Oppression

Nazism is a very faith-based belief system because, among other things, it is founded on the unproven and wishful (wishful for many twentieth century German people at least) claims that the German people are the master race and they should kill or enslave the rest of humanity. Besides, most, if not all, Nazi leaders, including Hitler, were theists. Hitler was baptized and raised Roman Catholic, never publicly rejected the idea that Jesus is the Only-begotten Son of God, and believed that he, Hitler, was some kind of God-appointed messiah to the German people. In fact, Hitler said the following quotations (<http://www.angelfire.com/la2/prophet1/religiousviewsofhitler.html>):

“My feelings as a Christian points me to my Lord and Savior as a fighter.”

“As a Christian I have no duty to allow myself to be cheated, but I have the duty to be a fighter for truth and justice . . . . And if there is anything which could demonstrate that we are acting rightly it is the distress that daily grows. For as a Christian I have also a duty to my own people.”

“The folkish-minded man, in particular, has the sacred duty, each in his own denomination, of making people stop just talking superficially of God's will, and actually fulfill God's will, and not let God's word be desecrated. For God's will gave men their form, their essence and their abilities. Anyone who destroys His work is declaring war on the Lord's creation, the divine will.”

“Secular schools can never be tolerated because such schools have no religious instruction, and a general moral instruction without a religious foundation is built on air; consequently, all character training and religion must be derived from faith . . . . [W]e need believing people.”

“We were convinced that the people need and require this faith. We have therefore undertaken the fight against the atheistic movement, and that not merely with a few theoretical declarations; we have stamped it out.”

“Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.”

Remember that, during World War II, the motto of the German army was “Gott Mit Uns” (“God [is] With Us”) and that its symbol was the black and white cross. This cross was even more common than the swastika on German tanks and planes during World War II, because Nazi Germany was still largely a Christian nation.

As for Communism, yes, the Soviet Union and Communist China were officially Atheistic, and they murdered millions of their own citizens and squelched freedom. Most secularists would agree with me that these actions were and are very evil. The real problem is not that the Soviet Union and Communist China were officially atheistic; it's that they did not value individual humans and freedom enough. The truth is that

secularism, compassion, and freedom go very well together, despite the atrocities of the Soviet Union and Communist China. At least secularism allows people the freedom to do what their conscience dictates regardless of the nonsense that the prevailing religion teaches.

Theists throughout history have been guilty of horrible atrocities such as the Medieval witch hunts, the Spanish Inquisition, the forced conversion and sometimes eradication of whole groups of people in northern Europe and the Americas, and the burning of thousands of supposed heretics at the stake (the last person to be murdered by the Spanish Inquisition was the Deist [Cayetano Ripoll](#) who was hanged for not only being a Deist, thus a heretic, but also for teaching other people about Deism).

The problem is not secularism; the problem is human nature. Regardless of their religion, many humans want to force all other humans to believe what they believe. It is wrong for one group of people to force another group of people to embrace or reject a belief system. Christians should not force non-Christians to be Christians, and Atheists should not force Theists to disbelieve in God. I am sure that if any group of zealous religious fundamentalists—be they Jews, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, or Hindus—took control of a large modern nation like the Nazis and Communists did in Germany, the Soviet Union, and China, they too would have murdered millions of their own citizens and squelched freedom.

## 32. Deism, Hinduism, and Buddhism

Hi Varun,

Thank you for contacting the World Union of Deists. Deism teaches just two things: 1) One should base one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists. Whatever religion or philosophy does not contract those two assertions is in harmony with Deism.

Deism is a great beginning for an adequate personal philosophy, but it is not, in and of itself, an adequate personal philosophy. A Deist must choose many other beliefs which are in harmony with Deism to develop an adequate personal philosophy, that is a personal philosophy that helps one to be as sane, good, and happy as possible throughout life.

Deism did not borrow any ideas from Hinduism or Buddhism. My understanding is that Deism first became popular among Christians during the Age of Enlightenment who thought, *I believe in God and Christian morality, but much of the rest of the Bible and Church teaching seem evil and/or false*. George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine were all raised Christian but became Deists in later life. However, anyone who believes the two assertions of Deism is a Deist. I suspect that there have been many such people for thousands of years, including Plato, Cicero, and Marcus Aurelius.

That leaves just one of your questions: Why doesn't the World Union of Deists (WUD) have articles critical of Hinduism and Buddhism? One reason is that WUD was founded by an American who rejected Christianity. Therefore, the focus of religious criticisms on the WUD website is on Christianity and Christian-like religions. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all monotheistic religions based on very similar supposedly holy books.

This does not mean that WUD necessarily approves of Hinduism and Buddhism. From what I understand, there are many different kinds of Hinduism and Buddhism, and some of these kinds are more reasonable than others. I guess that some very watered-down versions of Hinduism and Buddhism might be completely reasonable, but most forms of these religions are not.

The following comes from <http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinduism>, except for my comments, which are underlined:

Hinduism lays on the spiritual foundation of the Vedas, the Upanishads, as well as the teachings of many Hindu gurus through the ages. Many streams of thought come from six main Vedic/Hindu schools. Bhakti sects and Tantric Agamic schools are very common paths within Hinduism, the first of the Dharmic religions.

I have not read all of the assertions involved with these Hindu sources, but I doubt that all of the assertions are reasonable. From what I remember hearing about them, I believe that

they contain much myth. The first chapter of the *Rig Veda*, which I just read, confirms my assertion. It was about some priest who was a god, or something like that.

What can be said to be common to all Hindus is belief in Dharma, reincarnation, karma, and moksha (liberation) of every soul through a variety of moral, action-based, and meditative yogas. Still more basic principles include ahimsa (non-violence), the importance of the Guru, the Divine Word of Aum and the power of mantras, love of Truth in many manifestations as gods and goddesses, and an understanding that the essential spark of the Divine (Atman/Brahman) is in every human and living being, allowing for many spiritual paths leading to the One Unitary Truth.

According to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharma>, Dharma in Hinduism means one's religious duty. You tell me what one's religious duty is exactly, and I will tell you if I believe it is reasonable or not. If it is not, then Dharma is unreasonable and, thus, contrary to Deism.

Reincarnation, karma, and moksha are all possible, and they are more likely than the existence of the Loch Ness Monster or Big Foot. So I suppose that they could be reasonable.

I don't believe in reincarnation, though, for at least two reasons: 1) I believe that I am a purely physical being, and 2) I don't remember any of my past lives.

One reason that I believe that I am a purely physical being is that if my brain changed a lot—for example, I got hit on the head very hard, or a doctor surgically removed part of my brain, or I suffered a stroke—my memory and my personality would be likely to be changed as well. Such things have happened to people I have read about. If one's eternal spirit is not one's memory and personality, I don't know what it is. I also would not care about my eternal spirit much, even if it existed, because it is not me, or at least it is not the most important part of me.

The most important part of me is that part of me that has developed along with my body over the past 43 years. It has remembered things, forgotten things, learned things, made choices, loved things, hated things, rejoiced, mourned, regretted, hoped, and feared. It is that part of me that my friends and family like to talk with on the phone. If that part of me does not survive death, for me there really is not life after death. If my consciousness exists after death, I exist after death. If my consciousness does not exist after death, I do not exist after death.

I don't believe in karma for at least two reasons: 1) It is too cruel for God to have created, and 2) I believe that the pleasure and suffering of human life are usually caused by random chance or human free will, rather than karma.

Karma is cruel because it teaches that those who are born poor, sick, and/or deformed deserve to be poor, sick, and/or deformed because of what they did in a previous life. I believe that God is too good to have created karma because God is probably better than

any creature when it comes to doing anything that is excellent. Being intelligent, strong, and virtuous is excellent; and it seems most likely to me that God is more intelligent than the smartest human, stronger than the strongest human, and more virtuous than the most virtuous human. I am not the most intelligent and virtuous human, but even I would not purposefully make a human baby be born poor, sick, and/or deformed. So I don't believe that God would either.

I believe in moksha, but I do not believe that it comes after being reincarnated. I believe that we live this life, die, and are then physically replicated in a different universe, hopefully a much better universe than this one. Maybe if I was raised Hindu instead of Christian, I would believe in reincarnation rather than replication.

I admire ahimsa and am generally a nonviolent person. However, I believe that sometimes it is best to punish or kill relatively evil people. Suppose, for example, that a very evil person had kidnapped my son with the intent to rape and murder him, and I had a gun. I would gladly shoot that villain between the eyes. It would stop that very evil person from hurting my son and other people, and the removal of such a person from society would make society more sane, good, and happy.

I do not believe that "Aum" was the first word ever spoken or that it has miraculous powers. The reason is that there is not a reliable record of the first spoken word, and I was not there to hear it. Also, as far as I know, neither saying nor hearing "Aum" has ever helped anyone in a miraculous way, maybe a psychological way but not a miraculous way.

Gurus (as in teachers and mentors) and mantras are useful. This I know from firsthand experience. However, not all teachers, mentors, and mantras are useful; and some are probably relatively evil.

I do not believe in gods or goddesses, angels or demons. Why? Because saying that they exist is an extraordinary claim, and extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. There is no extraordinary evidence that I am aware of for the existence of gods, goddesses, angels, or demons.

Now let's talk Buddhism. The following comes from <http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism>, except for my comments, which are underlined:

Buddhists often talk about The Three Jewels, which are the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. The Dharma is the way the Buddha taught to live your life. The Sangha is the group of monks and other people who meet together, like a congregation. Buddhists say "I take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha." This means that these three things keep them safe. They give themselves up to the community and teachings inspired by the Buddha.

People should think for themselves. They should not automatically believe what someone tells them, even (and perhaps especially) when that person claims to be a holy person. Therefore, I do not take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. I take refuge in my own reason, believing that it is the best way for me to know what is good and evil, true and false.

The Buddha's first and most important teachings are The Four Noble Truths. Everything in life is painful. Everything in life is good enough and what is not does not last forever.

I agree that there is much suffering and change in this life.

The reason for this pain is our desires, anger and ignorance. We want more and more, so we feel pain. We feel pain even when we get what we want—because one day we will surely lose it. We feel pain through our anger and hatred, and we are led into painful situations through our ignorance.

However, we also feel pleasure when we get what we want. The following comes from one of the books that I have written, *The Happy Way*:

Q21: What causes pleasure?

A21: Having reasonable desires and having those desires fulfilled causes pleasure. Reasonable desires are desires that are obtainable and worth the effort. Unreasonable desires are desires that are not obtainable or just not worth the effort. An example of a reasonable desire is the desire to not starve to death, and an example of an unreasonable desire is the desire to eat all the cheeseburgers on Earth in one day. Reasonable desires promote happiness because they can and should be fulfilled. Unreasonable desires promote misery because they cannot and/or should not be fulfilled.

Q22: What are some reasonable desires?

A22: Desiring adequate air, water, food, sleep, sex, excretion, physical and mental health, financial security, friends, family, lover, self-respect, respect from others, freedom, and to come close to being the best that one can be at many worthwhile activities.

Q23: What are some unreasonable desires?

A23: Desiring all the air, water, food, sexy lovers, leisure time, money, land, oil, diamonds, and popularity on Earth; desiring to enslave and/or unjustly hurt humans; and desiring to be better than all humans at everything.

Q24: What causes suffering?

A24: Not satisfying reasonable desires, desiring something that one cannot and/or should not have, and/or feeling unhelpful pain.

Q25: With all this in mind, how can we be as happy as possible now and always?

A25: We can do everything in our power to maximize our pleasure and minimize our suffering for as long as we consciously exist. We maximize our pleasure by having and fulfilling all our reasonable desires. We minimize our suffering by not having unreasonable desires and by not having unfulfilled reasonable desires.

There is hope. There is a way to end pain.

Yeah, death. It is likely that after we die, we won't feel anything ever again or that God will choose to reward relatively good people with something like Heaven and punish relatively evil people with something like Purgatory until they truly repent. Then God will perfect them and put them in Heaven.

The way to end pain is to follow The Noble Eightfold Path.

People who follow The Noble Eightfold Path might be happier overall than those who don't, but they still suffer, at least in this life.

The Buddha told people to follow a special way of life called The Noble Eightfold Path if they want to understand The Four Noble Truths. These are:

[1] Know and understand The Four Noble Truths.

[2] Give up all worldly things and don't harm others.

[3] Tell the truth, don't gossip, and don't talk badly about others.

[4] Don't commit evil acts, like killing, stealing, or living an unclean life.

What is an unclean life? That needs to be better defined. Can I drink alcohol or not? If I can't drink alcohol, then Buddhism is not the religion for me because, like Winston Churchill said, I take more out of alcohol than it takes out of me.

[5] Do rewarding work.

[6] Work for good and oppose evil.

[7] Make sure your mind keeps your senses under control.

[8] Practice meditation as a way of understanding reality.

I have to admit that The Noble Eightfold Path sounds very good and helpful overall.

Buddhists are encouraged to follow The Five Precepts, or rules, that say what not to do. The Buddha taught that killing, stealing, having sex in a harmful way, and lying are not signs of skill.

These are The Five Precepts:

[1] I will not hurt a person or animal that is alive.

[2] I will not take something if it was not given to me.

[3] I will not have sex in a way that is harmful.

[4] I will not lie or say things that hurt people.

[5] I will not take intoxicants, like alcohol or drugs.

I agree with the first four of The Five Precepts. As for the fifth precept, that alone keeps me from becoming a Buddhist.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 33. Simple Answers to Difficult Questions

Dear Mohsen,

Let me give you simple answers to difficult questions.

- 1) Does God exist? Simply speaking, yes, because the universe seems purposefully made.
- 2) Is God completely good? Simply speaking, yes, because God created many good things and no creature is likely to be morally superior to God. God is more just and kind than the most just and kind human who ever lived.
- 3) Would the most just and kind human who ever lived burn someone alive forever for any reason? No.
- 4) Would the most just and kind human who ever lived punish someone for not believing all of the ridiculous assertions of the Koran or the Bible? No.
- 5) So will God burn you alive forever for not believing all of the ridiculous assertions of the Koran or the Bible? No.
- 6) What is better, faith or reason? Reason is because it is based on reality, not wishful thinking.
- 7) If God is completely good, whom will God let into Heaven as soon as they die, those who base their beliefs on faith or those who base their beliefs on reason? Simply speaking, those who base their beliefs on reason. God would rather spend eternity with those who are honest and think for themselves than those who are dishonest and believe whatever their imam or priest teaches them.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 34. Jesus Taught Some Evil Things

Hey Gene,

According to the Bible, Jesus taught many good things including the Golden Rule, but he also taught some evil things. For example, he promoted castration (Matthew 19:12), promoted excessive thought control (Matthew 5:28), brought peace and not a sword (Matthew 10:34-35), and encouraged people to hate their parents, spouse, children, siblings, and life (Luke 14:26). Also, if he was not the Only-begotten Son of God (which he probably wasn't), he was a delusional control-freak to say things like, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 13:6).

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 35. It Is Wrong to Believe that the Jews Are the Chosen People of God

Hi H.Man,

Let me see if I understand you completely. Yes, the main goal of the WUD website is to promote Deism, and I am glad that you like it. To do this, the website uses articles that explain why Deism is good and true, and articles that explain why other theologies are evil and/or false. The article about supposed Jewish superiority explains that the Bible teaches that the Jews are favored by God/Yahweh over every other nation. Therefore, Bible-believing Christians should believe this assertion.

