

THE HISTORY OF BOB DOOLEY'S RELIGIOUS LIFE

Bob was born and raised in a Christian family. Bob's parents accepted and were convinced of the standard beliefs of fundamentalist Christianity, and from a young age Bob absorbed these beliefs from his parents. Significant life events were interpreted as occurring in the full knowledge of God, who at times altered events in conformance to his will.

I don't know the exact date, but I think it was between 6 and 8 years of age that I had my conversion experience. Our family was attending a series of meetings at some kind of religious camp in the US where I committed myself to Jesus, asked forgiveness of my sins, etc. The enthusiasm of the counsellors was catching, and it rubbed off on me for some time. But it didn't last that long after the actual conversion experience. According to the theory, I was assured that Jesus took a load of sin off my shoulders (so to speak) and I would no longer be laden down with this. But if I compared how I was 1 month before the load was lifted to how I was 1 month after . . . I never noticed any load before or after!

It was 2 or 3 years after my conversion that I was baptized. So if there was any concern whether I was "bound for heaven", I had fulfilled the two requirements. (**Mark 1:4, Mark 16:16, Luke 3:3, 1 Peter 3:21**)

We were regular church goers with Bob and his sister attending Sunday School followed by church service. In the middle of the week there were often religious meetings and activities sponsored by our church, often which I participated in.

In my Junior High school there was an ISCF (inter-school christian fellowship) club which met once a week in a school classroom and had a time of worship and (would you believe it!) singing. ISCF on occasion had joint meetings on weekends where two or more school clubs were able to get together for fellowship and enjoyment. We had extracurricular activities and held car washes, etc. to raise money for ISCF and for related Christian organizations. At least twice a year the junior high crowd travelled to Bellingham WA for a weekend of fun and religious education at a conference ground called "The Firs". I always looked forward to this.

ISCF continued for me when I went to Magee Secondary School. I was always active in the group, and in my grade 12 year I was president of Magee's ISCF.

Our family started to go to a church in Vancouver when I was a teenager, and I enjoyed a number of years attending the Youth Fellowship there. This was a great group of kids and young adults that met each Friday night for a religious program followed by volleyball in the church gymnasium. This group had many activities, such as driving down to Linden WA on the weekend to go roller skating. What a hoot!

Another activity was to go to Union Gospel Mission in downtown Vancouver to take a religious service to the people as they came for an evening meal. For a couple of years I was the leader of this group, responsible for getting a speaker and arranging music, etc.

But even as I regularly went to church and attended youth meetings, I started thinking seriously about my religion and questioning things that just didn't seem right. I would ask one of our

ministers or church leaders about some matter that was bugging me, and often would get a very superficial answer with obvious reluctance to pursue the matter further. Some of the leaders and ministers were better than others, but I was often left with the impression that these were things I should really not question or concern myself with.

Things that were said in the ‘worship services’ were often illogical, extremely biased, even leading to outright lies. An approach that was frequently taken was to concentrate on one particular religious subject at a time, and remain oblivious to whether that subject jibed with the rest of christian dogma. An example of this might be where one part of the bible contradicts another part. It seemed like speakers expected the congregation to forget what they had said a week ago or several months ago, and pay attention only to what was being said that day. . . . in other words bury the contradiction or problem. When challenged, they often denied what had previously been said. As you may expect, the denial was particularly strong when the matter in contradiction came directly out of the bible.

To sum up, the opinions voiced by church folk were 1) warnings that universities strongly attacked religion, especially christianity, 2) strong suspicions of current biological/geological/astronomical/sociological/etc. data that seemed at variance with the bible, 3) warnings about the influence of non-christian speakers, 4) denials and ridiculing of any subjects relating to organic evolution, 5) refusal to read or consider **primary** sources of these subjects, and a total reliance on the spoken words of church leaders presenting them.

I guess it started in later high school that I realized that there were *significant* problems and inconsistencies in the religious dogma I had been taught. I suppose I oscillated between that realization and a desire to view them as not being that serious, or as resulting from the inadequacy of my own understanding.

At that stage of my life, the matter of the origin of life on earth and the age of the earth became important subjects to me as I was majoring in biology and learning how the evolution of life through natural selection worked. But as far as the church folk went, the subject of evolution was anathema—maybe as bad as, or at least on a par with the politics of communism.

I entered UBC and started working towards a baccalaureate degree—a number of science and math courses, but also a couple of classical sciences (psychology and philosophy), as well as education courses. With respect to religion, I was by now a skeptic, often surprised at the naivety of many of my fellow-students’ religious outlooks and understandings. But I had not yet given up the faith. I still waxed enthusiastic if a competent speaker came to our large Varsity Christian Fellowship meetings. I actually became enthusiastic and re-charged to find there was a considerable amount of historical information to provide support for the religious dogma being presented.

I was fortunate to have a very intelligent church friend at that time who majored in fish physiology at UBC and eventually got a PhD in that area. We were both seriously questioning much of the dogma that was being fed to us at church and criticising the biased attitudes shown by the church people. Being able to bounce things off each other provided personal encouragement and a check on the soundness of our thoughts.

I started a more serious reading of the bible along with both Christian and secular literature. This

exposed me to a lot more doubts, and most of my enthusiasm for the faith gradually drained away. I came to the point where I felt the need for a direct message of assurance from God if I was to continue along the Christian pathway.

It was in my early 20's when I determined to make a wholehearted attempt to get in touch with God. I was a university student and I still lived with my parents. It was summertime and I had a week free from summer work. I can't remember the circumstances now, but both my parents and sister were away (probably on a vacation) and I had the house to myself for that week.

This provided the privacy and freedom from interruption that I needed to concentrate on the task. I set aside practically all my normal daytime activities so I could fully concentrate on reading portions of the bible and praying. I begged God to provide some sign that he was real, that he was interested in me, and that he wanted me to live according to his will. Although I didn't get the response I was hoping from him, I did feel at the end of the week that I should have done this much sooner.

Although I was severely disappointed that he had not revealed himself to me in any recognizable way, I guess I still felt that I would try to live my Christian life as best I could. Thus followed a period of great stress where the evidence for God's existence was negative, but the pull of the Christian community was considerable.

In the early stages of my exodus from the Christian faith I had a fair amount of anxiety concerning the character of the head person of that faith i.e. God. Yes, I realized there were copious problems with some of the things he said in his book, and also with some of his actions. But I was probably more focussed on the way in which the principles of the Christian faith impinged upon the lives of its adherents. Many criticisms can be levelled against Christian doctrines based upon problems with well established scientific facts, history, or logic and in recognition of the many contradictions one sees upon carefully reading the bible. These problems are what stimulated me initially to make a serious critique of my own religious beliefs and over the years I have spent a lot of time and effort probing them.

The question I pondered was: there seem to be a lot of problems with Christian doctrine, but somehow it enables people to live a good, satisfying and moral life. How can that be? Although there are untold instances of Christian scoundrels in the past, most modern Christians (at least the ones that I have contacted) are pretty decent people . . . kind, friendly, and living good lives. The problem for me is that the formal services and associations that these people value focus around the Yahweh person whom they extol as being worthy of praise and worship. Is he actually worthy of that praise and worship? Do his good points exceed the bad, or is it the other way around? And thus began my attempt to focus more on the character of Yahweh. For, after all, *the goal of the Christian faith is to establish a close relationship with Yahweh both in our life on earth and for eternity in heaven.*

So in this document I am not going to cover tensions occurring between Christianity and modern intellectual knowledge. I would like to concentrate on just one aspect of the Christian religion—God—and the standards of morality involving him and his actions as presented in the Bible. For this paper I am not going to get into matters involving the 'philosophy of god', or 'philosophy of religion' but only take a close look at God and what the bible says about him.

Upon digging deeper into this investigation I soon came to realize that there was a lot that I should have been aware of much earlier. I can't make excuses for myself except to recognize the strength that religious indoctrination has on individuals, me included. These things, however, are what led to my present alienation towards the Christian religion.

And let me state one more time, that this is the story of how MY RELIGIOUS THOUGHT developed throughout my life. Streams that flowed into this included my own reading, discussions with my christian friends, talks with some of the prominent speakers in the Vancouver area, and readings from the internet plus, of course, a considerable amount of straight bible reading. I have long been in the habit of categorizing materials I read, and for materials of this genre, I save them in the Religion section on this computer. Much of what you will read here comes from this source, augmented with other material I have picked up. Chances are I have stated some of my thoughts in fairly strong language. Well . . . I guess I do feel strongly about some of these matters, especially stories that exemplify moral issues. **Try not to get hung up on the way I have worded things.**

Some of the points I bring up in this booklet may not be familiar to the average christian, or they feel they should put them aside (for a more opportune time), or simply ignore them. I guess I have some mental quirk that keeps me from doing this—I seem to have an insatiable desire to follow such matters through to resolution!

Regarding the bible: I will probably make some observations on the bible itself, as that is the source of our information about God. But for the purposes of this discussion I will view the bible as the ultimate authority on matters Christian. I may or may not agree with the information presented, but be that as it may, I will use the bible as the principle source and authority for this paper.

In most places in this document a boldface abbreviated biblical reference serves to locate the origin for the information presented either immediately before or after that reference. In a few cases biblical references are provided with little or no elaborative information. This is a good reason that **the reader should look up all the boldfaced biblical references** to be sure that all information is correctly adduced.

DIGRESSION: WHAT/WHO IS THE GOD?

The reason I am starting with this question is that religions center around recognition and worship of a god or gods, along with attempts to ascertain and follow the will of a god. But when you get honest about it, most of us have a very difficult time describing what a god is. If we are asked to write down on paper a definition or description of a “god” many of us will have a difficult time. What IS a god? What IS NOT a god? So let's start with that very question:

“What is a god?”

But you say, everybody knows what a god is (lower case) And everybody knows who God is!

But do they? I would hold that even well-trained theologians are likely to have problems with the details of some of these questions. For instance:

- is a god always invisible?
- can a god necessarily fly?
- do gods exist for ever and with no beginning?
- can a god travel through time? What does travelling through time mean?
- is a god super-strong (at least compared to humans)?
- does a god purport to have admirable moral qualities?
- do some gods do evil? . . . at least once in a while?
- does the Christian God know everything (omniscience)? What does that mean? What does it **imply**?
- is the Christian God all-powerful (omnipotent)? What does that mean? What are those **implications**?
- does the Christian God exist everywhere (omnipresent)? . . . all the time? throughout the universe?
- what does it mean when God shows (him)self only in special places? . . . in the holy of holies? . . . in the ark of the covenant? . . . on mount Sinai?
- can God change his nature over time? . . . in what ways? Does he make mistakes?
- is the Christian God omnibenevolent? . . . to what extent? Is the Christian God supposed to be fair in all his dealings?

Address any of these questions in detail and work through their various implications, and you quickly unearth all sorts of ambiguities. The phrase, “well it depends what you mean by . . .” frequently occurs. This resulting ambiguity results in individuals having all sorts of different, and often contradictory concepts of gods, even of their own God.

IMPORTANT CONCEPT: In light of the above questions (and many other things as well) it appears obvious to me that individual Christians construct their concept of God from ideas that appeal to each of them and that seem reasonable and acceptable to them. In most cases these ideas originate from their parents, from teachers and preachers, along with ideas that they have cherry-picked from verses in the bible. But, if the bible is supposed to be the standing authority on Christian dogma, I would venture to say that at least 90% of Christians have a substantially incorrect and incomplete picture of the God that is portrayed in the bible. — *their personal god* is definitely NOT YAHWEH.

In light of the wide diversity of people claiming to be Christian, it is not uncommon to hear the question, “But are they REAL Christians?” Indicating that there are lots of persons who falsely claim to be Christians, but who do not meet the qualifying standards.

But who does meet those standards, and what exactly are they? There is not anybody other than Jesus himself that doesn’t fail to meet the standards of some Christian group or other (and probably Jesus doesn’t either). So why don’t we just say that anybody that recognizes Jesus and in some way tries to worship him is a Christian, and leave it at that?

Incidentally, this is why I refuse to identify myself as an atheist. How could one argue that there are no gods in existence? There are thousands—no there are millions—of gods in the world. And who are we to say they are not real gods? People worship them, and they claim that their gods perform miracles, and they communicate with them and they get solace from them.

Well, having said all this, let's take a look at what I have found out about the character of Jahweh. In the rest of this paper I will point to biblical references that purportedly demonstrate the particular character trait I wish to show. I will present 3 or 4 samples and then suggest you go to the Notes section at the back of the paper for possibly a few more.

THE CHARACTER OF JAHWEH

In this section I will be telling the things that I (Bob Dooley) have discovered about the Christian god. This will consist of character traits he demonstrates as well as actions he has taken. Much of this will be overlooked by many Christians—at least it will not be recognized as being of key importance. But, again, this is MY STORY I am telling—these are specifically things that I have learned and experienced—things that have shaped my thinking. So let's get started. I will capitalize “God” when I refer to the anglicized name of Israel's god; otherwise I will use the lowercase “god”.

JAHWEH IS A VIOLENT PERSON WHO LOVES KILLING

KILLING OF CANAANITES

The bible tells the story of the settling of the Israelites in Canaan following their journey from Egypt. It is a story of abhorrent violence. It describes the combined actions of the warriors of Israel under God's command in combination with the actions of the warrior god himself. When I looked at the extent and completeness of the genocide perpetrated by these two parties, it boggled my mind. This was not just a driving away of political groups from their homeland, which is bad enough, but a complete and vicious butchering of men, women, children, and babies. A partial listing of the kings and kingdoms annihilated by Joshua (usually under the direction of Moses) is found in Notes at the back of this paper.¹

It was a dangerous time in human evolution when various tribes went to war against each other. But the kingdoms that the Israelites destroyed were peoples that were already settled in the land. I thought— is this what the god that supposedly loves each human on earth decided he wanted to do? Not just provide some space for the Israelites to settle down in, but to wipe out completely all these peoples that he supposedly loves?