However, most Christians would reject this assertion as false because it is unreasonable and contrary to their belief that Christians are somehow superior to other groups of people. There is not much evidence in favor of the idea that the Jews are the Chosen people of God, and there is some evidence against it. The evidence for it is that some old book (the Bible) says so; the Jews have survived and sometimes thrived throughout the centuries; billions of non-Jews, particularly Christians and Muslims, now worship versions of the deity of the Jews; and the nation of Israel has been reborn. The evidence against it is that God has not come out of hiding and obviously proclaimed that the Jews are "His" Chosen People to everyone, over the past 2,000 years the Jews have been horribly persecuted in many times and places, there are relatively few Jews (only about 14 million), and those non-Jews who worship a version of the deity of the Jews are not actually worshipping the deity of the Jews. Most Christians worship the Trinity, and most (if not all) Muslims worship a deity whose greatest prophet is supposedly Muhammad. Almost all Jews (if not all Jews) strongly reject the doctrine of the Trinity and the claim that Muhammad is God's prophet.

“So what?” You might ask. Well, if most Christians reject the assertion that the Jews are the Chosen People of God and the Bible teaches that the Jews are the Chosen People of God, this should get them to start rejecting the Bible. If they reject the Bible, they reject the deity and religion(s) of the Bible; and are thus more likely to accept the deity and philosophy of Deism.

Furthermore, the fewer people who are Fundamentalist Jews, Christians, and Muslims; the better. Fundamentalist Christians in the United States and Fundamentalist Jews in Israel might start World War III with Fundamentalist Muslims in the Middle East. Albert Einstein, who was theologically a Deist, said something to this effect: I don't know what type of weapons will be used in World War III, but I know what type of weapons will be used in World War IV: sticks and stones.

The more we get people to reject the Bible and Koran as literally true, the more we will discourage Fundamentalist Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—three very dangerous religions!

Lastly, believing that any group of people is the Chosen People of God is racist, wrong, and evil. It is racist because it encourages one group of people to believe that they are

more important than all other groups of people. It is wrong because, simply speaking, there is no evidence that God favors any group of people over any other or that any ethnic group is mentally or emotionally superior to another. It is evil because, as history has repeatedly proven, racists tend to mistreat people whom they believe are inferior to themselves. Often they enslave or murder them.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 36. Why Does God Allow Natural Disasters?

Dear Matt,

I don't know for certain why God allows natural disasters, but I will give you my best guess. It has to do with the meaning of life. Why did God put us here, and what are we supposed to do about it? Obviously, God did not put us here just to have fun because this universe and this life are not always fun. In fact, they can be very miserable.

My best guess is that God wants rational creatures such as humans to understand the totality of reality, including pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, justice and injustice, purposefully caused events and haphazard events. Destructive natural phenomena help to teach such things. God also wants to test rational creatures, and destructive natural phenomena help test rational creatures too.

Destructive natural phenomena are excellent ways to teach pain, sorrow, and injustice because they often cause those things. They teach haphazard events because they are striking examples of haphazard events.

Destructive natural phenomena test rational creatures because they force rational creatures to respond to them. A tornado destroys your house and kills your beloved child. Will you work hard to stay cheerful and rebuild, or will you become bitter and waste the rest of your life? A hurricane devastates an island full of poor people. Will you help organize and/or fund a relief effort, or will you ignore the problem because it does not directly affect you?

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 37. Starting a Local Deist Organization

Hi Richard and Paul,

I guess that the best way to start a local Deist organization might be to just start having periodic meetings at a local library, coffee house, or pub. The focus of the initial meetings should be to get to know each other and to get the word out to other Deists and Deist-friendly people. As the group grows, it might want to meet once a month with the ultimate goal of establishing a Deist learning center.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 38. The History of Deism

Hi John,

Thank you for the compliment, and let me compliment you too: You asked two excellent questions.

I will begin to answer them by defining Deism in an accurate and understandable way. Deism is the philosophy that teaches only two things: 1) One should base all of one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists, or at least probably exists.

According to

<http://www.prb.org/Article/2002/HowManyPeopleHaveEverLivedonEarth.aspx>, approximately 106 billion humans have ever been born. Suppose that half of those humans reached an age when they could possibly base all their beliefs on reason and conclude that God exists, or at least probably exists. In other words, they could possibly be Deists. That means there could have been 53 billion Deists throughout human history.

Obviously, not all 53 billion humans were/are Deists, but it is not very difficult for a knowledgeable, honest, and intelligent human to develop and believe the two teachings of Deism on his or her own. So, let's say that 1% of all humans who ever lived embraced Deism, whether they even knew the word *Deism* or not. Thus, approximately 530 million humans were/are Deists throughout human history.

Of course, the word *Deism* first became popular in predominantly Christian nations. According to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deism>, "[t]he earliest known usage in print of the English term 'deist' is 1621, and 'deism' is first found in a 1675 dictionary. Deism became more prominent in the 17th and 18th centuries during the Age of Enlightenment — especially in Britain, France, Ireland and North America — mostly among those raised as Christians who found they could not believe in supernatural miracles, the inerrancy of scriptures, or the Trinity, but who did believe in one God. The Founding Fathers of the United States were heavily influenced by Enlightenment philosophies, and it is generally believed that many of them were deists."

So to answer your questions directly. "Would Deism have arisen apart from Christianity?" Yes, in fact it did. Probably millions of people were Deists long before Jesus of Nazareth was born or people used the word Deism. Plato and Cicero were definitely Deists from that era.

"Doesn't the Deist belief system rely on presuppositions already established by Christianity?" No. Deism relies on two not-necessarily-Christian presuppositions: 1) One should base all of one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God exists, or at least probably exists.

However, Deism has historically been attractive to knowledgeable, intelligent, and honest

Christians who wanted to keep what is good and true about their inherited religion while rejecting what is evil and false. That having been said, I know for certain that many non-Christians also have embraced Deism, including many former Muslims.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 39. Emotion and Intuition

You might be pleased to know that I might already include what you call emotion and intuition with reason. What are emotion and intuition, and where do they come from? Emotion is an intense mental feeling, such as happiness and sadness. Intuition is supposedly the power of knowing or understanding something immediately without reasoning or being taught. I believe that both emotion and intuition come from parts of the brain. Thus, there is nothing spiritual (i.e. non-physical, mystical, or supernatural) about their source and power. I also believe that intuition is a type of emotion.

We might feel that someone or something is good without having much information about him, her, or it; or we might feel that someone or something is bad without having much information about him, her, or it. In either case, we are having an intense mental feeling that tells us we know or understand something immediately without reasoning or being taught.

Why should we value emotions and intuitions? Before humanity was as rational as it is now, it was a purely emotional species. Human emotions helped our ancestors survive and successfully reproduce. So imbedded in our psyche are emotions that we cannot and should not ignore. Instead, we should understand them as well as we can and cater to them as much as reason permits. Otherwise, they will make us very miserable. Emotions cannot be ignored forever.

As for intuitions, they seem to come from our subconscious; and sometimes our subconscious correctly perceives things that our conscious cannot or is not willing to perceive. Once, I had a supposed friend who was a villain, and I dreamed that he was doing something evil. So my conscious thought of him as a friend, although my subconscious knew that he was a villain and gave me a dream to tell me so. But my subconscious doesn't just speak to me in dreams. It speaks to me in intuitions. And, like one's emotions, one's subconscious should not be ignored. It has evolved to help one survive and thrive, and it can make one very miserable if it is ignored too much.

Unfortunately, the best course is not always to understand and do whatever one's emotions and intuition tell one to do. Sometimes, if not often, one's emotions and intuitions are completely inaccurate or very inappropriate. For example, I once had a student who struck me as a real troublemaker, despite the fact that I barely knew him. He just looked like a troublemaker. However, the truth was that he was a very intelligent and well-behaved student. So my intuition about that student was completely inaccurate, and I am glad that I kept an open mind about him. I knew that emotions and intuitions can be misleading. So I kept my mouth shut, observed him, and got more data. It didn't take long for me to realize that that student was the opposite of what I assumed he would be.

I think that people have intuitions like this frequently. Foolish people tend to remember when their intuitions are correct and forget when they are incorrect. Thus, they erroneously conclude that their intuitions are always correct, as if they come from God. That is very foolish indeed! It is an example of what is often called confirmation bias.

Wise people remember that their intuitions can be either correct or incorrect. They use their reason to think about their intuitions, and they gather more information to accept them as true or reject them as false. Unfortunately, we humans are imperfect, and our intuitions, being part of us, are imperfect too. There is no absolutely trustworthy way for us to believe things or make choices. The best that we can do is rely heavily on our reason, take educated guesses, and keep an open mind.

#### 40. Work

Hi Wendy,

Your situation at work reminds me of my career as a public school teacher. I used to be super-sensitive, and many hurtful (or at least seemingly hurtful) comments were directed toward me from students, parents, fellow teachers, and principals. I absolutely hated my career and was desperate to find a new one.

However, I was unable to find a suitable replacement, so I had to stick it out. Finally, I decided, *Forget it! I am going to do the best job that I can, and if y'all don't like the job I am doing, y'all can fire me and go squat naked on a cactus! To the best of my ability, I am going to figure out what my top boss wants me to do and then do it. If it is not good enough, she can tell me that I should quit or she can work to get me fired.*

My career has been much more pleasant and successful since I adopted this attitude. However, my career is still often difficult. Simply speaking, work sucks. That is why it is called work. If it was fun, it would be called fun.

I suggest that you consider adopting this way of thinking too. However, since you do not get paid in a set way and since your bosses might want you to get paid less, you might have to make a modification to this way of thinking. You might want to add the following thought to your decision: *I am going to be fair to this organization. However, as much as possible, I am going to make it pay me what it owes me. I am not going to work for less than what I deserve unless I absolutely have to.*

Until later,

Jayson

## 41. Giving Up Christianity

Hi Miriam,

I do not know if you know my personal struggle with “revealed” religion. I was raised Eastern Orthodox Christian, became an Eastern Orthodox Christian priest, and then rejected my inherited religion in favor of Deism. One of the best ways to learn something is to seriously try to teach it. That is what happened to me. I seriously tried to teach Christianity, so I became an expert in it and came to the conclusion that it was about 50% false and 10% evil. Then I thought that people, including myself, could and should embrace a better religion (actually rational philosophy) than that.

Giving up Christianity was difficult for me at first, and one of the greatest difficulties was truly learning to think for myself. Sure, I had to often think for myself on various occasions; but once I rejected Christianity, I had to think for myself at a much more fundamental level because I could not rely on the Bible or the Church to give me an indisputable answer. Welcome to freedom! It is challenging, but it is priceless and full of great joy!

My advice to you is that you seriously think about what you believe and why. What should one base one's beliefs on and why? I say reason not faith, because reason is how we successfully accept and deal with reality, while faith can make us believe something that is false and/or downright stupid. Follow whatever moral teachings you think are best. Just because you are no longer a Christian does not mean that you cannot adopt some Christian moral teachings. One of the reasons Christianity is so popular is that it has at least some good morality.

Thomas Jefferson, a most prominent Deist, actually took the four canonical gospels, physically cut out the miraculous parts, glued the remainder back together, and created *The Jefferson Bible*. The teachings of *The Jefferson Bible*, which include the Golden Rule, are teachings which many, if not most, Deists would wholeheartedly agree with.

In case you are looking for some other moral basis, you can look along with me at a philosophy called Utilitarianism. The goal of Utilitarianism is to promote the most happiness for the greatest amount of people or sentient beings. The ultimate goal of most widely-admired moral systems, such as those of Buddhism and Christianity, is probably the same, although officially the goal of Buddhism is Enlightenment and the goal of Christianity is doing God's will and going to Heaven. But Utilitarianism has a sounder philosophical basis and can easily be embraced by people of widely different religious/philosophical opinions.

What is the standard of right and wrong? It is what seems best to you. God is not going to speak to you or any other mortal human being from a cloud; all the supposed holy books in the world were written by fallible human beings and are, thus, flawed; and every religious organization in human history was created and is maintained by imperfect human beings, and is likewise imperfect. Don't automatically base your belief on

someone else's teaching when God gave you a decent brain and has put you in a position where you have to make your own choices. Glorify God by using that brain God gave you to the best of your ability. If you make an honest mistake, so what? God wants you to use your free will as well as you can; God does not expect you to be perfect!

Well, I hope that I have been of some help. Please contact me again if you have any questions or comments.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 42. My Beliefs

Hi All,

I am a . . .

Deist (I base all my beliefs on reason and conclude that God, the being who purposefully created the universe, exists.),

Pseudo-Utilitarian (I believe that whatever makes the majority of creatures, especially humans, happiest is usually, although not necessarily always, the best action.),

Unitarian (I believe that God is only one person.),

Universalist (Simply speaking, I believe that God will eventually make all creatures completely sane, good, and happy forever.),

and Freethinker (I base all of my beliefs on reason—not faith or any external authority—and I wholeheartedly accept the truth as I understand it, even when doing so causes me to abandon or modify previously cherished beliefs. Being a Freethinker is more important to me than being a Deist, Pseudo-Utilitarian, Unitarian, or Universalist; so I am willing to give up any of those philosophies to maintain Freethought.).

Simply speaking, all the aforementioned philosophies and names were invented by others. I just happen to agree with and adopt them.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 43. The Second Coming

Hi Anthony,

To answer your question, I will first borrow some thoughts from <http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=104384530792&topic=18544>.

Some person named Mark wrote, "There are several passages in the gospels where Jesus says he will return in the disciples' lifetime (Mark 13:30, Matthew 10:23, 16:28, 24:34, Luke 21:32, etc.).

"The same expectation held during the period the apostle Paul wrote his letters. In 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Paul says that the time is so short that believers should drastically change the way that they live. But Paul had a problem: Some believers had died, so what would happen to them when Jesus returned?

"Paul's answer in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 shows that Paul expected that at least some of those he was writing to would be alive when Jesus returned: 'we who are alive, and remain'. The same passage also indicates that Paul believed that those believers who had died remained 'asleep in Jesus' until he returned. However, as the delay in Jesus' return grew longer, the location of Jesus' kingdom shifted from earth to heaven and we later find Paul indicating that when believers die they will immediately 'depart and be with Christ' (Philippians 1:23).

"It is quite obvious that Jesus never intended to start any type of church structure since he believed he would return very shortly to rule his kingdom in person. It is also quite obvious that Jesus was wrong about when he was coming back."

Then some person named Francois wrote, "Isn't it amazing that the goal posts can always be moved just as long as you have 'faith'." To which I add, every field goal is good if one moves the goal posts just right. In other words, if a prophet predicts something that turns out to be false, the prophet, or the prophet's followers, can change the meaning of his or her prediction until it becomes true.

I will now say a make-believe prophecy to illustrate my point. The Lord came to me and did say, "Say unto the people that the Lord regards women equal to men, and in the land of the United States of America, the Lord will raise up a woman president before this generation passes away."

That prediction is certainly more likely to be true than the prediction that Jesus of Nazareth will return to Earth and judge the living and the dead. Yet, let's suppose that 100 years from now the United States still exists but has not yet had a woman president. Also, let's suppose that I have many followers at that time who believe everything that I wrote. Call them Jaysonites.

What will people say to the Jaysonites about my prophecy, and what will the Jaysonites

say to those people? The non-Jaysonites will say something sensible such as, "Jayson was wrong," and the Jaysonites will say something illogical such as, "Jayson was using the word generation very loosely. People have been the same from his time until now. Only after Americans are willing to have a woman president will people be sufficiently changed to be considered a new generation."

There, I metaphorically moved the goal post. My first attempt for a successful prophecy failed, but through the magic of shoddy thinking and rationalization, I have made my prophecy sound true to the weak-minded.

Now to answer your question simply. 2 Peter 3:3-4 was written long after it became obvious that Jesus was not coming back as soon as the first Christians believed that he would. It was written in response to those who questioned or rejected the doctrine of the Second Coming. However, those who questioned or rejected the Second Coming are correct, and those who believe in the Second Coming are incorrect. People can wait until the end of the universe, and Jesus will not come back.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

#### 44. Debating Atheists

Hi Ivan,

Good for you for becoming a Deist and sticking with what you honestly believe! Attached to this email is an essay I wrote. Pages 6 through 20 should help you out the most. That having been said, I want to tell you three things.