I also tried to put my mind into the mental state of the citizens of these countries:

What is happening to us? These Israelites are a tribe of vicious thugs who have descended upon us and whose goal is to eliminate all our people, people who are living peaceably in the geographic area of our kingdom. And when asked, they say they are fulfilling the commands of their terrible god.

But that's not how the bible sees it. And I wondered, should I accept the bible's version? It is no defence to argue that the Canaanites were evil people and didn't deserve to live. Every despot characterizes the people they want to rule or get rid of as being weak and wicked. And yes, I reminded myself that history is written by the victor, not the vanquished. I will deal with the charge that is often put against Canaanites that they practised child sacrifice in a later part of this paper.

Joshua chapter 10-11 provides a listing of many of the kingdoms where the people were completely exterminated by Joshua's army. I have reproduced it in the Notes section of this paper, and it is of note that over 40 kings and kingdoms were eliminated. If we were doing a tally and we posited an average of only 2,000 persons in each kingdom (most had more than that), these two chapters of Joshua would tally the Hebrew's and/or Yahweh's destruction of at least 98,000 persons.

(See Notes for a listing of the kingdoms slaughtered)

A few more things I noted about these events:

1. When the Israelites failed to completely exterminate men, women, children, babies, and fetuses, God showed his anger and gave directions to Moses that this had to be remedied.
2. The extermination was accomplished in the most violent manner possible. God didn't provide barrels of sleeping pills that the recipients could be forced to ingest and die in their sleep of an overdose. No, he relied on the weapons of war possessed by the Israeli army. Some of the barbarous events include descriptions of pregnant women being gutted with a sword to enact a double murder (**such as in Hosea 13:16**).
3. According to **Joshua 11:20** God didn't want any of these kings to back off from war and thus result in at least partial survival of their peoples, so he hardened their hearts. How this could happen, we are given no clue, but if God can read the thoughts in everyone's mind (he is omniscient), presumably he could place some of his own thoughts into their minds. No? And, of course, this happened many times throughout the history described by the bible.
4. When Joshua became old and weakened, his god told him not to worry, that he would take over the killing himself. (**Joshua 13**)

THE MATCHSTICK MAN

The killing of the Canaanites had to do with large numbers of peoples God didn't like. But surely he wouldn't be concerned if a small number of people were doing something strictly innocuous, I thought. But then I read about (I'll call him) the matchstick man in Numbers 15. This was only one person, and all he was doing was collecting some sticks likely to use for cooking his food (but on the Sabbath day). Surely that couldn't offend God. I mean we often pick up sticks for a campfire and we never concern ourselves with which day of the week it is.

But I underestimated God. He didn't just dislike that man picking up sticks on his special day—he thought the matchstick man was doing something unforgivably terrible. Moses didn't know what to do with the matchstick man, but luckily God told Moses that the man should be taken outside the camp and be stoned by all the people. And they did. And he died. (**Numb. 15:32, 35, 36**)

MEN OF BETHSHEMESH

The Philistines had warred with Israel, defeated them and captured the ark of the covenant (God's box). They then carried the ark back to their territory and kept it there for 7 months, incidentally experiencing bad luck events during that time. After considerable adjustments and argument, they decided to take the box back to Israel to avoid the tumours which it apparently produced.

So the Philistine men yoked two milk cows to a cart bearing God's box along with some gifts (gold tumours and mice—would you believe it) and let the cows go. They started off right away in the direction of Beth-shemesh (which is in Israeli territory). When it got there, some of the men of Beth-shemesh, presumably wanting to know if the Philistines had pilfered any of god's jewelry, looked inside it.

Uh oh, God didn't like that. And as 1 Samuel 6 tells us "And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men . . ." **(1 Samuel 6 KJV)**

IF YOU CAN'T SWORD 'EM, DROWN 'EM

Yes, Jahweh certainly had his time killing in Canaan Land, but this is already after he had his most thorough go at murdering worldwide. (In comparison, how many was Adolph Hitler responsible for killing? A couple of sources I read estimate about 6 million.) How many humans were on earth when God murdered them all? Nobody knows for sure; our current 7 billion persons dwarfs that population. But let's say about 1 million. . . .

God may not have met Hitler's 6 million in absolute numbers, but he swamped Hitler's proportion of the world population by far. And we know that all dictators charge their victims with being weak and wicked. Well God did also. And most likely over half of these would be innocent children (most of those early families produced as many children as they could because they were useful helpers in the family business of herding or farming). But considering God's other murders, it seems he takes a particular delight in extinguishing babies and children.

And what a terrible way to go. Can you just see terror-stricken mothers trying to hold up their babies and children with water pounding down upon them and no place to go for refuge. And yes I said pounding down. It certainly wasn't rain. If the waters covered the highest mountains and Mt Everest is 29,029 ft. above sea level, at 40 days and 40 nights that amounts to 725 feet of water coming down per day yes, per day. That isn't rain; it's a deep world-wide lake dumping down each day. When you think of the pictures we see on television of South American . . . or whatever other . . . countries that have received 5-10 INCHES of rain per day for a week, and the terrible land erosion they experience, with 725 feet of water pounding down each day, there would be no soil left anywhere on earth, just bare rock everywhere. And 725 feet of water pounding down EVERYWHERE, solid water not rain drops, would weigh $725 \times 62.4 \text{ lb} = 45,000 \text{ lb} = 22 \text{ tons}$ per square foot each day. And you doubt the land would be completely stripped of soil?

But think of the hopelessness of people having to put up with that torture—at least it would only be for a few seconds, if that! Is God so lacking in intelligence that he couldn't figure out a way of punishing the really bad guys without murdering all the innocents at the same time. Not only that, but all the animals—the sensate ones especially. And this is the guy that thought he would create all of life on earth so there would be someone to praise him! **(Genesis 6,7)**

Anyway, that's for another story. Sorry if I bore down rather heavily on that but it bothers me immensely—I don't have the nature, I guess, to take that glibly. So you've seen a sample of instances where God showed his murderous nature. And this character trait is the one I think provides the greatest obstacle for me. Other examples you can see in the Notes section of this paper. What's next?

GOD LACKS EMPATHYUzzah (II Samuel 6:1-11)

One might expect that if Yahweh wanted to market himself as a loving father he might show evidences of empathy for the people he created. After all, why did he create us in the first place? Presumably he wanted a modicum of social intercourse with us humans. But aside from the complete lack of empathy he exhibited for the families he massacred, what empathy did he show for his own people?

Well, let's look at Uzzah. David and his chosen men (30,000 of them supposedly) went to Baale-judah to get God's box (the ark) and bring it to Jerusalem. They placed the box upon a wooden cart and attached two oxen to pull it. When the procession got to the threshing floor of Nacon, one of the oxen stumbled and there was some concern that the box might fall off the cart and get damaged. Not wanting that to happen, Uzzah put up his arm to steady it.

Now it so happens that the box was supposed to be a holy box such that only the priests were allowed to carry it, or touch it. But, hey, this was an emergency and neither the priests, the people, David, Uzzah, or God wanted it to be damaged. Did God empathize with Uzzah and tell him he realized Uzzah made a split-second decision to try to protect his box, with no thought of gain for himself and thus held his arm up it to keep it from falling off the cart.? Not likely when he could kill him instead, which is what he did!

Everyone, including David, was angry with the Lord because he let his anger blaze out against Uzzah instead of expressing his gratitude. David was so angry that he took the box to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite instead of taking it to Jerusalem. Can you blame him, I thought. (II Samuel 6:1-11)

Jephthah

And then there was Jephthah . . . He was at first a shunned Israelite (his mother was a prostitute), who became a mighty warrior. Such that when the Israelites were fighting a very strong Ammonite army, they sent for him from a far-away land, Tob, to ask him to command their army. At first Jephthah refused since the Israelites had earlier shunned him, but upon their constant imploring, he decided that if the Lord gives the Ammonites to him, he would be their leader.

The Lord did that, and Jephthah made a vow unto the Lord: "If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whoever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the Lord's to be offered up by me as a burnt offering." A dangerous oath . . . yes! Because his very own daughter was the first to come out of the door to greet him.

Well this was an oath to the Lord. But if that Lord had any degree of empathy and concern for Jephthah and his family, wouldn't he whisper in Jephthah's ear a warning not to make such a foolhardy oath, especially if it might affect one of his family members. (In those days people believed that God could speak to them in an audible voice). Wouldn't there be other things that Jephthah could do to show his gratitude for the divine help he had received?

Jephthah gave his daughter two months to wander the mountains and bewail her virginity with her companions, and then he performed the act. Did that bother Jahweh?—not likely if he lacked empathy! Or so I thought. (Judges 11:29-31)

Onan (Gen. 38: 1-12)

Judah married Shua, a Canaanite (**n.b.**) woman and “went into her”. She conceived and produced a son named Er. She conceived again and produced another son named Onan. Er married a girl named Tamar. However, he turned out to be a wicked man. So God killed him.

Judah instructed his second son Onan to *go into* his sister-in-law to “raise up offspring for your brother.” Onan did *go in*, but since they weren’t going to be his children, he spilled his semen on the ground. God didn’t like Onan doing that (primitive birth control), so he solved the problem in his usual way—he killed Onan. No thought of Onan’s responsibilities to his own family: to earn a living to feed and clothe his wife and children. I would hope modern christians are very careful with the disposition of their semen! What does this indicate? Could it be lack of empathy. (**Gen. 38:1-10**)

Mary

Mary was the mother of Jesus. But why Mary, you might ask? For some reason or other God felt that if part of him came down to earth for an important purpose, then that part of him had to go through a human birthing process.

Well OK. And how should that be accomplished. Presumably God could take whoever he wants to provide this. Wouldn’t this be an excellent opportunity to bless an infertile spinster lady who desperately longed for a child. She would have to be of top-notch character and piety of course, and be greatly appreciative to me, God, for the opportunity I grant her.

I suppose, but I may as well come down to earth and screw a poor Israelite lad’s fiancé. That could provide problems for both members of the couple and their families, but what of it?
Talk about empathy! (**New Testament**)

And yes, that’s how human babies are formed. Semen we are finding is not just for fertilization; it actually seems to “prime the females immune system for pregnancy making it more likely that the embryo will successfully implant in the womb”. It is also possible that during the implantation semen helps to “minimise the chances of a woman’s body rejecting the fetus later on in pregnancy.” (New Scientist, 30 August 2016) Well I was pretty sure that virgin birth didn’t work anyways.

CHILD SACRIFICE

Well we may as well look at child sacrifice now, as this is the subject that many christians bring up as a supposed reason why God can justify having adults killed for offering their children as sacrifices. No, not just sacrificed, but sacrificed as a burnt offering. People I have read and are supposed to know something about this say that 1) all tribes and cults that lived about that time offered burnt offerings of their children. After all, it was generally believed that gods fed off the blood of humans. And if you give the gods something that is valuable to them, they are likely to give you something in return. 2) Although child sacrifice was done almost universally amongst ancient peoples, it wasn’t done frequently, only occasionally. After all, what family can afford to lose good workers? Christians believe that the Hebrews didn’t sacrifice their children.

But they did . . . the bible tells me so. **(Exodus 13:2)** “Consecrate to me all the firstborn; whatever is the first to open the womb among the Israelites, of human beings and animals, is mine.”

(Exodus 22:29-30) You shall not delay to make offerings from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. 30 You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall remain with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me.

But maybe this means that God wants to have all these sons around just to serve him, as did Samuel? But, I asked myself what . . . did God want to have a bunch of oxen and sheep around to serve him as well? Both sheep, oxen, and children are mentioned in the same context. Wouldn't God want to make a clear distinction between these two groups!?

(Leviticus 27:28,29) dispels any doubt about that: Nothing that a person owns that has been devoted to destruction for the Lord, be it human or animal, or inherited landholding, may be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to the Lord. 29 No human beings who have been devoted to destruction can be ransomed; they shall be put to death.

Oh yes, later on God accepted an animal to be slain in place of these little boys, but that was later on, or was it?

(Ezekiel 20:26) I defiled them through their very gifts, in their offering up all their firstborn, in order that I might horrify them, so that they might know that I am the Lord.

And consider probably the two most famous instances of child sacrifice in the bible: Abraham and Jephthah.

God asked Abraham to take his son, Isaac, to a far off land, Moriah, to offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains there. Did Abraham complain to God that this was an abominable thing to be asked to do, wholly immoral and unethical? No, Abraham and Isaac just plodded along to Moriah. If any thing, Abraham was probably worrying how God would fulfill his promise to make his offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky if he sacrificed Isaac . . . because grandpa Abraham was 100 years old, while his wife, Sarah, was 90. **(Ex. 32:13)**

And isn't God the person that christians say wants to exterminate the Canaanites and Phoenicians for performing child sacrifice? A little two-sided is he not? At least that's what I thought.

But it only gets worse:

In **Ezekiel 5 (9-10)** when God complains that the residents of Jerusalem have rebelled against his ordinances and statutes, he says he will do what he has never done before to those people: Parents shall eat their children in your midst, and children shall eat their parents.

(See also Lev. 26:29)

I didn't want to, but I tried to put myself in the place of those parents where I was forced to cut up MY own children boil their body parts in a pot and eat them over a period of days. What horrid memories with each bite!! Well, I thought, God's a real sweetie. Enough about Child Sacrifice per se.

It is not just humans that God loves to murder. God seems to think that roasting a live sensate animal somehow compensates for what God considers to be a sin (be it small or large) or to celebrate some religious event. The bible indicates this has occurred from the earliest Hebrew history:

1. for instance at the time of the dedication of Solomon's temple 120,000 sheep and 22,000 bulls were sacrificed as burnt offerings. I wonder what air pollution that would have caused.
2. Most of the offerings the Hebrews made to God were burnt offerings. Only a small number were non-burnt offerings.
3. **Leviticus chapt. 1-7** goes through a list describing many of these offerings required by the Hebrew god: *gift offering, grain offering (part of it was burnt), offering of well-being, sin offering, offering for a rash oath, offering for touching an unclean thing, unintentional sin, failure to testify, sin of robbery or deceiving a neighbour, thank offering, offering of elevation, ordination offering, etc.*

GOD CHANGES

Funny thing . . . the Lord can't make up his mind about whether he changes his mind!