One, many people like to try to push their religious beliefs on you, so no matter what religion you are (Christian, Atheist, Deist, etcetera), someone is going to try to convert you. What is most important is that you base all your beliefs on reason, are completely honest with yourself, and always try to be a good person. If you do those things and people still complain about you, they are probably being cruel and/or unfair. So they should probably be taught, fought, or ignored.

Two, intelligent Atheists, unlike intelligent Christians, are difficult to argue with. When an intelligent Deist argues with an intelligent Atheist, there isn't much to argue about. Both base their beliefs on the same method (reason), and both base their beliefs on the same evidence (the universe). The only difference is that they have different conclusions about what started the universe. The Deist believes that a Supreme Being did, and the Atheist believes that something that was not a Supreme Being did.

So the conversation usually boils down to this. The Deist says, "I believe that God created the universe," and the Atheist says, "I believe that God did not create the universe." I don't think that it is worth starting a debate over God with an Atheist, but I also don't think it is worth fearing such a debate if an Atheist ridicules your belief in the Supreme Being.

Christians, like other "revealed" religionists are much easier to debate because their method (faith) and their evidence (the Bible) are extremely flawed. Metaphorically speaking, both Christians and Atheists are incorrect to an extent, but the Christians (at least those Christians who believe everything that the Bible teaches) wear a big target while the Atheists wear a little target.

Three, I like hanging out with Atheists because they talk more sensibly about religion than most other people and are generally more intelligent than the average person. Also, unlike the Deists in my area, they have a well-established community.

If I ever debate an Atheist, I imagine that the conversation will go something like this.

Me: "Do you believe in the Big Bang?"

Atheist: "Yes."

Me: "So do I. The question is, What caused the Big Bang?"

Atheist: "I don't know, but that doesn't mean that you should conclude that a god did it."

Me: "I try to base all my beliefs on reason, which is like playing the odds. Whatever is most likely to be true is what I believe. Because the universe seems purposefully created, the odds are that God exists. At least that is how it seems to me."

Atheist: "Can you give me any proof that God exists besides your vague assertion that the universe seems purposefully created?"

Me: "The universe has all the things to create and sustain life as we know it, including energy, water, and elements like carbon. It also has the proper amount of gravity. The gravitational constant is a physical constant involved in the calculation of the gravitational attraction between objects with mass. If the gravitational constant was stronger, the universe would have collapsed on itself by now. If it was weaker, the stars would have died out by now because they need much mass to burn."

Atheist: "Well, haven't you heard of the Multiverse Theory?"

Me: "Yes. Correct me if I am wrong, but some physicists assert the Multiverse Theory to explain why our universe seems so fine-tuned for life without resorting to belief in God. They argue that there are probably many universes, maybe more than a trillion of them, and our universe is one of them. At least one of those universes should be perfect for life because each (or at least many) of the universes is at least a little different. So, suppose that there are a trillion universes in the Multiverse, and just one, our universe, is able to create and sustain life. 'Big deal!' such Atheistic physicists would say. 'That still leaves 999,999,999,999 without life.'"

Atheist: "That is basically correct. So, why don't you believe the Multiverse Theory?"

Me: "The main reason that I reject the Multiverse Theory is that there is basically no evidence for it. No other universe has been scientifically proven to exist. Therefore, until such evidence is convincingly presented to me, I will continue to believe that this universe is the only universe that exists."

Atheist: "Oh, there you go. It's the God of the Gaps Theory."

Me: "God is my hypothesis for what started the universe. I will continue to believe my hypothesis until someone convinces me that there is a better one. Merely asserting that the universe began with a quantum fluctuation in a vacuum will not convince me."

Atheist: "A quantum fluctuation in a vacuum sounds more likely than some entity beyond time and space purposefully created the universe."

Me: "That is your opinion, not mine. I think that on this issue we should agree to disagree. We can still be friends, though. It is much more important what people do than what they believe."

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

#### 45. Becoming a Deist

God made you a human without you going anywhere, saying anything, or doing a ceremony. Likewise, you have become a Deist just by being where you are, basing all your beliefs on reason, and concluding that God exists or at least probably exists.

That might sound simple, but it is actually very profound. Basing all your beliefs on reason is a long journey toward perfection that will not end in this life. It means that you must reject all superstitions, both major and minor; and you must always perceive reality as completely and honestly as you can, and then make logical conclusions based on what you perceive. Although your reason, like mine, is imperfect, it is still the best means for you to believe what is true and disbelieve what is false.

I think that it is very appropriate that Deists do not have a ceremony for becoming a Deist. When one realizes an important truth, one usually does nothing but accept that truth and grow intellectually and emotionally. Becoming a Deist just means realizing the two important truths of Deism: 1) One should base all of one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists. Upon those two truths, you can and should build a most excellent personal philosophy.

That having been said, many Deists choose to join the World Union of Deists (WUD). If you want to join WUD, just go to <http://www.deism.com/member.htm>.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 46. Dealing with Family

Hi Alexander,

The best advice I can give you is this. First, love everyone regardless of their religion. Second, be extremely fair to your Jewish friends and relatives. Third, try to understand why they do and believe what they do and believe. Fourth, only try to enlighten them when you are certain that doing so will probably do more good than evil. Sorry to quote the Christian Bible, but to paraphrase Saint Paul, "A little yeast makes all the dough rise" (Galatians 5:9). In this case, this saying means that we can have a huge, positive influence just by doing whatever good things we can.

I invite you to write to me whenever you want. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!** Life is very confusing for all humans. There might be a best way to live our lives, but in this life we won't know it and we won't live it. Just do your best.

I was a devout Christian until I was about 30, and I sometimes wonder what I would have done if I was in high school again with the beliefs that I have now. I think that I would tell my devout Christian mother, "Mom, I love you, and there is much good in the Bible and the Church. But I don't want to go to church anymore because I don't believe in the miracles of the Bible." I would not try to convert her, but I would try to avoid wasting my time attending religious services that I do not believe in. However, I think that I would still attend church on Christmas and Easter just to make her happy. Family is very important.

Be a good, honest, wise, and respectful person; and your family should come around and love you as much (if not more) than ever. If you do this and they don't, they have far greater problems than you have.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 47. Supposed Prophecies of Jesus and Why Jesus Is Not the Messiah

Hi All,

Many, if not all, of the supposed prophecies about Jesus were not prophecies at all. They were passages in the Old Testament that reminded Christians of Jesus. For example, Hosea 11:1 is about how the nation of Israel was liberated from Egypt by God, using the poetic expression "My son." Trinitarian Christians like to believe that Jesus is the Only-begotten Son of God, so many of them claim that this passage about the nation of Israel was also about Jesus of Nazareth being brought back to Judea from Egypt by God (see Matthew 2:14-15). It is a nonsensical assertion, comparing apples to bowling balls.

When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son. ( <i>Hosea 11:1</i> )	<b>flight to Egypt</b>	And he arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "Out of Egypt did I call My Son." ( <i>Matthew 2:14-15</i> )
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As <http://judaism.about.com/od/judaismbasics/a/Jewish-View-Of-Jesus.htm> explains, the Messiah is supposed to

- Be an observant Jewish man descended from the house of King David
- Be an ordinary human being (as opposed to the Only-Begotten Son of God)
- Bring peace to the world
- Gather all Jews back into Israel
- Rebuild the ancient Temple in Jerusalem
- Unite humanity in the worship of the Jewish God and Torah observance

Because Jesus of Nazareth obviously did not do all these things, the vast majority of Jews intelligently reject him as the Messiah. So the people who understand the Old Testament best and whose ancestors wrote it, reject Christian claims that Jesus fulfilled a bunch of Messianic prophecies. In general, Christians probably do not understand the Old Testament as well as Jews do, and their ancestors did not write it.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 48. Terrorism

I think that the main causes of terrorism are injustice and a lack of compassion.

If everything was just, there would be no need for terrorism. The men who destroyed the World Trade Center did so in part because they believed that the United States has treated Arabs and Muslims unjustly. They would have attacked the United States with a conventional army if they had a conventional army that had a decent chance of winning. They didn't, so they resorted to terrorism.

That having been said, the men who destroyed the World Trade Center also did so for a religious reason: "Infidel" American troops were stationed in large numbers in the Muslim holy land, the Arabian Peninsula. I can somewhat sympathize with the accusation that the United States has treated Arabs and Muslims unjustly, but I cannot sympathize at all with any superstitious motive, including the aforementioned religious reason.

A lack of compassion often causes injustice in the first place. Probably the Arabs and Israelis should have had more compassion for each other when the Jews first started settling in twentieth century Palestine; probably the Israelis and Palestinians should have more compassion for each other after 1948; and probably the United States should have promoted freedom, peace, and democracy in the Middle East instead of corrupt and oppressive governments. Simply speaking, if the Jews, Israelis, Palestinians, Arabs, and Americans (yes, I know there is some overlap here) were all compassionate all the time, the Jews would be allowed to live happily in Palestine, the Arabs would be happy and free, and the Americans would be completely just.

Not only that, but it is much more difficult to do terrorist acts if one genuinely cares about all people. Terrorist acts often kill innocent civilians, and compassionate people are very reluctant to kill innocent civilians.

49. The Resurrection of Jesus (Or Lack Thereof)

Dear Austin,

Being an ex-priest, I know a little about the Jesus story. As I recall, Jesus supposedly resurrected from the dead and appeared to various people. Fine then, I invite Jesus to appear to me and explain the error of my ways.

I'm still waiting, Jesus.

Jesus, where are you?

Where, O where, O where is Jesus?

Hey, Jesus didn't show up. Hard to believe!

In case you are not totally closed-minded, I have attached an essay that I wrote which explains why I believe that "revealed" religions are wrong, Deism is better than Atheism and Agnosticism, and that there is life after death and true justice.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 50. The ReaCH Philosophy

Hello David,

I was raised Christian, got a master's degree in theology, was ordained a priest, and served in that capacity for approximately three years. If you ever want to understand a subject well, teach it well. To make a long story short, I taught Christianity so well that I came to understand that it and the Bible are approximately 50% false and 10% evil. This new and improved understanding eventually led me to create my own personal philosophy and to largely reject Christianity. I invite you and the rest of humanity to create your own personal philosophy too—a personal philosophy that is more true and good than your inherited religion, and a personal philosophy that is designed to improve over time as you learn more about reality.

Before I created my personal philosophy, I thought to myself, *What should I base my beliefs on?* And I concluded that I should base my beliefs on reason because reason is my best guide to embrace truth and reject falsehood. Then I thought, *Reason alone will not guarantee that I will be a good person. Ayn Rand was very reasonable, but her philosophy, Objectivism, is very selfish and evil.* So I concluded that I should also base my beliefs on compassion. Then I thought, *OK, that will make me reasonable and compassionate, but I can still despair.* So I also decided to base my beliefs on hope. I call my personal philosophy the ReaCH Philosophy (R for Reason, C for Compassion, and H for Hope.) Using that foundation, I live my life fairly well, I think. I also reject nonsensical religious assertions.

ReaCH led me to Deism because Deism teaches just two things: 1) One should base all of one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists. I was already basing all my beliefs on reason, and I still honestly believed that the universe was purposefully created. Thus, I still honestly believed that God exists because of what reason, not faith, led me to believe.

The reason that I mention all this to you is that I am convinced that it will help you (and everyone else) with any theological and philosophical difficulties that you have.

51. Israel

Hi Don,

My understanding is that the Bible claims that the Jews are the Chosen People of God. This is problematic for at least two reasons: It is an irrational claim, and it is likely to encourage something akin to racism and/or nationalism. In fact, the Book of Joshua describes the Jews murdering thousands (if not millions) of Canaanites and stealing their land and possessions, all the while justifying these horrible acts as God's will.

And this is not all ancient history. As you are aware, there is currently an ongoing conflict between Israeli Jews and the Palestinians, who are very much like modern-day Canaanites because they are Gentiles who live in the so-called Promised Land.

Personally, I think every nation should work to make the world a better place. That includes helping governments which are relatively good and hindering governments that are relatively evil. The United States should not blindly support any nation, and the United States should not help or hinder any government for religious reasons. The United States is and should be a secular nation that bases its policies on its own wellbeing and the wellbeing of humanity in general. When the United States gives money to other nations, it should do so with those truths in mind.

The United States should continue to support a two-state solution to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian problem, and it should continue to support democratic reforms in every nation, even itself. (Wouldn't it be nice to get rid of the electoral college and gerrymandering?)

The United States should keep more to itself and not selfishly or unwisely tinker with the governments of foreign nations. Let the United States support Israel when Israel is relatively good, and let the United States hinder Israel when Israel is relatively evil. The same goes for all the Middle East nations and for every other nation in the world.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 52. Christianity and Scientology/Christianity Is Ridiculous

Hi Anthony,

How can anyone be certain that what the Bible teaches about God is true? The Bible teaches that God is three persons who share one substance or essence, but that doesn't sound true. That sounds impossible. The Bible also teaches that one of these divine persons became incarnate in a virgin's womb; lived as a baby, then a boy, and then a man; and then died a sacrificial death on a cross. That sounds like pure mythology. Just because something is written in an ancient book that many people strongly believe does not make it true.

Check out the following two definitions.

Christianity is "[t]he belief that a cosmic Jewish Zombie who was his own father can make you live forever if you symbolically eat his flesh and telepathically tell him you accept him as your master, so he can remove an evil force from your soul that is present in humanity because a rib-woman was convinced by a talking snake to eat from a magical tree" (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=christianity&page=3>). And if you don't believe this nonsense, God, who is love, will burn you alive forever.

Scientology is the belief that a galactic emperor blew up 1.4 trillion frozen aliens around volcanoes on Earth to reduce overpopulation. The spirits of these aliens have attached themselves to our bodies and are the root cause of all our problems. Only the Church of Scientology can save people from these extraterrestrial ghosts . . . for a hefty fee (<http://www.skeptictank.org/gen3/gen01985.htm>).

Why should your friends be Christians rather than Scientologists or some other kooky religion? Probably most, if not all, of them are Christians because they were raised to be Christians. If they were raised to be Scientologists, they would be Scientologists. Once upon a time, those same Christian friends of yours were probably raised to believe in Santa Claus, and they did believe in Santa Claus as much as they currently believe in Jesus Christ. Now though, they are smart enough to realize that Santa Claus is a myth; but they have yet to realize that the same is true of Jesus Christ.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 53. Thomas Paine's Excellent Statement

Thomas Paine wrote in *The Age of Reason* that "It is only in the **CREATION** that all our ideas and conceptions of a word of God can unite. The Creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they may be. It is an ever-existing original, which every man can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not; it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this word of God reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God" (Paine, Thomas. *The Age of Reason: The Complete Edition*. Escondido, CA: Truth Seeker Company, 2009, page 28.).

## 54. Bible Monsters

Hi Gregory,

The following was written by Bob Johnson, the one who wrote the article:

"This page has received a lot of attention from revealed religionists who tell me it is inaccurate. It seems they've looked up the Bible verses found below in their Bibles, but the references to the Bible monsters and fictional creatures are not found. That is because they're not looking in the King James Version of the Bible. More recent versions of 'the word of God' have changed these ridiculous creatures to more reasonable creatures, such as oxen, etc.

"The fact that the changes were made, proves the Deist position that the Bible, or any proclaimed 'holy' book, cannot be the word of God. To take a quote from Thomas Paine that he wrote in his outstanding book on God, religion, and Deism, *The Age of Reason*: ' . . . the idea or belief of a Word of God existing in print, or in writing, or in speech, is inconsistent in itself for reasons already assigned. These reasons, among many others, are the want of a universal language; the mutability of language; the errors to which translations are subject; the possibility of totally suppressing such a word; the probability of altering it, or of fabricating the whole, and imposing it upon the world.'