Numb. 23:19 God is not a human being, that he should lie, or a mortal, that he should change his mind,

James 1:17 Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change

Ezek. 24:14 I the Lord have spoken; the time is coming, I will act. I will not refrain, I will not spare, I will not relent. According to your ways and your doings I will judge you, says the Lord God

Mal. 3:6 For I the Lord do not change

But:

Ex. 32:14 And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

Gen. 6:6-7 And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 7 So the Lord said, "I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.

Jon. 3:10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

Oh well, we all change our minds, I guess. It is just that he seems so proud of not doing that and never varying. And speaking of being proud . . .

GOD IS A PROUD AND JEALOUS PERSON

Usually when I think of people that are jealous and overly proud, I think that they are probably suffering from a bit of an inferiority complex. But is God inordinately proud? Well, I wonder!

Psalm 106 is a song (ode) to God where he gets praised for mighty and many things. The Psalmist states that God's people "have sinned, we have committed iniquity and done wickedly." Yet God saved them . . . Because he loved them? No, "for his name's sake, so that he might make known his mighty power." (**Psalm 106: 8**) In other words he would lose some pride if his special people were wiped out.

(**Isaiah 43:25**) has God saying, "I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake and I will not remember your sins." What could this mean? How is it God's sake? Could there not be a tiny bit of love in there?

Moses was up Mount Sinai conversing with God, and God told Moses that he was planning to exterminate the Israelites because they had made a golden calf to worship. He told Moses that He would make of him a mighty nation. Moses appealed to God's pride and his reputation amongst the other nations to get God to change his mind and not destroy Israel. And what do you know—it worked!

And pride doesn't weigh high on God's mind? What about jealousy?

Jealousy? You've got to be kidding. Individual persons in comparison with God's universe are infinitesimally small: we are less than atoms to God, much as we might say as electrons are to us. And our capabilities are also infinitesimal. How could God possibly be jealous of us?

Ex.20:4-5 You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me

Isaiah 48:9 For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, so that I may not cut you off. [New RSV]

In Exodus 34 God is warning the Israelites not to associate with the residents of the Canaanite valley and he states:

(**Ex.34:14**) for you shall worship no other god, because the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God)

Well, there he says it! Perhaps we should be addressing him as Lord Jealous . . .

IS GOD FAIR?

Adam and Eve Banished

In the strict sense the word "fair" has to do with striving for *balanced consequences*, not favouring one party over another. At least, that's how I'm going to use it for this section. Now is God fair?

I went to the beginning of the bible (Genesis for my first look at this question. Adam and Eve were living in the (more or less perfect) garden of Eden. But they didn't live there long. As we all know, Eve ate the magic fruit and then gave it to Adam to eat. This fruit was in the garden wholly as a

result of God's weird gardening tastes. Could there be a food that eating one bite of it endows you with the ability to recognize good and evil? Doubtful, but for the sake of argument let's accept that.

This fruit was one that God had instructed them not to eat. (I don't know why—it seems to me that this ability would be an important one you would want your creatures to have.) Nevertheless, God told them not to eat it. And God determined that they would die if they ate some (which they didn't—die that is).

The serpent told Eve that she would not die, but she would gain a form of knowledge. And so she ate a fruit. And also gave Adam some to eat.

Now the Lord God didn't like that, so he not only drove them out of the perfect garden, but also dumped upon them a load of "original sin" which would be passed on to ALL THEIR OFFSPRING. At first I thought, "well they got what they deserved." But then I thought a little harder and reasoned yes, they disobeyed God by eating that promising fruit, but should they be blamed for disobeying God? After all God was only one voice in the garden, and another voice told them differently. And seeing that they had not yet learned to differentiate good from evil, they would be in essence as a young toddler. Would a toddler recognize that the first voice was voice good, while the second was voice bad? Not if the story took place as told in the bible.

So was God fair in that respect? Consider the world-changing consequences God laid upon those two (and the snake also). All women will now have pain in child-bearing and all men will have to work hard throughout their lives . . . and their lives will no longer be everlasting! You can make up your own mind with respect to that. But for me, I thought the punishment was totally overbearing, affecting the lives of all people in our species from then until now. And since the result (acquisition of a moral conscience) seemed to be something that everybody should have more of, and Adam and Eve had no way of knowing that they were 'doing bad', shouldn't God have just slapped their wrist if there could possibly be something wrong with getting that conscience. Not only that, but God in his omniscient mind would have known that his prime specimens would disobey him long before he created them in the first place. So whose fault was it that: a couple who couldn't distinguish right from wrong, or a creator that knew this couple would disobey, so he planted a toxic tree in the garden just so he could "get them". (**Gen. 2,3**) Or so I thought.

Murder of David's Son

What are some other examples of God's interaction with people? How did God resolve the murderous actions of his servant David with respect to the purposeful death of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband? (**2 Samuel 11-12**) God's prophet told David, "the Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the SON born to you will die." I suppose that is in agreement with God's mixed up fairness, for he says: "the Lord . . . visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation" (**Ex. 34: 6,7**)

Murder of Egyptian Sons

Another obvious one has to do with the purported time of the Hebrews in Egypt. Who stopped the Hebrews from going into the wilderness to worship their god? Why, it was the pharaoh of course. And the Lord sent down a number of increasingly serious plagues upon (ALL OF) Egypt in an

attempt to change the pharaoh's mind about letting the people go. But the pharaoh couldn't change his mind. Why? **Because the Lord hardened his heart. (Ex. 7:3)** That's like bribing a witness.

So amongst other plagues, the Lord killed all the livestock of Egypt once, and then he killed them all again, just for good measure.

And what was God's final plague? Well, he wanted to kill some people, not just the perpetrator. So he decided to kill the firstborn sons of all the people in Egypt, most of whom had no power at all to decide whether the Israelites should leave the city or not. But by now, as I might have expected, God let the pharaoh himself go. Would you believe it?! What does it matter who I kill, as long as I get to kill lots. This is how it appeared to me. **(Ex 12: 29-32)**

IMPORTANCE OF FEMALES

Somehow I get the impression that God doesn't think as much of women as he does of men. We have all heard the verse:

(Col. 3:18) Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord

I noted how God treats females in comparison to males.

(Ex. 20:17, Deut. 5:21) You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

So women BELONG to men. Just like a slave or a donkey!

(Isaiah 30:22) Then you will desecrate your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, "Away with you!"

Unless I missed the intimation, he further said:

(Ezekiel 36:16,17) - This word from the Eternal further came to me: "Son of man, when the Israelites lived in their own land, they polluted it with their practices; to me their practices were as loathsome as a woman's menstruous discharge;

Yes, I get it.

What weight should be put upon a woman's word vs a man's word? **Numbers 30** lays it out pretty straight:

The vow of a woman only holds if her father or husband approves.