"The changes in the Bible that the objections to this page have brought to light, make it clear Thomas Paine was correct in his above quote. Taking a look around us, at the beautiful sun rising or setting, the blue sky and the night stars, we see and experience the real Word of God. We don't need any other. And that's good, because there isn't any other!"

If you want to debate with me, you can. If you want to debate with Bob, email him at bob@deism.com.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

\* Also see "85. Translations (Why I Tentatively Believe that the Revised Standard Version of the Bible Is the Best Translation)".

## 55. Miracle Stories

Hi Mendel,

According to a fifth-century Pali text, "The Lord Buddha . . . created a crystal path in the sky from the eastern boundary of the city of Kapilavastu to its western perimeter. Then, ascending into the air, . . . he walked on the sky-bridge he had miraculously created. [After that, the] Lord Buddha, filled with splendor, extended his arms until he touched the sun and the moon. Then, from a teaching platform that he created in the sky, he told the assembled crowd [of 60,000 followers], 'Here there is no place for dust to settle.' He also performed numerous other miracles, such as appearing to walk above the heads of the Shakyans [citizens of the ancient kingdom of Shakya]" (Woodward, Kenneth L. *The Book of Miracles: The Meaning of the Miracle Stories in Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000, pages 321 and 403).

I suppose that millions of Buddhists believe in miracles such as the one described above because, supposedly, tens of thousands of people witnessed them. So, what is the truth? Did Buddha really walk on the air in front of 60,000 people, or is the passage false? I say that the passage is false because it is easy to lie and I have yet to see an indisputable miracle. Well, if that is true for Buddhist scripture, it also applies to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Scriptures. In fact, it applies to all supposed holy books.

It is unlikely that thousands of Israelites got together and agreed to invent a miracle story to fool future generations. Rather, it is much more likely that some Israelite started telling the basis of the story, with or without the purpose of deceiving others; and then other Israelites began to tell that story to many people, believing it to be historically true. Along the way, the story of Moses received additions and subtractions until it reached the form which was recorded in the Bible.

Let me know if you converted to Deism yet. 😊

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 56. Prayer

Different Deists have different beliefs and practices regarding prayer. Some like praying and do it often, others hate it and don't do it at all, and others are somewhere in between. I am somewhere in between.

Often, I talk with God when I am alone in my car, just to have someone perfect to talk to or to have a free psychotherapist. Of course, if God talks back to me, it is not with words that I hear with my ears. Maybe it is with emotions and thoughts. Yet, even if God does not talk back to me, such talking seems to help me. So I will keep doing it anyway.

Sometimes, I talk to God just to thank God. I think that this is a good practice for me because it cultivates thankful thoughts and a thankful attitude within me. Thankful people are happier and more pleasant to be with than unthankful people.

Occasionally, I will ask God for something. When I ask God for something, I don't expect a miracle. I just hope for one. Maybe God intervenes in the natural working of the universe, or maybe God doesn't. If God does, God probably does so in a covert way so that, even if God does a miracle, it is debatable whether it was an extreme coincidence or not.

I think that asking for God's help can be beneficial as the final act of a series of wise actions. Here is an example. I try to eat right and exercise so that I will have a long and happy life, but I am still a little scared of dying. I think that almost all humans are at least a little scared of dying because we know that we will die someday but are programmed by Nature to try to survive. Sometimes when I lay facedown in bed, which is often how most easily fall asleep, I can feel my heart beating in my chest; and this reminds me that someday that heart will stop beating and I will die. That's when I feel the fear. Well, to help me sleep I pray to God, "God, please help me."

Maybe God helps me because of my prayer, or maybe God doesn't. I'm not sure. What I am sure of is that I have done everything that I reasonably can to live a good life and that I am hoping and trusting in God to help me have the best future that I can have.

I have another example of when I did the best that I could and then asked God to help as the final act of a series of wise actions (or at least the wisest actions that I knew how to make). However, this example is extremely personal, so I won't describe it in detail. I just want to mention that this horrible crisis—a crisis far worse than most other people will ever have to face—worked out surprisingly well, seemingly miraculously well. Perhaps God was moved by my prayer to help me. If so, I thank God with all my being. Amen.

57. Deist Books

Dear John,

The World Union of Deists has a wonderful selection of books which can be ordered at <http://www.deism.com/books.htm>. Two of the best ones there are *Deism: A Revolution in Religion, A Revolution in You* by Bob Johnson, and *The Age of Reason, The Complete Edition* by Thomas Paine.

Also, if you don't already have a subscription to our free Deism webzine but would like to, just go to <http://www.deism.com/thinkonline.htm>. We will be happy to add you to our subscriber list.

Lastly, I have attached a free copy of my rather lengthy essay, "What Is the Best Theology?"

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 58. The Jesus Bet

I'll tell you what, the next time you see Jesus, please ask him to visit me and kindly explain to me the error of my ways. Furthermore, Jesus will have to convince me that I am not dreaming or hallucinating. But hey, if Jesus has the knowledge, intelligence, and power of God, he will know how to convince me and will be able to do it.

I'll bet you that I will never see Jesus. Until I actually see Jesus and Jesus claims that the New Testament is basically true—i.e. He is the Incarnate Word of God who sacrificed Himself on the cross to atone for humanity's sins and then resurrected from the dead and ascended into Heaven—I will be winning the bet.

## 59. What to Tell People Who Are Suffering

Hi Chuck,

I really don't know exactly what to say to people who are in such a scary situation as you are in now, so I guess that I will just tell you some of my thoughts and feelings. I am sad because you are such a wonderful person. You don't deserve to be sick, and humanity in general and your friends in particular would lose much if you ever got too sick.

Like you, I am hopeful about your situation. There is a good chance that Nature and science will combine to fix your problem sooner rather than later.

I admire how Stoically you are handling this and encourage you to keep going in that manner. It is better to accept the truth so that one can deal with it wisely, even if one cannot fix the problem. Ignorance can be bliss, but there is great satisfaction and power in knowing that one has honestly and completely accepted reality as well as one can.

Please let me know if I can be of any help.

Your friend,

Jayson

## 60. Deist Reason Centers

Bob Johnson, the founder and director of the World Union of Deists, wrote the following:

“Paul Mopps, our WUD Deist Contact in Washington, has reopened the first ever Deist Reason Center! Paul is a very active Deist for whom Deism is not simply an interesting topic to talk about, but Deism is a way of life for Paul. I'm very grateful for all Paul does for Deism and for all he has done over the years for Deism and the WUD.

“Our eventual goal for Deist Reason Centers (the topic of Deist Reason Centers is covered in our podcast) is to have them open to the public and have them staffed by Deists who can answer questions people may have about Deism. They will also have books, DVDs and literature on Deism. I'd also like to have volunteer doctors, nurses and dentists at Deist Reason Centers who can treat people who can't afford proper medical and dental care. The Deist Reason Centers will also offer free literacy classes and have a quality telescope along with someone knowledgeable about astronomy who can teach people about the wonders of the Universe/the only real word of God. That is our long term goal. Right now the Deist Reason Center in Washington is provided by the generosity of Paul and his willingness to open up part of his own home for this important project for Deism.”

## 61. The History of Religion

One of the best writers about religion is Karen Armstrong, and she wrote an excellent book called *A History of God*. Using sources such as that book and modern science, I have come to the following tentative conclusions.

The first humans did not have a religion. Humans are descended from chimpanzee-like creatures, and chimpanzees do not appear to believe in God or gods. However, humans have a greater ability for abstract thought than any other creature I know of. With this ability, humans began to try to answer questions about the origin of things. We have wondered why things are the way they are, who we are, and what will happen to us after death. Since the universe seems purposefully made and humans already made lots of things such as tools, weapons, jewelry, paintings, and babies, it occurred to most of our ancestors that the things of the universe were purposefully made.

Was the first human religion monotheistic or polytheistic? I don't know. Perhaps the first religious humans were monotheistic and attributed all creations to an invisible Father, Mother, or Craftsman. Such a Creator might have seemed too remote and inaccessible to many of our ancestors, so they invented, supplicated, and worshiped many intermediary gods: the god of light, the god of the sky, the god of weather, the god of the moon, the god of the hunt, the god of plants, the god of fertility, the god of war, the god of water, et cetera. In any case, by the time that written history began (c. 3,500 B.C.E.), the vast majority of humans were polytheists.

Polytheism is less logical than monotheism, though, because everything had to come from something except the first thing. Thus, if there are other gods, they were ultimately created by the one God. And if they were created by God, they are less powerful than God. To use Biblical terminology, the gods are like angels and God is like Yahweh. Yahweh created the angels, according to the Bible or at least Christian tradition.

Also, after 3,500 B.C.E., it became obvious to many people that there were conflicting myths regarding the gods. For example, regarding the gods, the Hindus said one thing, the Egyptians said another, the Celts said another, and the Greeks said another. This made the gods seem fictitious.

For these reasons, more enlightened people began to realize that there is probably only one God, and humanity began to move from polytheism to monotheism. Christianity is now the most popular religion, and Islam is now the second most popular. Both religions are still growing, and Islam is the fastest-growing major religion on Earth. There are many Jews and Baha'is, and many modern Hindus believe that all gods are just parts of the Creator. In effect, those Hindus are basically monotheists.

So monotheism is an improvement over polytheism; but too often, monotheism is intertwined with false myths and counterproductive commandments. This is a major reason why many people are becoming Deists.

Deism is the philosophy that teaches only two things: 1) One should base all of one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists or at least probably exists.

According to

<http://www.prb.org/Article/2002/HowManyPeopleHaveEverLivedonEarth.aspx>, approximately 106 billion humans have ever been born. Suppose that half of those humans reached an age when they could possibly base all their beliefs on reason and conclude that God exists or at least probably exists. In other words, they could possibly be Deists. That means there could have been 53 billion Deists throughout human history.

Obviously, not all 53 billion humans were/are Deists, but it is not very difficult for a knowledgeable, honest, and intelligent human to develop and believe the two teachings of Deism on his or her own. So, let's say that 1% of those 53 billion humans embraced Deism, whether they even knew the word *Deism* or not. Thus, approximately 530 million humans were/are Deists throughout human history.

Of course, the word *Deism* first became popular in predominantly Christian nations. According to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deism>, "[t]he earliest known usage in print of the English term "deist" is 1621, and "deism" is first found in a 1675 dictionary. Deism became more prominent in the 17th and 18th centuries during the Age of Enlightenment — especially in Britain, France, Ireland and North America — mostly among those raised as Christians who found they could not believe in supernatural miracles, the inerrancy of scriptures, or the Trinity, but who did believe in one God. The Founding Fathers of the United States were heavily influenced by Enlightenment philosophies, and it is generally believed that many of them were deists.

Would Deism have arisen apart from Christianity? Yes, in fact it did. Probably millions of people were Deists long before Jesus of Nazareth was born or people used the word Deism. Plato and Cicero were definitely Deists from that era. Furthermore, Deism relies on two not-necessarily-Christian presuppositions: 1) One should base all of one's beliefs on reason, and 2) reason leads one to conclude that God exists or at least probably exists.

## 62. Comparing Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Hi Anthony,

Being a knowledgeable and educated Deist, I have no preference for Islam, Christianity, or Judaism over each other. I have read and studied the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Koran, and find them all dangerous and flawed.

The Old Testament says that the Jews are God's holy people and should kill or forcibly remove the Canaanites from the supposed Promised Land. ("Holy genocide, Batman!")

Although the New Testament preaches much peace, it didn't stop Christians from torturing and/or murdering Pagans, supposed heretics, and supposed witches; greatly stifling science; enslaving and stealing from millions of non-Europeans; persecuting thousands (if not millions) of Jews; and plunging the world into two world wars.

The Koran, like the other two testaments, teaches a mixed message. It teaches that God is compassionate, but like the New Testament it teaches that God will burn a large percentage of humanity alive forever. Likewise, it teaches some religious tolerance and human brotherhood, but it also teaches that Islam should rule the world and that it is often good to kill people from other religions.

I bring all this up because Fox News is a propaganda machine for conservative American Christians and Capitalists. It teaches indirectly that Judaism, Christianity, Jews, and Christians are largely good, but Islam and Muslims are largely evil. The truth is that all people are a mixture of good and evil, and just about every human group has some relatively good people and some relatively evil people. The truth is also that faith does more evil than good, and reason does much more good than evil.

I hope that you have enjoyed my rant. Have a wonderful day.

Jayson X

### 63. Satan/the Devil

Why do so many people believe in Satan, a.k.a. the Devil? Part of the reason is that this belief somewhat answers the question, "How can God be completely good and there be evil in the universe?" What the doctrine of Satan does is allow God to be completely good and create the universe completely good, and then have the universe partially ruined by someone else.

The main problem with this explanation of evil is that everything came from something, except that first thing; and that first thing is probably God. So God created the universe and any demons who tinker around with the universe. This implies that God is much more powerful than Satan, who is a demon. So God cannot be completely good and allow Satan to make every sentient creature on Earth suffer and die. God is responsible for the vast majority of all suffering and death in the universe, even if Satan exists.

Those who want to continue clinging to the Satan explanation of evil might argue that God loves freewill so much that God has to let creatures such as Satan do evil if they truly choose to. I agree that freewill is a good thing and that perhaps creatures with freewill should be allowed to do some evil. However, allowing one creature (Satan) to make every sentient creature on Earth (perhaps more than a quadrillion of them throughout history) suffer and die, is excessive in the extreme.

Therefore, the existence of a demon does not excuse God for all the evil in the universe. God is responsible for approximately 99% of all evil things: unwanted pain, diseases, natural disasters, old age, and death. The question is, Why does God allow evil? In other words, can God allow some evil and still be completely good? I say yes. Just let me know if you want to know why I say yes.

## 64. The Trinity

Hi Alex,

I will begin to answer your question by quoting Chief Wiggum from *The Simpsons*: "Yeah, yeah, the Bible says a lot of things" ("The Old Man and the C." Writ. Julie Thacker. Dir. Mark Kirkland. *The Simpsons*. FOX Broadcasting Company. 25 Apr. 1999.) That is a very intelligent observation from such as a stupid character. The Bible does indeed say a lot of things, many of them contradictory. The New Testament mentions the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and often talks about them as if all three of them are God. For example, the Gospel of John begins by saying that the Word (another word for the Son) is God (John 1:1-5). This Word of God (a.k.a. the Son of God) was and is Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:14-18).

Now things get more complicated. Jesus of Nazareth makes claims in the New Testament that make him sound very human, such as "the Father is greater than I" (John 14:28) and "But of that day and hour [when the universe will be completely fixed] no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son [of God, a.k.a. me], but only the Father" (Mark 13:32).

The Father obviously refers to Yahweh of the Old Testament, i.e. the deity of Judaism; and the Son/Word obviously refers to Jesus of Nazareth. I'm not sure why the Holy Spirit became so fundamental to Christianity. Unlike the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit seems without gender. However, the Holy Spirit impregnated the Virgin Mary with Jesus of Nazareth (Matthew 1:18) and then empowers and directs Christians now that Jesus took the cloud elevator up to Heaven. I guess that the main function of the Holy Spirit is to explain how Jesus is still on Earth and how Christians are holier than non-Christians.

So the New Testament is making all these assertions, and Christians have had to somehow make sense of it. After centuries of theological battling, the opinion of most Christians—although not even close to all Christians<sup>3</sup>—is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate divine persons, co-equal (despite what Jesus reportedly said in John 14:28) and co-eternal. These three divine persons share the same substance or essence, and that somehow makes them one God. They are a Trinity, a tri-unity, a unity of three persons.

As for Jesus of Nazareth, he is one person who is both fully God and fully human. In fact, Jesus is the one and only person who is both fully God and fully human. He is God incarnate.