Paul agrees with this in the new testament, as you well know:

(I Cor 14:34-35) women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church

Two or three other references echo this sentiment:

(Eph 5:22-24) Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. 23 For the husband

is the head of the wife . . . Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

(Titus 2: 3-5) Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior . . . to love their husbands, to love their children . . . so that they may encourage the young women, to be self-controlled . . . submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.

NO QUALMS ABOUT RAPE

While we are looking at God's view of women, we might take note that God has no qualms about rape.

(Gen. 6:1-2) When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose.

So, I guess God had more sons than one. At least the writer of Genesis saw it that way.

(Zech. 14:2) I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city.

Notice God says, *I will cause this to happen!*

Judges 21 tells how it is perfectly acceptable to take virgins from another community (400 of them) to be used for _____ purpose as long as you have burnt offerings and fellowship offerings ahead of time.

HONESTY/DISHONESTY

At one time I thought that God, at least dealt with people in an honest manner. You can count on what he says. A few references give you cause to wonder.

(Ez 14:9 KJV) And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

(2 Thess. 2:11) For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, 12 so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned.

(1 Kings 22:23) So you see, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the Lord has decreed disaster for you.

(Luke 19:29-34) When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and

as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” 32 So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” 34 They said, “The Lord needs it.”

I suppose this *could* fall under the owner’s accord, but notice Jesus doesn’t have the disciples speak to the owners first and ask permission to take the colt. He says “just take it”. Jesus also plays footloose and fancy free with domestic animals belonging to someone else:

Matt 8:28-34 describes how Jesus caused someone’s large herd of swine to drown in the sea (presumably the sea of Galilee). This is the sort of thing I have read (the story of the healing of the Gadarene demoniac) and think: Oh, wasn’t that wonderful—the poor man was healed, but fail to take note of the rest of the story.

GOD’S BAD BEHAVIOUR

A couple of quotes that could be classified as bad behaviour.

(Mal. 2:3) I will rebuke your offspring (**n,b,**) and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and I will put you out of my presence.
[hence cometh the term s___head]

(I Kings 14:10) Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. (KJV)

There’s a whole book of the bible that documents God’s very bad childish behaviour: in his treatment of Job.

According to the book of Job, Job was a blameless and upright man who was quite prosperous and had a good family. Job took care to be sure both he and his family remained sanctified. He would rise up early in the morning to offer burnt offerings.

Apparently Satan challenged God that Job didn’t lead such a good life for nothing; it was because God put a fence around him and his house and blessed the work of his hands. If God was to take some of his possessions away from him Job would curse God to his face.

Now believe it or not, God paid heed to this challenge and accepted it. Here is the omnipotent, omnibenevolent, omniscient creator of the whole universe responding to the play-school taunt of the devil. Why? Because of his silly childish pride.

God allows Job to lose all his animals, his property and his seven children. Job doesn’t weaken. Then God allows Satan to afflict Job with “loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head”. Job’s wife urges him to “curse God and die.” but he resists her suggestion. His three “friends” chide him as having sinned and urge him to seek forgiveness from the almighty. They tell him that God doesn’t punish an innocent man, so Job must have done serious wrong to suffer so.

Job protests his innocence, he accuses God of ignoring the righteous that are suffering, but refuses to curse God. Eventually his three “friends” and a close acquaintance who all chastise Job abandon him. Then God asks Job where he was when God made the earth, the seas, the clouds, and set the whole cosmic machinery in motion. God tells Job that because he (God) has done all these mighty things that Job has no right to accuse him. The problem is that God had no ethical right to do what he did to Job—all to meet a childish challenge from Satan!

Satan was supposed to be a fallen angel that God had created, a vastly inferior being in comparison to God himself. And yet God didn’t have the self control or pride of self to simply ignore this lowlife. Sure, Job remained reasonably faithful to God (note Job’s challenge to God in **Job 10:3** and in the remaining chapters of this book) but God acted the bully with Job simply because he had the power and he could. SHAME!

Of all the people that God killed because he wanted to, we focus our attention on the innocent babies and children because they have the greatest emotional appeal. But they aren’t the only blameless persons that suffer. It’s impossible to do no wrong whatsoever as we live our lives here on earth. Situations occur where one choice of action results in a bad result. But failure to perform that action, or doing something different often produces a different bad result. *You’re damned if you do, and you’re damned if you don’t!* so to speak.

We humans love to make ordered lists of entities, and our legal system does that with crimes, and assigns punishments accordingly. Minor theft is somewhere near the bottom of the list I guess, while murder is up at the top. And in this section of the paper, *God’s Bad Behaviour*, I don’t think it is necessary to list all the times that God has killed often just because it injured his pride. Yes, these are all instances of God’s bad behaviour, so I’ll leave it at that!

SLAVERY

It took many centuries to get rid of slavery in the Western World, but eventually it was gone. We now consider the taking of slaves to be a highly immoral thing. It destroys a person’s ability to provide direction for their lives, it sacrifices their freedom, and it sabotages a person’s self-worth. Seeing that all humans are God’s children, slavery would be something that he couldn’t stand.

But let’s see,

(Ex 21:2-11, 20-21) These are the ordinances God sets before Hebrew citizens:

- 1) time of servitude for Hebrew slaves
- 2) fate of a wife if she comes into slavery married or unmarried to a husband
- 3) fate of a wife if she is given to the male slave by the master; and the fate of her children
- 4) fate of a female if her father sells her into slavery
- 5) her fate as a satisfactory or unsatisfactory concubine
- 6) If the master takes her for his son.
- 7) guilt of a master if he strikes a slave with a rod and the slave dies immediately
- 8) lack of guilt of the master if the struck slave survives a day or two, for the slave is the owner’s property

(Lev. 25:44-46)

- 1) You can acquire slaves from the nations around you
- 2) and from aliens living in your land, along with their families

3) You can keep them as a possession for your children

(Joel 3): “And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the Lord hath spoken it.”

So, the slavery is a well-established institution of Hebrew society. It is not an exceptional incident. Hey, even God says he will do it! What does Jesus say about it?

(Luke 12:37-48) Jesus describes the matter-of-fact duties of the slaves in preparation for a wedding banquet. He lays out the duties of the slave master in providing food for the slaves, describes ways in which a slave can gain respect from the master, and indicates that a slave that didn't know what his master wanted should get only a light beating.

Jesus had a good grasp of the rules for slavery, and never uttered a word of criticism.

Paul also did too:

(Col. 3:22) Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord.

And Paul lets us know that obeying our masters is actually a way of fearing the Lord. Paul must have spoken to him to know that.

BASIC INTELLIGENCE

There is no intelligence test you can give to God, but an overview of his statements and actions gives one to wonder just how much intelligence he has. Humans with a modicum of acumen tend to take care in what they say and how they say it. Rash statements are not the mark of a wise man. Nor is extreme narrow-mindedness. In my experience, a certain respect for reasoned morality goes along with one's mental powers. If these foregoing traits are completely lacking in a person, I(we) seldom consider him to have a high level of intelligence.

What do I know about God?

A. Fair-mindedness: We have covered a number of instances where God has failed to exhibit basic fair-mindedness: blaming Adam and Eve for behaviour that they had no idea (by definition) was bad, killing persons and people for actions they didn't commit (first-born Egyptian sons, David's son.)

B. Avoiding astute actions: Drowning innocent persons along with the allegedly guilty ones, as well as all the animals and most of the plants. Initiating the whole remake of life on earth again with no attempt to redesign the organisms. Especially, knowing that things would turn out almost the same the second time around.

C. Narrow-mindedness: the whole schema of cleanness and uncleanness. i.e. the food laws, clean and unclean animals based on ? (number of divisions on their hoofs?, whether they chew their cud? whether they crawl along the ground), etc. You are to detest all creatures living in water that do not have fins and scales (e.g. shrimp, lobster) and a whole list of birds you are to detest, insects that walk on four legs (no insects have only 4 legs or walk on 4 legs!)

Disallowing a disabled man from coming near to present food offerings (blind or lame, damaged testicles, etc.)

D. Failure to recognize the obvious: (Ex 32:7-14) During the wilderness wanderings, God wants to kill (all) the Israelites because of their bad behaviour. Moses warns God that that would be bad for his reputation. The Egyptians would say it was of evil intent (just to kill them in the mountains) that God led them away from Egypt. [*God admitted, "Right you are, Moses. I hadn't thought of that. I better not kill them. Thanks for the reminder."*] <- a little loose with the sacred text!

He is supposed to be omniscient, but he can't even see the obvious fact that Abraham is 100% worshipful. Abraham has to go through the mental torture of offering up his son as a burnt offering before God stops him at the last minute. He says, "**Now I know** that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Pretty poor, God!

E. Jealousy: The whole of the Old Testament (at least the Old Testament) portrays a ridiculously jealous person. He even admits it! Unbelievable that the alleged god of the universe exhibits jealousy towards miniscule human beings.

F. Uncontrolled Fury: Coupled with jealousy, he kills, kills, kills often for trivial matters. Like killing 42 boys for teasing his prophet.

G. Lack of Knowledge of how the Human Mind Works: Puts people in atrocious situations (no food, no water, physical harm, no personal contact) and wonders why people react like they do. Expects people to 'believe on him' without providing adequate evidence.

H. Confused morality: says only the perpetrator of a crime will be punished; noone else. Then says he will punish the offspring of the perpetrator down to the third and fourth generation. Does his share of lying too. (**Ez 14:9, 2 Thess. 2:11, I Kings 22:23**)

I. Quality of Writing/Editing: The bible covers some good points throughout, but the quality of writing is actually pretty poor. Consider all the duplications (e.g. **II Sam. 7-8 & I Chr. 17-18; I Kings 7 & II Chr. 4; II Sam.22 & Psalm 18; Ezra 2:1-3 & Nehem 7: 5-8**, etc.)

I don't know where to start on all the self-contradictions within the bible.

Like I said, I realize there is no IQ test that could be administered to God, but there are a lot of implications from his actions that provide an estimate. At least, that's what I thought.

SALVATION PLAN AND TORTURE

Well, this list has gone on long enough. I have been reading about God for many a year, and I feel it is important to be aware of his character. But by now I am sure you can at least UNDERSTAND why I can't possibly venerate such a person. However, this last topic puts the finishing touch on it.

God has decreed that people have an afterlife: they either go to heaven and have a perfectly blissful life, or they go to hell and they don't. To get into heaven each person must fulfill the requirements to get there. I think the first bible verse I ever memorized was **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." (KJV)

So the bible story goes . . . God (as the trinity) decided to send a piece of himself down to earth to undergo a cruel temporary death experience which would supposedly provide remission for the sins of every human being that has ever lived or ever will live on earth.

Why? Because on Judgment Day every person will come before the judge to determine whether they will go to heaven or to hell. And who is the judge? . . . why, God himself, of course. So why

doesn't he just forgive those humans who are contrite, sorry for whatever bad they had done, try to make restoration, and promise they will try to do better in the future? I mean isn't that what compassionate humans do? We have all heard stories of people willing even to forgive someone who has killed one of their family members. Is God not able to do this? What's wrong with him? Is there some moral code that omnipotent, omniscient God IS FORCED TO FOLLOW rather than show compassion. If so, what does that imply about his omnipotence? Or is he just mean?

And going back to **John 3:16** . . . what does it mean "believeth in him"? . . . Believe that he existed? Believe that he was a good guy? Desire to follow his example? Believe that Jesus is a god? Do you also have to accept that this thing called 'sin' is a substance that can be transferred from one human to another?

Whatever these two things specifically mean, you have to set your mind to think them . . . if you want to get into heaven¹. And that's all there is to it! There is no criterion for living an acceptable quality of life. You can live a horrible immoral life, and just at the last minute before life seeps out you can say you "believe in Jesus" ask his forgiveness and you will depart this earth and end up in glory land. No problem.

By the way, here is an interesting implication of this salvation plan:

In considering the question of who were the worst malefactors who ever walked on earth, many people would at least include Adolph Hitler in their answer. Nobody knows the inner thoughts of Mr. Hitler, but there are many evidences from his writings and from his speeches that he considered himself to be continuing God's work by getting rid of the Jews, the murderers of Jesus.² Now it's interesting to consider that if Hitler made a last-minute confession to God/Jesus just before pulling the trigger that took his life in his bunker, he would now be up in heaven, while his innocent Jewish victims would be in hell!! Probably this did not occur, but under the terms that God laid out it certainly could have.

Not exactly a great plan of salvation!! (c.f. the Islamic plan)

And what is supposed to happen if one refuses salvation, doesn't believe³ in it, hasn't heard of it, OR WASN'T SELECTED BY GOD TO PARTAKE OF IT? (See **John 6:44, Acts 13:48, Romans 8:28-30, I Thessalonians 1:4, II Thessalonians 2:13, Eph. 1:4, etc.**)

Easy answer: they are dumped off in hell to be burned continuously for ever. This is not a sunburn,

¹ (**John 14:6**) Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, **but by me.** (KJV)

² "I am convinced that I am acting as the agent of our Creator. By fighting off the Jews, I am doing the Lord's work." (*Mein Kampf*)

³ Only believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Problem is you can decide to support something, you can cheer for something, you can donate money to it, you can even trust something. But there is no way you can believe something that you actually don't believe. Believing is not a state of will; it is a state of cognition. In other words, if you see what you ascertain is sufficient proof, you will believe (deep inside) no matter whether you want to or not! (And whether you will admit it or not!)

which can be very painful, but this is incineration in flames. Burning in fire could very well be the most painful way of dying. But, of course, they don't die; they just remain in excruciating pain.

My only experience with this was when my father was doing some soldering in the kitchen and he put the soldering iron down on a heat pad on the counter. I came into the house from a Wolf Cubs meeting and, without knowing, put my hand down on the counter right on top of the soldering iron. In an experience like that you can't think of anything except **get your hand away from there!** There will be no meditating on the sins you have committed in your past life, or no thoughts of what's going to happen in the future—all your concentration is on the pain you are experiencing and (hopefully) getting away from.