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3. Here, I define Christians as those who claim to try to live according to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth more than they try to live according to the teachings of some other religious leader or philosopher. True Christians are those who honestly make this claim, and False Christians are those who do not honestly make this claim. I don't always know who is a True Christian and who is a False Christian, but I believe that God does.

If all this is difficult to understand, that's OK, because it is nonsensical. I wouldn't waste much time on it myself, if I had to go back in time.

Now to answer your question directly: "Would you say the New Testament supports the [doctrine of the] Trinity?" To a large extent, yes; but not perfectly. If a committee of intelligent and honest people were taught that every assertion of the New Testament were true and that somehow they had to explain who the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were, they could do worse than coming up with the aforementioned nonsensical formulations. However, as 2,000 years of Christian disunity make painfully obvious, such formulations are highly debatable.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 65. Pantheists, Panentheists, Pandeists, and Panendeists

Those who believe in God are Theists, and those who disbelieve in God are Atheists. Theists who base all their beliefs on reason are Deists. Theists who do not base all their theological beliefs on reason are "Revealed" Religionists, because they believe that God (or something else that is supernatural) revealed truths to them in a miraculous way—truths that cannot not be discovered and proved through reason.

Theists who believe that God and the universe are one and the same thing are Pantheists. Theists who believe that the universe is part of God are Panentheists. Pantheists who are also Deists are Pandeists, and Panentheists who are also Deists are Panendeists. Below is an outline of what I am trying to say.

- I. Atheists
- II. Theists
  - A. Deists
  - B. "Revealed" Religionists who are also Theists (Most Theists are "Revealed" Religionists, and most "Revealed" Religionists are Theists.)
- III. Pantheists
  - A. Pandeists
  - B. "Revealed" Religionsists who are Pantheists
- IV. Panentheists
  - A. Panendeists
  - B. "Revealed" Religionsists who are Panentheists

## 66. Thomas Jefferson Was Not a Christian

### **QUOTES OF THOMAS JEFFERSON THAT PROVE HE WAS NOT AN ORTHODOX OR FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN**

Note: I define a small-o orthodox Christian as a Christian who believes in the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Second Coming, the General Resurrection, eternal Heaven for the righteous, and eternal Hell for the unrighteous. I define a Fundamentalist Christian as a Christian who believes that the entire Bible is true. All literal assertions of the Bible are literally true, and all figurative assertions of the Bible are figuratively true. Please note that an orthodox Christian can be a Fundamentalist Christian and vice versa. However, an orthodox Christian is not necessarily a Fundamentalist Christian, but a Fundamentalist Christian is probably an orthodox Christian.

(\* The following quotations are taken mainly or exclusively from "Our Founding Fathers on Religion." *Get Enlightened*. 1 Feb. 2013.

<http://zenhell.com/GetEnlightened/FoundingFathers/>)

#### I. Jefferson specifically rejected the doctrine of the Trinity.

"It is too late in the day for men of sincerity to pretend they believe in the Platonic mysticisms that three are one, and one is three; and yet that the one is not three, and the three are not one. But this constitutes the craft, the power and the profit of the priests."  
-Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Adams, 1803

"The doctrines of Jesus are simple, and tend all to the happiness of man. But compare with these the demoralizing dogmas of Calvin.

1. That there are three Gods.
2. That good works, or the love of our neighbor, is nothing.
3. That faith is every thing, and the more incomprehensible the proposition, the more merit the faith.
4. That reason in religion is of unlawful use.
5. That God, from the beginning, elected certain individuals to be saved, and certain others to be damned; and that no crimes of the former can damn them; no virtues of the latter save."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Benjamin Waterhouse, Jun. 26, 1822

"The metaphysical insanities of Athanasius, of Loyola, and of Calvin, are, to my understanding, mere lapses into polytheism, differing from paganism only by being more unintelligible."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Jared Sparks, 1820

#### II. Jefferson believed that Jesus of Nazareth was a mere human being, not the Only-begotten Son of God. He believed that Jesus was a great teacher of theology and morality. In other words, Jefferson disbelieved in the doctrine of the Incarnation.

"But the greatest of all reformers of the depraved religion of his own country, was Jesus of Nazareth. Abstracting what is really his from the rubbish in which it is buried, easily distinguished by its lustre from the dross of his biographers, and as separable from that as the diamond from the dunghill, we have the outlines of a system of the most sublime morality which has ever fallen from the lips of man. The establishment of the innocent and genuine character of this benevolent morality, and the rescuing it from the imputation of imposture, which has resulted from artificial systems, invented by ultra-Christian sects (The immaculate conception of Jesus, his deification, the creation of the world by him, his miraculous powers, his resurrection and visible ascension, his corporeal presence in the Eucharist, the Trinity; original sin, atonement, regeneration, election, orders of the Hierarchy, etc.) is a most desirable object."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to W. Short, Oct. 31, 1819

"The office of reformer of the superstitions of a nation, is ever more dangerous. Jesus had to work on the perilous confines of reason and religion; and a step to the right or left might place him within the grasp of the priests of the superstition, a bloodthirsty race, as cruel and remorseless as the being whom they represented as the family God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, and the local God of Israel. That Jesus did not mean to impose himself on mankind as the son of God, physically speaking, I have been convinced by the writings of men more learned than myself in that lore."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Story, Aug. 4, 1820

"The truth is, that the greatest enemies of the doctrine of Jesus are those, calling themselves the expositors of them, who have perverted them to the structure of a system of fancy absolutely incomprehensible, and without any foundation in his genuine words. And the day will come, when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the Supreme Being as his father, in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Adams, Apr. 11, 1823

III. Jefferson believed that orthodox Christians, such as Saint Paul, have changed the religion of Jesus for the worse by adding miraculous nonsense to it.

"In every country and every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot . . . they have perverted the purest religion ever preached to man into mystery and jargon, unintelligible to all mankind, and therefore the safer engine for their purpose."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Horatio Spafford, March 17, 1814

"But a short time elapsed after the death of the great reformer of the Jewish religion, before his principles were departed from by those who professed to be his special servants, and perverted into an engine for enslaving mankind, and aggrandizing their oppressors in Church and State."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to S. Kercheval, 1810

"It is not to be understood that I am with him (Jesus Christ) in all his doctrines. I am a Materialist; he takes the side of Spiritualism; he preaches the efficacy of repentance toward forgiveness of sin; I require a counterpoise of good works to redeem it. Among the sayings and discourses imputed to him by his biographers, I find many passages of fine imagination, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others, again, of so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same being. I separate, therefore, the gold from the dross; restore him to the former, and leave the latter to the stupidity of some, the roguery of others of his disciples. Of this band of dupes and imposters, Paul was the great Coryphaeus, and the first corruptor of the doctrines of Jesus."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to W. Short, 1820

IV. Jefferson was theologically a Deist, and he was morally a Christian at least to an extent.

"When we see religion split into so many thousands of sects, and I may say Christianity itself divided into it's thousands also, who are disputing, anathematizing, and where the laws permit, burning and torturing one another for abstractions which no one of them understand, and which are indeed beyond the comprehension of the human mind, into which of the chambers of this Bedlam would a man wish to thrust himself. The sum of all religion as expressed by it's best preacher, 'fear god and love thy neighbor,' contains no mystery, needs no explanation—but this wont do. It gives no scope to make dupes; priests could not live by it."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to George Logan, November 12, 1816

"Shake off all the fears of servile prejudices, under which weak minds are servilely crouched. Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call on her tribunal for every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Peter Carr, Aug. 10, 1787

Note: Deists base all their beliefs on reason, even their belief in the existence of God. Orthodox and Fundamentalist Christians base many (if not all) their theological beliefs on faith, which is the opposite of reason.

V. Jefferson thought that at least part of the Bible is nonsense.

"It is between fifty and sixty years since I read it [the Book of Revelation], and I then considered it merely the ravings of a maniac, no more worthy nor capable of explanation than the incoherences of our own nightly dreams."

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to General Alexander Smyth, Jan. 17, 1825

## 67. Justice

The ancient Egyptians built the pyramids, the British built a worldwide empire, and the Americans walked on the moon. But no nation has ever come close to being as just as it should be. As great as those former accomplishments are, they are not nearly as impressive or useful as a nation that is as just as it can be.

Such a nation would deal fairly, compassionately, and wisely with all its citizens and with the rest of the world. All its citizens would have enough quality air, water, food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, freedom, and opportunity to be the best that they can be at any worthwhile endeavor.

How can one start to create such a nation? One must be the change one seeks. If you want justice in the world, establish justice in yourself first and then work to make the world as just as it can be. We might fail to make the world as just as it can be, but if we don't try, we definitely won't succeed and we will be extremely dishonorable.

## 68. Love and Reason

I define love as wanting what is best for someone or something. For example, I love my son, so I want my son to be as sane, good, and happy as possible now and always. The purpose of love is to motivate people to help themselves and other creatures. Since helping ourselves and other creatures is the best thing that we can do (or at least one of the best things that we can do), love is a very good and important emotion and/or disposition.

That having been said, as you know, reason is very important because reason is the best way for us to know what is true and false, good and evil. Love does much less good, and in fact can do much evil when it is misguided. Therefore, love should be guided by reason so that we actually love what is true and good, and hate what is false and evil. My guess is that love and reason are equally important. Both love without reason and reason without love can be monstrous.

## 69. Miracles in General

Hi Waqar,

I believe that God exists. Therefore, miracles can happen. However, I know that God usually, if not always, remains hidden and silent from us mortal humans. If God does miracles, God probably does them in a secret way so that people are not sure if they are really miracles or just extreme coincidences.

When one experiences what might be a miracle, one should be honest and think, *Yes, this could be a miracle; but it also could be just an extreme coincidence or some phenomenon that I do not understand.* We should never forget that skepticism is a virtue and that humans have an amazing capacity to imagine things and to believe imaginary things. This is particularly true when humans want something to be real. Most humans want to believe that God exists, favors them, and will grant them Heaven after death. Thus, many humans eagerly mistake minor coincidences for miracles.

Whether God does miracles or not, our duty is the same. We should strive to be as sane, good, and happy as we can be, now and always, for everyone's sake.

Party on, dude!

Jayson

## 70. The Jefferson Bible

I admit that, in a letter to Charles Thomson, dated January 9, 1816, Jefferson states, "I, too, have made a wee little book from the same materials, which I call the Philosophy of Jesus; it is a paradigm of his doctrines, made by cutting the texts out of the book, and arranging them on the pages of a blank book, in a certain order of time or subject. A more beautiful or precious morsel of ethics I have never seen; it is a document in proof that I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus" (<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Faith-Tools/The-Founding-Faith-Archive/Introduction-To-The-Jefferson-Bible.aspx>). This statement does not contradict any assertions that I have already made; in fact, it strengthens them.

Thomas Jefferson did not believe in orthodox Christian doctrines such as the Trinity and the Incarnation. Instead, he believed that Jesus was a great teacher of theology and morality who was wrongly deified and mythologized by some of his followers. Therefore, Jefferson believed that he is a "real Christian," unlike orthodox Christians, because he believed in Jesus's actual teachings and respected Jesus for who Jesus actually was. Jesus's actual teachings were "precious morsel[s] of ethics," and Jesus was a mere human being. Note that Jefferson is "a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus," not of the LORD Jesus Christ. It is Jesus's doctrines which are the basis of the moral aspect of Jefferson's personal philosophy, not Jefferson's relationship with the Only-begotten Son of God who became incarnate in the womb of a virgin. Jefferson believed that at least most of the moral teachings attributed to Jesus in the four canonical gospels are excellent and true, but he also believed that the Son of God incarnate was a lie.

'In an 1803 letter to Joseph Priestley, Jefferson states that he conceived the idea of writing his view of the "Christian System" in a conversation with Dr. Benjamin Rush during 1798–99. He proposes beginning with a review of the morals of the ancient philosophers, moving on to the "deism and ethics of the Jews," and concluding with the "principles of a pure deism" taught by Jesus, "omitting the question of his deity." Jefferson explains that he does not have the time, and urges the task on Priestley as the person best equipped to accomplish the task.

'Jefferson accomplished a more limited goal in 1804 with "The Philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth", the predecessor to *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. He described it in a letter to John Adams dated 13 October 1813:

'In extracting the pure principles which he taught, we should have to strip off the artificial vestments in which they have been muffled by priests, who have travestied them into various forms, as instruments of riches and power to themselves. We must dismiss the Platonists and Plotinists, the Stagyrtes and Gamalielites, the Eclectics, the Gnostics and Scholastics, their essences and emanations, their logos and demiurges, aeons and daemons, male and female, with a long train of ... or, shall I say at once, of nonsense. We must reduce our volume to the simple evangelists, select, even from them, the very words only of Jesus, paring off the amphibologisms into which they have been led, by forgetting often, or not understanding, what had fallen from him, by giving their own

misconceptions as his dicta, and expressing unintelligibly for others what they had not understood themselves. There will be found remaining the most sublime and benevolent code of morals which has ever been offered to man. I have performed this operation for my own use, by cutting verse by verse out of the printed book, and arranging the matter which is evidently his, and which is as easily distinguishable as diamonds in a dunghill. The result is an octavo of forty-six pages, of pure and unsophisticated doctrines.

‘This 1804 version's full title was, *The Philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth, being Extracted from the Account of His Life and Doctrines Given by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; Being an Abridgement of the New Testament for the Use of the Indians, Unembarrassed [uncomplicated] with Matters of Fact or Faith beyond the Level of their Comprehensions.* Jefferson frequently expressed discontent with this earlier version. *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* represents the fulfillment of his desire to produce a more carefully assembled edition’ ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jefferson\\_Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jefferson_Bible)).

Note that Jefferson performed this operation for his own use. However, the full title does indicate that Jefferson might have also created the book to morally educate Native Americans. Jefferson certainly did not want to convert the Native Americans or anyone else to orthodox or Fundamentalist Christianity, in any case.

In a Beliefnet article about the Jefferson Bible, I did find this noteworthy quote: 'In a letter dated April 25, 1816, written from Poplar Forest, near Lynchburg, addressed to Mr. Fr. Adr. Vanderkemp, Jefferson gives further details as to how he made this preliminary volume. After telling his correspondent that he was very cautious about not having the syllabus, which he had prepared, get out in connection with his name, being unwilling to draw on himself "a swarm of insects, whose buzz is more disquieting than their bite," he writes: "I made, for my own satisfaction, an extract from the Evangelists of the text of His morals, selecting those only whose style and spirit proved them genuine, and his own"' (<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Faith-Tools/The-Founding-Faith-Archive/Introduction-To-The-Jefferson-Bible.aspx>).

Note once again that Jefferson wrote *The Jefferson Bible* for his “own satisfaction.” Also, note that he selected "only [those excerpts from the four canonical gospels] whose style and spirit proved them genuine, and his [Jesus's] own." This proves that Jefferson did not believe that everything in the gospels is true. In fact, Jefferson did not believe that every word and deed attributed to Jesus in the four canonical gospels was said and done by Jesus.

## 71. A Truly Impressive Prophecy

The LORD spoke to me and said, "Tell the people of Israel this. The Messiah will be God incarnate, born in Bethlehem, and raised in Nazareth. He will teach wonderful things about Me and will be executed on a cross for both blasphemy and rebellion. But don't worry, He will resurrect from the dead before the end of three days and make various appearances. Then He will go to Heaven for 2,500 years and return back to Earth. Finally, He will actually fix the universe and all the creatures therein. Oh, by the way, people will walk on the moon 1,969 years after He is born, and many diseases are caused by creatures that are so tiny that they cannot be seen with the unaided human eye. Thus, you would be wise to sterilize medical equipment with things like fire and very strong alcohol, and to keep you and your surroundings clean. Lastly, the Earth orbits the sun, and not vice versa."