And that's what God has created for by far the vast majority of humankind (untold billions)!. Jesus may be providing a way out, but he's not doing a very good job of it if most of the humans that have ever lived do not have access to it.

But that's only for the very worst of persons, Right?

No. Go back to **John 3:16, Rom. 3:23, Rev. 20:15** and look what they say.

SUMMARY

I have considered a great range of material in this booklet. Thank you for reading this far.

What I was attempting to do was to try to explain why I have taken a strong aversion to THE BELIEFS of the Christian religion.

AND YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THERE IS NO SCIENCE, NO PHILOSOPHY, NO RIDICULE IN THIS BOOKLET; IT IS ALL TAKEN RIGHT OUT OF THE BIBLE—GOD'S OWN BOOK!! There are millions of people in this world for whom these beliefs pose no problem. In thinking about this, I have found it hard to comprehend how this can possibly be. But as I think some more, I can quite understand how this can be.

After all, at one time I was a completely convinced believer. And it never dawned on me that the god of the bible could have done so many bad things and evinced such bad attitudes. However, I think I have finally been able to see that people that appear to accept bad ideas probably don't fully accept them, but they put them to the side, and have little trouble living a good life and being good people. Yes, I like religious people (when they don't try to push their religion upon institutions, and other people). Many of my friends consider themselves to be christians, and that is great. I respect them for the lives they live.

Apparently it does seem to be possible to have a clear, workable dichotomy between RELIGIOUS ACTIONS and RELIGIOUS BELIEFS. And that's how I see things now!

NOTES

In this section of the paper I give a few more references under a number of headings that I use in the first section. Read them if you are particularly interested; ignore them if not.

Table 1 Canaanite Kingdoms that were Destroyed

Joshua utterly destroyed the following kingdoms and all the people in them: Estimate 2,000 citizens per kingdom.							
Refrnce	Kingdom	# destr'd	Refrnce	Kingdom	# destr'd		
Joshua 10-12	Amorites	2,000	Joshua 10-12	- the Hivites made peace with Joshua			
	- King Adoni-zedek of	2,000		- Anakim	2,000		
	- King Hoham of Hebron	2,000		- King Sihon of Amorites	2,000		
	- King Piram of Jarmuth	2,000		- King Og of Bashan	2,000		
	- King Japhia of Lachish	2,000		- King of Jericho	2,000		
	- King Debir of Eglon	2,000		- King of Hebron	2,000		
	- Ai	2,000		- King of Jarmuth	2,000		
	- King Makkedah	2,000		- King of Geder	2,000		
	- King of Libnah	2,000		- King of Hormah	2,000		
	- King of Jordan	2,000		- King of Arad	2,000		
	- King of Lachish	2,000		- King of Adullam	2,000		
	- King Horem of Gezer	2,000		- King of Bethel	2,000		
	- King Jabin of Hazor	2,000		- King of Tappuah	2,000		
	- King Jobab of Madon	2,000		- King of Hopher	2,000		
	- King of Shimron	2,000		- King of Apeh	2,000		
	- King of Achshaph	2,000		- King of Lasharon	2,000		
	- Kings in the northern hill	2,000		- King of Taanach	2,000		
	- Kings in the Arabah	2,000		- King of Megiddo	2,000		
	- Kings in Naphtoth-dor	2,000		- King of Kedesh	2,000		
	- Canaanites in the E & W	2,000		- King of Jokneam in Carmel	2,000		
	- the Hitites	2,000		- King of Dor in Naphath-dor	2,000		
	- the Perizzites	2,000		- King of Gaiim in Galilee	2,000		
	- the Jebusites	2,000		- King of Tirzah	2,000		
	- King Hermon of the Hivites	2,000		- King of Debir	2,000		
	- the Hazorites	2,000		- King of Madon	2,000		
	(cont. next column)					TOTAL 98,000	
	Joshua 10:40	Joshua defeated the whole land, the hill country and the Negeb and the lowland and the slopes, and all their kings; he left no one remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded.					

JAHWEH IS A VIOLENT PERSON WHO ENJOYS KILLING

(Ex 22: 18-20) not allow witches to live. How many innocent women were killed under the guise of being witches during the years between 1500 and 1660 in Europe?

(Ex. 32: 27) Encourages the Hebrews to put on a sword and go throughout the camp killing your brother, your friend, and neighbour.

(I Sam. 15:2,3) Thus saith the Lord of hosts. . . Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

(II Kings 2:23,24) Elisha cursed in the name of the Lord a group of small boys that were jeering at him, calling him 'baldy', & 2 bears came out of the woods and mauled 42 of them.

(Psalm 137:9) Happy shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!

(Hosea 13:16) Samaria shall bear her guilt, because she has rebelled against her God; they shall fall by the sword, their little ones shall be dashed in pieces, and their pregnant women ripped open

EMPATHY

(Matt. 15: 22-28) Jesus refused at first to heal the Canaanite woman's sick child.

CHILD SACRIFICE

(Ex 13:11-14) When the Lord has brought you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your ancestors, and has given it to you, you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. . . . Every firstborn male among your children you shall redeem

GOD CHANGES

(I Sam. 15:10-11) The word of the Lord came to Samuel: 11 "I regret that I made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me, and has not carried out my commands." Samuel was angry; and he cried out to the Lord all night.

vs

(I Sam. 15-29) And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.

INTELLIGENCE AND PRIDE

(Ez. 36-20-23) But it lowered my sacred honour to have them scattered thus among the nations; for people sneered, 'These are the Eternal's people, and yet they are driven out of the land!' Now I had some concern for my sacred honour thus lowered by the dispersion of the Israelites. So tell the Israelites that this is what the Lord the Eternal has to say: It is not for your sakes, O Israel, that I take action, but for the sake of my own sacred honour which has been lowered by your dispersion among the nations. I will uphold my high honour which has been lowered and degraded by you among the nations; and when I show them what I am, by my dealings with you, then, says the Lord the Eternal, the nations shall learn that I am the Eternal.

IS GOD FAIR?

(Josh. 11:20) For it was the Lord's doing to harden their hearts so that they would come against Israel in battle, in order that they might be utterly destroyed, and might receive no mercy, but be exterminated, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

(Gen 4:3-6) In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

(I Cor. 15:22) , , ,for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

PETTINESS

(1 Sam. 6) The Lord killed 50,070 men of Beth-shemesh since they looked into the ark of the Lord.

(Lev. 21:16-23) No disabled person can offer the bread of his god or come near to the offerings made to the lord . . . Lest he profane My sanctuaries for I the lord sanctify them.

RAPE

(Numb. 31:7-18) Midianite virgins: But all the young girls (32,000) who have not known a man by sleeping with him, keep alive for yourselves.

(Isaiah 3:17) the Lord will afflict with scabs the heads of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will lay bare their secret parts.

(Nahum 3: 5,6) I am against you, says the Lord of Hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face; and I will let nations look on your nakedness and kingdoms on your shame. I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt, and make you a spectacle.