The supposed prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament are not so clear or convincing. They are vague, and any halfway-intelligent Bronze Age Jewish theologian could have written them.

## 72. My Short Religious Biography

I was raised Eastern Orthodox Christian, which is a lot like being raised Roman Catholic; and most of my relatives are Eastern Orthodox too. I graduated with a Master of Theology from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology; was ordained a priest; and eventually realized that Christianity and the Bible are approximately 50% false and 10% evil, and that we humans are better off basing our beliefs on reason rather than faith. So I left the priesthood, got excommunicated, and became the Deputy Director of the World Union of Deists. I am now 43 and am glad that I chose intellectual honesty and freedom over intellectual dishonesty and mental slavery.

### 73. Zionism

Should Deists support Israel or not? When Israel does good, we should support it; and when Israel does evil, we should oppose it.

Should Deists support Israel's policy about war with Iran or not? I'm not sure. Iran is a Muslim theocracy, and that is bad because all theocracies are bad and Islam is often a violent and imperialistic religion. A Muslim theocracy with nuclear weapons might start World War III to try to please Allah.

However, Israel is a Jewish nation, which sort of makes it a theocracy; and Israel already has nuclear weapons.

I believe that the United States should not blindly support Israel, and I also believe that the United States should not attack a nation unless that nation attacks it first. I suppose that if Israel attacks Iran without first being attacked by Iran, the United States should stay neutral in that war, even if Israel or Iran dies in the process. This is what I believe as a Deist, and I offer my opinion to other Deists for them to accept or reject according to their own reason.

Of course, to every rule there is an exception. The rule here is that Nation A should not attack Nation B, unless Nation B attacked Nation A first. However, suppose that Nation A was a very just, rational, and peaceful nation; and Nation B was a very unjust, irrational, and violent nation and that Nation B was close to developing nuclear weapons which it would probably use against Nation A. In this case, Nation A should probably stop Nation B from developing such weapons, even if Nation A has to attack Nation B first.

Now the questions arise: "Is the United States a very just, rational, and peaceful nation; and is Iran a very unjust, irrational, and violent nation?" I'm not sure. I believe that the United States is more just and rational than Iran, but I don't know if the United States is very just and rational. Moreover, I don't know if the United States is very peaceful or even more peaceful than Iran. The list below this paragraph comes from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_wars\\_involving\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_involving_the_United_States) and records the generally-known instances in which the United States was and/or is involved in a military conflict. The point here is that, throughout its history, the United States almost always has been involved in a military conflict. Therefore, the United States might be an extremely violent nation, perhaps even a more violent nation than Iran.

American Revolutionary War: September 1, 1774 to September 3, 1783

Northwest Indian War: 1785 to 1795

Quasi-War: 1798 to 1800

First Barbary War: 1801 to 1805

Tecumseh's War: August to November 1811

War of 1812: June 18, 1812 to March 23, 1815

Second Barbary War: 1815

First Seminole War: November 22, 1817 to April 12, 1818  
West Indies Anti-Piracy Operations: 1817 to 1825  
African Anti-Slavery Operations: 1819 to 1861  
Callao Affair: November 5 to 6, 1820  
Arikara War: 1823  
Aegean Anti-Piracy Operations: 1825 to 1828  
Winnebago War: 1827  
Black Hawk War: May to August, 1832  
First Sumatran Expedition: February 6 to 9, 1832  
United States Exploring Expedition: 1838 to 1842  
Second Seminole War: December 12, 1835 to August 14, 1842  
Second Sumatran Expedition: December 1838 to January 1839  
Capture of Monterey: October 19 to 20, 1842  
Battle of Kororareka: March 11, 1845  
Mexican-American War: April 25, 1846 to February 2, 1848  
Navajo Wars: 1856 to 1866  
Cayuse War: 1847 to 1855  
First Pitt River Expedition: April 28 to September 13, 1850  
Cayuse War: 1847 to 1855  
Second Pitt River Expedition: 1857  
Apache Wars: 1851 to 1900  
Bombardment of San Juan del Norte: July 13, 1854  
Battle of Tyho Bay: August 4, 1855  
First Fiji Expedition: October 1855  
Yakima War: 1855 to 1858  
Rogue River Wars: 1855 to 1856  
Puget Sound War: 1855 to 1856  
Third Seminole War: 1855 to 1858  
Second Opium War: 1856 to 1859  
Second Fiji Expedition: October 1858  
Paraguay Expedition: 1859  
Reform War: March 6, 1860  
Paiute War: 1860  
American Civil War: April 12, 1861 to April 9, 1865  
Dakota War of 1862: August 17 to December 26, 1862  
Bombardment of Qui Nhon: July 31, 1861  
Colorado War: 1863 to 1865  
Battles for Shimonoseki: July 20, 1863 to July 6, 1864  
Powder River Expedition: 1865  
Snake War: 1864 to 1868  
Red Cloud's War: 1866 to 1868  
Formosa Expedition: June 1867  
Comanche Campaign: 1867 to 1875  
Battle of Boca Teacapan: June 17, 1870  
Korean Expedition: June 1, 1871 to July 3, 1871  
Modoc War: July 6, 1872 to June 4, 1873

Oahu Expedition: February 12, 1874  
Red River War: June 27, 1874 to June 1875  
Black Hills War: 1876 to 1877  
Nez Perce War: 1877  
Bannock War: 1878  
Cheyenne War: 1878 to 1879  
Sheepeater Indian War: 1879  
White River War: 1879 to 1880  
Egyptian Expedition: June to July 1882  
Colombian Civil War: March 30 to April 24, 1885  
Samoan Crisis: 1887 to 1889  
Pine Ridge Campaign: November 1890 to January 1891  
Bering Sea Anti-Poaching Operations: June 22 to October 5, 1891  
Chilean Civil War: 1891  
Rio de Janeiro Affair: January 21 to 29, 1894  
Second Samoan Civil War: 1898 to 1899  
Spanish-American War: April 25 to August 12, 1898  
Philippine Insurrection: June 2, 1899 to July 4, 1902  
Moro Rebellion: 1899 to 1913  
Boxer Rebellion: September 28, 1899 to August 15, 1900  
Occupation of Nicaragua: 1912 to 1933  
Mexican Revolution: April 21, 1914 to June 16, 1919  
Occupation of Haiti: July 28, 1915 to August 1, 1934  
Occupation of the Dominican Republic: 1916 to 1924  
World War I: 1917 to 1918  
Russian Civil War: 1918 to 1920  
World War II: December 7, 1941 to September 2, 1945  
Cold War, including Korean War and Vietnam War: 1947 to 1991  
1958 Lebanon Crisis: July 15 to October 25, 1958  
Lebanese Civil War: August 24, 1982 to February 7, 1984  
1981 Gulf of Sidra Incident: August 19, 1981  
Action in the Gulf of Sidra: March 1986  
Bombing of Libya: April 15, 1986  
Iran-Iraq War: 1987 to 1988  
1989 Gulf of Sidra Incident: July 4, 1989  
Invasion of Panama: December 20, 1989 to January 31, 1990  
Gulf War: August 2, 1990 to February 28, 1991  
Iraqi No-Fly Zones: 1991 to 2003  
Somali Civil War: 1992 to 1994  
Bosnian War: 1993 to 1995  
Operation Uphold Democracy: September 19, 1994 to March 31, 1995  
Bombings of Afghanistan and Sudan: August 20, 1998  
Kosovo War: March 24 to June 10, 1999  
War on Terror, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan: October 7, 2001 to the present  
Second Liberian Civil War: 2003

2011 Libyan Civil War: March 19 to October 23, 2011

With all this in mind, it seems to me that the United States should get the general permission of the international community of nations before it preemptively attacks another nation, especially when the United States is so much more militarily powerful than that nation, as is the case with Iran. Militarily attacking a weaker nation is, in most cases, a type of bullying, just like physically attacking a weaker person. Simply speaking, bullying is an unjust assault in which a stronger person (or nation) uses his or her (or its) superior strength to hurt a weaker person (or nation). Since the United Nations is the organization that best represents the international community of nations, the United States should probably get the general permission of the United Nations before it preemptively attacks Iran. Doing so would greatly minimize the possibility that the United States would be bullying Iran.

The United States failed to get U.N. permission when it preemptively invaded Iraq in 2003, which is why I (and many other people around the world) believe that the United States waged an unjust war in that case. In short, the United States was the bully and Iraq was the victim. We would hate for the United States to make that same moral mistake with Iran.

In general, should Deists consider Zionists in America and Israel friends or enemies? It depends on what you mean by the word Zionist. The Jews have been horribly persecuted for thousands of years in many nations, and it would be good for them to have a nation of their own where they will not be persecuted. A Zionist who wants Israel to be a peaceful haven for Jews and to basically stay within the boundaries first established by the United Nations is worth considering a friend. However, a Zionist who wants Israel to be "from the Nile river (which is mainly modern Egypt and Sudan) to the Euphrates (modern-day Iraq)" because the Bible teaches that Yahweh promised this land to Abraham's descendants approximately 3,000 years ago, is an enemy. Read <http://www.chosenpeople.com/main/israel-articles/545-taking-it-literally-the-biblical-boundaries-of-israel> for some frightening facts about the Yahweh-promised details of Israel.

I support President Obama's solution: "President Barack Obama on Thursday [October 4, 2012] made official the long-held but rarely stated U.S. support for a future Palestinian state based on borders that existed before the 1967 Middle East war. In the past, the United States has unofficially backed a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict based on the borders in place prior to the war 44 years ago in which Israel seized the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula.

"In a major speech Thursday, Obama became the first president to formally endorse the policy, but he also acknowledged the need for modifications through the negotiating process due to conditions on the ground" ([http://articles.cnn.com/2011-05-19/politics/obama.israel.palestinians\\_1\\_israel-palestinian-conflict-borders-settlements?\\_s=PM:POLITICS](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-05-19/politics/obama.israel.palestinians_1_israel-palestinian-conflict-borders-settlements?_s=PM:POLITICS)).

I guess that President Obama is a Zionist whom I trust.

That having been said, I think that Britain did not have the right to give Arab land to Zionists in the first place and the United States should have had a much more neutral policy toward Israel since Israel's rebirth. Both Britain and the United States should have allowed for much Jewish immigration to their nations; and once those Jews became British or American citizens, they should have been treated well like any other citizens. Supporting Israel is like supporting the Bible, and the governments of all nations should be secular. Let Christians and Jews support Israel as private citizens if they want, but the United States and Britain should have not been Zionistic.

Now that Israel exists as a real nation though, it should be supported or opposed based on what it does—just like every other nation should be supported or opposed based on what it does. As I wrote before, when Israel does good, it should be supported; and when Israel does evil, it should be opposed.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 74. One World Government

Hello Everyone,

I don't fear one world government as long as it is a true democracy and religiously neutral. Who knows? It might even be better than what we have now. One world government might be able to stop most wars, educate and feed all humans, and better encourage responsible economic growth. Hey, I'm a fan of *Star Trek*. That series envisions the Earth with the ideal world government. I would rather live on a planet like that than the planet I live on now.

I believe that many Christians fear one world government for at least two reasons: 1) It might be so good that the need for Christianity will diminish, and 2) the Bible has some cryptic passages that seem to basically say that Satan will rule the Earth through one world government, or at least that is what many Christians preach.

If assertion Number 1 is correct, great, let's have one world government! Forget Christianity! (For the record, "forget" is not exactly the f-word that I have in mind. 😂 ) And I am 99% convinced that assertion Number 2 is incorrect. Satan does not exist, and the Bible is not a very helpful guide for understanding truth and planning the future of human civilization.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 75. My Politics as of 2012

I think that the government should keep its citizens alive and educated, but it should not do much (if any) more for citizens who are physically and mentally fit to work. I say, "Let their lives be so miserable that they really, really want to work." I also say, "Let Capitalism work. No bank, corporation, or farm is too big or important to fail. If the leaders of a business made bad decisions, let the business die and the leaders be fired."

Simply speaking, I don't trust any politician. Instead, I trust party platforms. When voting, I keep in mind that most politicians will basically stick to their party's platform. I do not want to unnecessarily insult anyone, but I tend to trust the Democratic party more than the Republican party, although I realize that the Democratic party is very flawed. It seems to me that the Democratic party is more secular and more likely to help the poor and middle class. In contrast, the Republican party is more theocratic and more likely to help the rich while hurting the poor and middle class. All governments, especially the government of the United States, should be religiously neutral. Citizens should be allowed to become and stay rich, but the rich don't need extra help. They are doing fine financially. However, the poor and middle class often need extra help. A virtuous society helps those who most need help.

## 76. Gulf War II

I supported Gulf War I because Iraq had just unjustly invaded another nation. Almost always, one nation should not attack another nation unless that other nation attacked it first. I strongly objected to Gulf War II for the same reason: One nation should not attack another nation unless that other nation attacked it first. Here, someone might argue, "Well, what if Iraq was illegally building nuclear bombs?" I would say, "Who made the law that Iraq was supposedly breaking?" I guess that the answer would be, "The international community." Then I would reply, "What organization best represents the international community?" And the answer would be the United Nations. The United States failed to get the approval of the United Nations before it invaded Iraq during Gulf War II. In fact, the Secretary General of the United Nations at the time, Kofi Annan, urged the United States to not invade. Therefore, the United States did evil.

In short and in general, a nation should not attack another nation unless that other nation attacked it first. However, to every rule there is an exception. If a nation does choose to attack another nation preemptively, it should get the approval of the international community first. The United Nations is imperfect, but so is the United States. The United Nations usually represents the majority opinion of all nations, and the United States often acts for its own benefit without regard to the majority of nations. In fact, the United States sometimes acts for the benefit of its most influential citizens and not for the benefit of the majority of its citizens.

I don't want people to be murdered just to make some rich people richer or to make some religious wackos believe that they are doing God's will. It matters little to me if those being murdered are Americans or foreigners, and it matters little to me if those rich people or religious wackos are Americans or foreigners. I am American enough to believe that all human beings are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. Among these rights are the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. No nation, not even the United States, has the right to unjustly deprive anyone, not even a foreigner, of his or her life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. Yet that is what the United States did to tens of thousands of Iraqis during Gulf War II.

## 77. Capitalism, Socialism, and Communism

Capitalism is an economic system in which the means of production are privately owned and operated for profit, and in which the distribution, production, and pricing of commodities are determined in a free market.

Socialism is the economic system in which the government of a nation owns all the wealth of that nation. The purpose of Socialism is to distribute the wealth of a nation equitably so that no citizen is too rich or too poor.

Communism is the type of Socialism that teaches that a Capitalist society cannot become a Socialist society without a violent revolution. The reason is that most rich citizens will not voluntarily give up their excessive wealth and power for the benefit of middle class and poor citizens, without being forced to.

Given these three definitions, one can be a Deist and also be a Capitalist, Socialist, or Communist.

## 78. My Stadium Metaphor/How I Accept Assertions

I believe that the goal of human life is to be as sane, good, and happy as possible. I have accepted that as my purpose, and I do whatever I can to accomplish that goal. Part of being sane is believing only things that are true and disbelieving in things that are false—at least to a large extent. Using a metaphor, I think of my brain as having a stadium full of people, and each person in the stadium represents an assertion that I accept as true. For example, I accept the following assertions as true: 1) I am not currently dreaming or hallucinating, 2) I am typing on my keyboard right now, 3) my keyboard and my hands exist, 4) the Great Wall of China exists, and 5) many moons orbit Jupiter. Metaphorically speaking, the ticket to get into my stadium of belief is for an assertion to be more likely to be true than false. Of course, a spectator can get too rowdy and be thrown out of the stadium. In other words, I am ready, willing, and able to reject a belief that I once regarded as true if I now regard it as false because of new evidence or improved understanding.

## 79. "Holy Books"

The Jewish "holy" book basically teaches that Jews are the Chosen People of God<sup>i</sup> and there is not conscious existence after death.<sup>ii</sup>

The Christian "holy" book basically teaches that true Christians will go to Heaven, everyone else will go to Hell, and Jesus is the Only-begotten Son of God.

The Muslim "holy" book basically teaches that true Muslims will go to Heaven, everyone else will go to Hell, and no one is the Only-begotten Son of God.

The Mormon "holy" book basically teaches that Christianity is generally correct, Native Americans are the dark-skinned descendants of some evil Jews,<sup>iii</sup> and Jesus preached in North America after his resurrection.

Which one of those "holy" books is correct?  
Probably none of them.  
Instead of wasting much time reading such human-made and sometimes-confusing nonsense, we should be studying the only book that God definitely wrote: the universe.  
The universe is probably the only real holy book that is available to us.

80. New Member

Hi Valerie,

Welcome to Deism and to the World Union of Deists (WUD). I relate to your story very much, because I was raised Eastern Orthodox Christian, which is very similar to Roman Catholic Christian. Unlike you, whom I envy, I believed in my inherited religion so much that I actually got a Master of Theology and was ordained a priest. But if one wants to understand something well, one should teach it well. I taught Christianity so well that I came to the conclusion that the Bible and orthodox Christianity are approximately 50% false and 10% evil. I also came to the conclusion that we humans are better off basing our beliefs on reason and rational philosophy than faith and supposedly revealed religions.

The following is the web address where you can formally join the WUD:  
<http://www.deism.com/member.htm>. I am cc-ing this email to Bob Johnson, the director of the WUD, so that he will put you on the mailing list for our free electronic publications. If you do not want these publications, please email Bob and tell him so. His email address is bob@deism.com.

Feel free to email me anytime about anything.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 81. Near-Death Experiences

My understanding is that people in all societies throughout history have experienced strange events. For example, people often dream, hallucinate, and misinterpret what they actually see. Likewise, people often see, or believe that they see, strange things when they are close to death. This is not surprising because when the brain is close to death, it is in an unusual circumstance. That circumstance might include a lack of oxygen, a surge of powerful hormones, and/or sensory deprivation.

Furthermore, what people believe influences what they think, and what they think influences how they perceive reality. It is worth noting that only people who know the Christian doctrines of Jesus Christ, Christian Heaven, and Christian Hell see, or believe that they see, those things when they are close to death. I am sure that some Native Americans had near-death experiences before 1492 (the year Columbus "discovered" the Americas), and that they did not see Jesus Christ, Christian Heaven, and/or Christian Hell. Instead, they might have seen, or believed that they saw, the Great Spirit, the Happy Hunting Ground in the Sky, and/or some other doctrine from the religion that they were raised with.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 82. The Meaning of Life

Do Deists believe that there is a point or purpose to life? Yes. Because God purposefully created the universe, God did it for a reason. That reason is a mystery, though, because God remains hidden and silent. Most Deists believe that God gave us reason to deal wisely with this life, so that is what we try to do. So, simply speaking, the point or purpose to life is to deal with it wisely. Whether or not there is life after death, reason dictates that we try to make the best of this life. If our conscious existence ceases after death, we will have done the best we can. If there is life after death, we still will have done the best that we can, but we also deserve to be rewarded more than people who have not done the best that they could.

Using a card-playing metaphor, God dealt each human a hand. Some of those hands are better than others. Some people will improve their hands, and some people won't. Those who improve their hands win, and those who don't lose. What comes after the game is unknown. Perhaps those who played well will play a new and better game, and perhaps those who did not will play the same or a similar game until they choose to improve their hand.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

### 83. When Someone Leaves Deism

Hi Sofian,

Thank you for writing to me. I am also sad and disappointed that Anas has left Deism for Christianity, and I am very glad that you talked with him. The struggle to make humanity as reasonable, compassionate, and hopeful as possible is never-ending. For every two steps forward humanity takes, it takes one step back. However, this does not mean that we should quit. Too many important things are at stake, such as our personal happiness and the happiness of billions of people who are yet to be born. What this means is that we need to keep doing our best to promote reason, compassion, and hope within ourselves and everyone else; and that we should expect many problems along the way.

Carl Sagan is a hero and mentor of mine. Have you ever heard of him? He wrote and said many wonderful and true things. Anyway, Sagan said that all people are in danger of embracing irrational religions and superstitions, even the most rational of us. Therefore, we must always work hard to make sure that our thinking is as rational as possible.

I like Deism much more than I like Christianity. But for now, Christianity offers a better social support system and some comforting beliefs that Deism doesn't offer—that is comforting on a superficial level. Christianity saves people from doing difficult thinking and from unpleasant realities such as the real possibility that death is the end of our consciousness. However, God did not say that we would not have to do difficult thinking, and God did not promise us life after death. To be as intelligent and virtuous as we can be, we have to frequently do difficult thinking and to accept unpleasant realities.

I believe that you realize these things, and I hope that Anas comes to realize them soon. In fact, I hope that all humanity realizes them soon. That is why I promote Deism through the World Union of Deists.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

#### 84. Translations (You Shouldn't Have to Learn an Ancient Language to Know God)

Hi All,

What I want to say is this: I find Christians and Muslims very similar when they start saying that "If one only understood the original language/languages in which our holy book was written, one would know it was from God."

Let me see if I understand this correctly. If the Muslims are correct, I have to learn ancient Arabic to realize that the Koran is so beautifully written that it must be from God; and if the Christians are correct, I have to learn ancient Hebrew and ancient Greek to understand the Bible as it should be understood. Then I will know that the Bible correctly asserts the soul-saving truth and I can join the correct version of Christianity, whatever that denomination might be.

This reeks of falsehood. (I would have said bullshit, but I don't like to cuss.) If God wants me to believe a bunch of farfetched assertions, God can visit me in the comfort of my own home and talk to me in my native tongue, which is modern American English. I shouldn't have to learn ancient Arabic, ancient Hebrew, or ancient Greek. I would hate to waste years of my life learning those dead languages only to conclude even more that both Christianity and Islam are false.

Not only that, but I have written a book about some of the contradictions, factual errors, and evil moral teachings in the Bible. I have attached this book to this email in case you care to understand my thinking further and why it will be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for me to be a Christian again.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 85. Translations (Why I Tentatively Believe that the Revised Standard Version of the Bible Is the Best Translation)

Hi All,

I admit that, to understand any ancient text best, one should understand the original language or languages it was written in. One should also read the original text in its original language because something is always lost in translation. Furthermore, I admit that I do not know ancient Greek and ancient Hebrew well, and I probably never will.

I chose the Revised Standard Version of the Bible for my *Bible Problems* book because, as far as I know, it is the best translation in English. My two Humanities professors at Geneseo State College said so, as did a well-respected Bible scholar at my seminary, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

It seems to me that I could spend the rest of my life learning ancient Greek and ancient Hebrew, and still not be able to translate the original texts (or at least the oldest existing texts of the Bible that scholars currently possess) better than the committee that created the Revised Standard Version. Therefore, I basically read the Revised Standard Version as if it is the original books of the Bible.

As I recall, the Revised Standard Version does not mention fanciful creatures such as unicorns. However, it shows a great level of ignorance that the most popular translation of the Bible in one of the most popular languages in the history of humanity—namely the King James Version—does mention fanciful creatures such as unicorns. If Christians in the 1600s could believe in myths such as unicorns, could Christians in modern times believe in myths such as the Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, Ascension, and Second Coming?

I find it ironic that many Christians teach their children to believe in Jesus Christ, Santa Claus, and the Easter Bunny; and then later insist that Jesus Christ is real but the other two are fake. I am convinced that they are all myths.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 86. Real and Fake Believers

Perhaps there are two types of believers in every religion: Real Believers and Fake Believers. A Real Believer is someone who honestly claims to try to live according to the teachings of the religion more than the teachings of any other religion or philosophy; and a Fake Believer is someone who dishonestly claims to try to live according to the teachings of the religion more than the teachings of any other religion or philosophy.

I define Christians as those who claim to try to live according to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth more than they try to live according to the teachings of some other religious leader or philosopher. Real Christians are those who honestly make this claim, and Fake Christians are those who do not honestly make this claim. I don't always know who is a Real Christian and who is a Fake Christian, but I believe that God does.

Likewise, I define Muslims as those who claim to try to live according to the teachings of the Koran more than they try to live according to the teachings of any other religion or philosophy. Real Muslims are those who honestly make this claim, and Fake Muslims are those who do not honestly make this claim. I don't always know who is a Real Muslim and who is a Fake Muslim, but I believe that God does.

As a group, Jews are more complicated than Christians or Muslims, because many people who claim to be Jews believe and live according to the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud, and many other people who claim to be Jews do not believe and live according to the Hebrew Bible and Talmud very much. Thus, there is probably a continuum of Jews. The more one believes and lives according to the Hebrew Bible and Talmud, the more of a Real Jew one is; and the less one believes and lives according to the Hebrew Bible and Talmud, the more of a Fake Jew or Non-Jew one is. However, unlike Fake Christians and Fake Muslims, I have more respect for Fake Jews because they are generally honest about their religious beliefs and practices. They are not pretending to be something they are not for some unethical reason. They just want to be Jewish to a limited extent. In fact, it is completely fine to be Fake Jew as long as one is also either a Deist, Agnostic, or Atheist; and, out of respect for this reality, it is probably best to call Fake Jews who are either Deists, Agnostics, or Atheists Cultural Jews or Non-Religious Jews.

87. A Summary of My Philosophy

1. Humans should base all of their beliefs and actions on reason, compassion, and hope.
2. God exists and is the being who purposefully created the universe for at least one reason: to teach and test rational creatures such as humans for the next life.
3. Rational creatures who generally learn and choose as they should are relatively good, and rational creatures who generally do not learn and choose as they should are relatively evil.
4. After death, relatively good rational creatures are perfected by God and go directly to Heaven, where there is much happiness and no misery. And after death, relatively evil rational creatures go directly to Reformatory, where they continue to be taught and tested until they become relatively good. Then they are perfected by God and go to Heaven.
5. God is extremely knowledgeable, powerful, wise, and just. All good actions will be adequately rewarded, and all evil actions will be adequately punished.
6. A human does good when he or she does what makes the most creatures, especially humans, the happiest. A human does evil when she or he does not do what makes the most creatures, especially humans, the happiest.
7. A human is just a body without a spirit. God will replicate each human in either Heaven or Reformatory as soon as they die in this life. The replicated human becomes that human, and the body that is left in this universe to decompose is no longer that human.
8. Eventually, all creatures will rejoice forever in Heaven with God.

88. How Should a Teacher Introduce His or Her Students to Deism?

Hi Michael,

As for introducing Deism to your students, I would not generally do it. Your job is to teach your students English; it is not to convert them to your philosophy. I suggest that you try to be as good, honest, and wise as you can be. If you succeed, you will provide a good example for your students, and they will want to get to know you better and be like you. When my students ask me my opinion on controversial topics such as my religion and who I voted for for president, I tell them, "Ask me on the last day of school. My job is to teach you how to read, write, and speak well. It is not to teach you my religious and political opinions."

This response works well for at least four reasons: 1) I don't seem like I am hiding something, which might be the case if I just said, "I am not going to tell you." 2) My students usually forget to ask me. 3) If some adult complains that I am indoctrinating my students with some unpopular religion or political opinions, I can say, "That's not true. I didn't tell them what I believed until the last day of school." 4) It actually allows me to be more influential.

This last assertion requires some explanation. My students will relax their intellectual guard around me because they will know that I am not trying to unfairly use my position as their teacher to persuade them that their family's religion and political beliefs are flawed. With their intellectual guard down and their trust in me high, I can metaphorically plant some good seeds. Planting some good seeds literally means that I put good ideas in their brains which they will hopefully fully embrace as they get older; ideas such as reason, science, democracy, egalitarianism, justice, and compassion are good; and blind faith, willful ignorance, autocracy and oligarchy, inequality, injustice, and apathy for suffering creatures (especially fellow humans) are evil.

Those ideas are very Deist-friendly. They are not Deism per se, but they are actually more important than Deism. (And Deism is very important!) I would rather have people be virtuous than be Deists. In other words, I would rather have people believe that reason, science, democracy, egalitarianism, justice, and compassion are good; and that blind faith, willful ignorance, autocracy and oligarchy, inequality, injustice, and apathy for suffering creatures (especially fellow humans) are evil; than to be a Deist and believe the opposite. One can be a Deist and be relatively evil, although it is not likely; and one can be an Atheist, Agnostic, or "Revealed" Religionist and be relatively good.

One last suggestion: Even on the last day of school, answer all questions tactfully. Shorter answers are probably better than longer answers. If a student asks me what my religion is, I would say, "I don't have a religion, but I do have a personal philosophy. I am a Freethinker. A Freethinker is someone who bases all of his or her beliefs on reason and decides for him or herself what is true and what is false." If a student asks me if I believe in God, I would say, "Yes," without any elaboration. And if a student asks me if I believe

that Jesus is God or if Muhammad is really a prophet, I would say, "Go get a college degree, and then come back and talk to me about this subject."

At least once, I told a student that "I am a Deist" rather than "I am a Freethinker." However, I value being a Freethinker more than I value being a Deist. I am free to believe whatever seems true to me and to disbelieve everything else. Right now, I am a Freethinker who believes that God probably exists. Therefore, I am also a Deist. However, if I ever stop believing that God exists or become convinced that I cannot possibly decide if God exists or not, I will become a Freethinker who is also an Atheist or Agnostic. In any case, I will be a Freethinker; and I plan to die a Freethinker. (I also plan to die a Deist, in case you are wondering.)

I look forward to your response on these matters.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 89. Anti-Semitism

Hi Judy,

Why do the emails seem anti-Semitic? Perhaps it is because people in our culture have been conditioned to think that any criticism of Judaism is an attack against the Jewish people. The World Union of Deists (WUD) is not against any group of people. We want all people to be as sane, good, and happy as possible, including all Jews. To paraphrase a popular Christian saying, we should love all people but hate the evil and false teachings of all religions and philosophies.

WUD is for reason and compassion. So whatever teaching is contrary to those two things—even if those teachings are sacred cows, metaphorically speaking—WUD criticizes them. WUD's founder and director, Bob Johnson, is an American and a former Evangelical Christian. That is why WUD tends to scrutinize the teachings and practices of Judaism and Christianity more than those of other "Revealed" Religions. The United States, to a large extent, blindly supports Israel; and many Americans automatically assume that Judaism and Christianity are very good and that many other (if not all other) religions and philosophies are very evil.

I embrace what is true and good no matter what the source, and I reject what is false and evil no matter what the source. Therefore, I will make a chart below to try to give balance to the assertions of WUD.

### I. Judaism

- A. True and good: The teachings that God created the universe and that there is only one God.
- B. False and evil: God told the Jews to murder all the Canaanites so that they could steal the Promised Land.

### II. Christianity

- A. True and good: "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" (Matthew 7:12).
- B. False and evil: God will burn people alive forever.

### III. Islam

- A. True and good: The teachings that God created the universe and that there is only one God.
- B. False and evil: God said "to slay the idolaters wheresoever you find them" (9:5).

IV. Hinduism

- A. True and good: We should let people believe what they want to believe.
- B. False and evil: We deserve all the suffering that we get in this life because of Karma. Thus, a baby who is born poor, ugly, and crippled deserves to be poor, ugly, and crippled.

V. Buddhism

- A. True and good: All of our actions should be compassionate.
- B. False and evil: We deserve all the suffering that we get in this life because of Karma. Thus, a baby who is born poor, ugly, and crippled deserves to be poor, ugly, and crippled.

VI. Atheism

- A. True and good: We should base all of our beliefs on reason.
- B. False (I wouldn't say evil): God does not exist or probably does not exist.

VII. Deism

- A. True and good: We should base all of our beliefs on reason, and reason leads us to conclude that God exists or at least probably exists.
- B. False and evil: Non-Applicable

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 90. The Origin of Life and Intelligence

Hi Peter,

You wrote that "it is far more logical to conclude that intelligence created intelligence." Here, I think that you are arguing that like makes like. A tree makes a tree, a dog makes a dog, a human makes a human, and only an intelligent thing can make an intelligent thing. Likewise, you wrote, "You discount the supernatural, yet believe that life can somehow come from non-life?" In this statement, you are using the same argument. Like makes like, so only a living thing can make a living thing. To an extent, that argument makes sense. It is what we frequently experience. When my wife gave birth, I expected and got a baby human, not a baby octopus.

However, like does not always make like. Hydrogen and oxygen are both gasses, but they often merge to form water. So, in this case, two gasses don't make another gas; they make a liquid. Judging from just that example, it is possible that the first intelligence arose from something unintelligent, and the first living thing arose from non-living stuff.

What are life and intelligence anyway? Are they very different from that which is without life and/or without intelligence?

Life is the condition that distinguishes living things from nonliving things. It is characterized by growth through metabolism, reproduction, and the power of adaptation to environment through changes originating internally. Death is the moment when a creature stops living. In other words, death is when life ends or (if there is an afterlife) at least seems to end.

As far we mortal humans know, life requires a physical body to happen. Once that body dies, it decomposes into lifeless elements after death. Thus, all living things that we know of eventually decompose into lifeless elements. If all living things that we know of decompose into lifeless elements, it is not farfetched to believe that the first living things were originally composed of lifeless elements. In fact, it is likely. Life is closely related to that which is without life.

Now to discuss intelligence. Intelligence is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills. Like life, as far as we mortal humans know, intelligence requires something physical, specifically a brain. When a brain is damaged through blunt trauma, stroke, lobotomy, lack of oxygen, or the use of certain drugs, intelligence is often negatively affected. And when a brain dies, for all we know, the intelligence within it (along with the memories and the rest of the personality) dies too.

The brain is just another part of the body; and like all other parts of the body, it decomposes into lifeless elements after death. It seems most likely to me that lifeless elements lack any intelligence. Therefore, if all brains that we know of, along with the intelligence within them, decompose into lifeless elements, they also decompose into unintelligent elements. Because of this, it is not farfetched to believe that the first brains

were originally composed of unintelligent elements. In fact, it is likely. Intelligence is closely related to that which is without intelligence.

You and I are both Theists, that is we both believe that God (the being who purposefully created the universe) exists. Atheists enjoy asking people like us this question: "Where did God come from?" You would probably say that God always existed. Many Atheists would probably say something to this effect: "Why was the first thing that existed an extremely intelligent, virtuous, and powerful being?" How do you answer that question? I'll bet that you will basically say, "I don't know. God just always existed as God is."

You say that my answer seems illogical to you. I say that it makes more sense than answering a mystery with a mystery that is unlikely to be true. The first thing that existed was probably not an extremely intelligent, virtuous, and powerful being. All beings that we know of do not start off extremely intelligent, virtuous, and powerful. They start off the opposite. They start off extremely unintelligent, amoral if not immoral, and weak. Find me a human baby who is extremely intelligent, virtuous, and powerful at its conception; and your speculation will make more sense to me.

May reason prevail!

Jayson X

Deputy Director  
World Union of Deists

## 91. Science and Deism

It is extremely unscientific, problematic, and dishonest that some people do not openly allow for the possibility that God exists, even (perhaps especially) in scientific matters. It is fine to be an honest Atheist, but all honest people should be open to the fact that they might be wrong. Accepting one's possible fallibility is a large part of being an honest person. Therefore, honest Atheists should be at least a little Agnostic and be open to the fact that God might exist; just like honest Deists should be open to the fact that God might not exist.

Too many Atheists and Agnostics draw the boundary between reasonable and unreasonable at Agnosticism. They seem to believe that one can be very knowledgeable and rational as long as one is an Atheist or Agnostic; but as soon as one becomes any type of Theist—including a Deist—one is by default very irrational and/or at least very ignorant. (Here, I define a Theist as anyone who believes that God, the being who purposefully created the universe, exists.) Those Atheists and Agnostics are wrong. The boundary between reasonable and unreasonable should be drawn at Deism.

Atheists, Agnostics, AND Deists can be very knowledgeable and rational; but as soon as one becomes any type of "Revealed" Religionist, one is by default very irrational, or at least very ignorant, about at least one important issue. That issue is accepting something as true solely or mainly on faith. Here, faith is defined as one's ability to believe something although it is not proved to be true; and reason is one's ability to perceive reality as honestly and completely as one can, and then make logical conclusions based on what one perceives. Believing in leprechauns requires faith, and believing in the moons around Jupiter requires reason.

A "Revealed" Religion is a system of beliefs that includes one or more doctrines that can only be proved through a miracle. Religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are called "Revealed" Religions because most of their fundamental doctrines were supposedly revealed to them in a miraculous way. For example, God supposedly revealed a bunch of commandments to the Jews on Mount Sinai, God supposedly revealed His plan of salvation as Jesus of Nazareth to the Christians, and God supposedly revealed the Koran to Muslims through Mohamed. The vast majority of humans are "Revealed" Religionists. All the rest of humanity are Atheists, Agnostics, Deists, or do not have any opinion regarding theological subjects.

The goal of science is to understand reality as it is, using all the observable facts and logic that we have. Scientists should generally favor natural explanations for reality over supernatural explanations, because simply accepting supernatural explanations without constantly striving for natural explanations often (if not always) leads to the incorrect answer. However, concerning what created the universe, scientists should be open to the possibility that God exists. They should even be open to the possibility that one day science will either definitively prove or disprove the existence of God. In short, God should be considered a scientific hypothesis, proposed to explain how the universe was created. To do otherwise is very unscientific. It is like a Fundamentalist Christian

rejecting evolution through natural selection because he or she has already decided that the Book of Genesis's creation account must be literally correct.

Such a decision is based on faith, not reason. And just like there are Fundamentalist Christians who are blinded by their faith to the possibility that evolution through natural selection is true, there are Fundamentalist Atheists who are blinded by their faith to the possibility that the universe might have been purposefully created. Thus, God might exist.

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## END NOTES

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<sup>i</sup> The following was taken from "Chosen People." *JewishEncyclopedia.com*. ©2002-2011. 28 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4355-chosen-people>>:

The Chosen People is the '[n]ame for the Jewish people expressive of the idea of their having been chosen by God to fulfil the mission of proclaiming His truth among all the nations. This choice does not imply a superior claim, but a superior duty and responsibility on the part of the Jewish people, inasmuch as they have been pledged by the covenant which God concluded with Abraham, their ancestor, and again with the entire nation on Sinai, to testify, by precept and example, to the truth revealed to them, to lead a holy life as God's priest-people, and, if needs be, sacrifice their very lives for the sake of this truth. In this peculiar sense they are called God's own people; their religious genius, as manifested in their patriarchs, prophets, inspired poets, sages, and heroes, having rendered them the chosen people of religion to a far greater extent than the artistic and philosophical genius of the Greeks made that nation the chosen people of art and philosophy, or the juridical and political genius of the Romans made them the chosen people of law and politics.

‘Consciousness of Selection.

‘Unlike any other nation, the Jewish people began their career conscious of their life-purpose and world-duty as the priests and teachers of a universal religious truth; and their whole history, with all its tragic sternness, was and to the end of time will be devoted to the carrying out of this purpose and the discharge of this duty. This view is expressed in all the Biblical and rabbinical passages referring to Israel as the chosen people, or to Abraham as their ancestor. "For I have singled him out [A. V., "have known him"] to the end that he may command his children and his house after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment" (Gen. xviii. 1, Hebr.; compare Neh. ix. 7, "Thou art the Lord, the God who didst choose Abram").

‘Conditions of Choice.

‘That Israel's character as the chosen people is conditioned by obedience to God's commandments is stated in the very words of the Sinai covenant: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. xix. 5, 6). "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers" (Deut. vii. 7, 8). The great obligation imposed upon Israel as the chosen people is especially emphasized by the prophet Amos (iii. 2): "You only have I singled out [R. V., "known"] of all the families of the earth: therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities." Compare Deut. xiv. 2: "Thou art an holy people unto the

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Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth," and *ib.* xxiv. 18, 19, R. V.’

<sup>ii</sup> Most of the following comes from Babinski, Edward T. “Sheol and the Afterlife - Several Views on Afterlife in the Bible.” *Biblical Errancy*. 26 Nov. 2012. <<http://etb-biblical-errancy.blogspot.com/2012/04/sheol-and-afterlife-several-views-on.html>>. I have made some minor grammatical corrections to it.

“1) Early Old Testament view: Everyone returns to dust and goes down to Sheol together.

“ 2) Later Old Testament view: The Book of the Daniel contains the first unequivocal mention of resurrection and life after death. (Before such ideas appeared in the very late Hebrew Book of Daniel, those same ideas had already appeared in the holy books of Zoroastrianism, the religion of the Persians who allowed the Hebrews to return to their homeland after having been held captive by the Babylonians.)” Thus, Judaism got much of its belief in an afterlife from Zoroastrianism.

The following was taken from “Sheol.” *JewishEncyclopedia.com*. ©2002-2011. 26 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13563-sheol>>.

Sheol ‘connotes the place where those that had died were believed to be congregated. Jacob, refusing to be comforted at the supposed death of Joseph, exclaims: "I shall go down to my son a mourner unto Sheol" (Gen. xxxvii. 36, Hebr.; comp. *ib.* xlii. 38; xliv. 29, 31). Sheol is underneath the earth (Isa. vii. 11, lvii. 9; Ezek. xxxi. 14; Ps. lxxxvi. 13; Eccclus. [Sirach] li. 6; comp. Enoch, xvii. 6, "toward the setting of the sun"); hence it is designated as תהומות (Deut. xxxii. 22; Ps. lxxxvi. 13) or תהומות (Ps. lxxxviii. 7; Lam. iii. 55; Ezek. xxvi. 20, xxxii. 24). It is very deep (Prov. ix. 18; Isa. lvii. 9); and it marks the point at the greatest possible distance from heaven (Job xi. 8; Amos ix. 2; Ps. cxxxix. 8). The dead descend or are made to go down into it; the revived ascend or are brought and lifted up from it (I Sam. ii. 6; Job vii. 9; Ps. xxx. 4; Isa. xiv. 11, 15). Sometimes the living are hurled into Sheol before they would naturally have been claimed by it (Prov. i. 12; Num. xvi. 33; Ps. lv. 16, lxiii. 10), in which cases the earth is described as "opening her mouth" (Num. xvi. 30). Sheol is spoken of as a land (Job x. 21, 22); but ordinarily it is a place with gates (*ib.* xvii. 16, xxxviii. 17; Isa. xxxviii. 10; Ps. ix. 14), and seems to have been viewed as divided into compartments (Prov. vii. 27), with "farthest corners" (Isa. xiv. 15; Ezek. xxxii. 23, Hebr.; R. V. "uttermost parts of the pit"), one beneath the other (see Jew. Encyc. v. 217, s. v. Eschatology). Here the dead meet (Ezek. xxxii.; Isa. xiv.; Job xxx. 23) without distinction of rank or condition—the rich and the poor, the pious and the wicked, the old and the young, the master and the slave—if the description in Job iii. refers, as most likely it does, to Sheol. The dead continue after a fashion their earthly life. Jacob would mourn there (Gen. xxxvii. 35, xlii. 38); David abides there in peace (I Kings ii. 6); the warriors have their weapons with them (Ezek. xxxii. 27), yet they are mere shadows ("rephaim"; Isa. xiv. 9, xxvi. 14; Ps. lxxxviii. 5, A. V. "a man that hath no strength"). The

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dead merely exist without knowledge or feeling (Job xiv. 13; Eccl. ix. 5). Silence reigns supreme; and oblivion is the lot of them that enter therein (Ps. lxxxviii. 13, xciv. 17; Eccl. ix. 10). Hence it is known also as "Dumah," the abode of silence (Ps. vi. 6, xxx. 10, xciv. 17, cxv. 17); and there God is not praised (*ib.* cxv. 17; Isa. xxxviii. 15). Still, on certain extraordinary occasions the dwellers in Sheol are credited with the gift of making known their feelings of rejoicing at the downfall of the enemy (Isa. xiv. 9, 10). Sleep is their usual lot (Jer. li. 39; Isa. xxvi. 14; Job xiv. 12). Sheol is a horrible, dreary, dark, disorderly land (Job x. 21, 22); yet it is the appointed house for all the living (*ib.* xxx. 23). Return from Sheol is not expected (II Sam. xii. 23; Job vii. 9, 10; x. 21; xiv. 7 *et seq.*; xvi. 22; Ecclus. [Sirach] xxxviii. 21); it is described as man's eternal house (Eccl. xii. 5). It is "dust" (Ps. xxx. 10; hence in the Shemoneh 'Esreh, in benediction No. ii., the dead are described as "sleepers in the dust").'

<sup>iii</sup> The following comes from *Wikipedia*. 20 Nov. 2012. 2 Dec. 2012.  
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamanite>>.

‘According to the Book of Mormon, a Lamanite is a member of a dark-skinned nation of indigenous Americans that battled with the light-skinned Nephite nation. Mainstream archaeologists, geneticists, and historians do not recognize the existence of Lamanites but adherents of the Latter Day Saint movement typically believe that the Lamanites comprise some part, if not the entirety, of the indigenous peoples of the Americas and the Polynesian people.

‘The Book of Mormon describes the Lamanites as descendants of Laman and Lemuel, two rebellious brothers of a family of Israelites who crossed the ocean in a boat around 600 BC. Their brother Nephi founded the Nephite nation. The Lamanites reputedly gained their dark skin as a sign of the curse for their rebelliousness (the curse was the withdrawal of the Spirit of God), and warred with the Nephites over a period of centuries. The book says that Jesus appeared and converted all the Lamanites to Christianity; however, after about two centuries, the Lamanites fell away and eventually exterminated all the Nephites. By the end of the Book of Mormon, the Lamanites were defined less by their skin color than by their lack of Christianity. Many Mormons believe that the Polynesian people originated from the descendents of Hagoth who led his people off on a ship and was never heard from again. Although Hagoth was a Nephite, these Mormons regard Polynesians as Lamanites.

‘Within the culture of Mormonism, indigenous Americans and Polynesians are sometimes referred to as "Lamanites".’

The following comes from Smith, Joseph. *The Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981.

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“And the angel said unto me: Behold these [Lamanites] shall dwindle in unbelief. And it came to pass that I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief they became dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations” (1 Nephi 12:22-23).

“And he [God] had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them (2 Nephi 5:21).

“Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness and the cursing which hath come upon their skins, are more righteous than you; for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto our father—that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none, and there should not be whoredoms committed among them” (Jacob 3:5).

“Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, which is the word of God, that ye revile no more against them because of the darkness of their skins; neither shall ye revile against them because of their filthiness; but ye shall remember your own filthiness, and remember that their filthiness came because of their fathers” (Jacob 3:9).

“Now the heads of the Lamanites were shorn; and they were naked, save it were skin which was girded about their loins, and also their armor, which was girded about them, and their bows, and their arrows, and their stones, and their slings, and so forth. And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of their transgression and their rebellion against their brethren, who consisted of Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph, and Sam, who were just and holy men” (Alma 3:5-6).

“Thus the word of God is fulfilled, for these are the words which he said to Nephi: Behold, the Lamanites have I cursed, and I will set a mark on them that they and their seed may be separated from thee and thy seed, from this time henceforth and forever, except they repent of their wickedness and turn to me that I may have mercy upon them” (Alma 3:14).

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