
Subject: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Sat, 15 Jan 2011 13:19:14 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

as i'm sure you've noticed, i've debated a lot of religious people lately. there's one thing that always comes up, which seems to me what religion invariably boils down to - the threat of hell. of all the christians i've debated (a great many), only one never mentioned or alluded to it, and one other didn't believe it. for all the talk of love and salvation, this threat is what it always comes down to in the end.

i have three objections in response to it.

firstly that there are several contradictory religions that make this threat. the pope says only catholics are going to heaven and all other non-catholic forms of christianity are 'defective'. many protestant churches say the reverse is true. islam says all non-muslims are going to hell. clearly at least some of these claims are flat out wrong, so it becomes a question of who has the evidence (none of them)

secondly the person making the threat is putting themselves on one side of a particular moral question, or rather two questions:

Is freedom of religion a right we humans deserve? And if you say no to that, is torture an acceptable punishment for not being the right religion? like i said, every christian i've debated has come down on the wrong side of this moral question, i.e. the anti-freedom-of-religion and pro-torture side. but they try to justify this extraordinary position with my Thirdly.

thirdly there's one phrase that they always use when explaining why we atheists don't have freedom of religion and why we can be tortured for not being the right religion: "choose to believe". it's supposedly acceptable for us to be tortured forever for not being the right religion because we made a conscious choice in the matter. we've been warned, we've been told what the punishment will be if we persist in this crime, and we choose to continue in our atheism. well, if that were true, the person making the threat would still be fanatically opposed to freedom of religion and would still be pro-torture, but here's the odd thing. "choose to believe"? that's a baffling phrase. since when is belief a choice? does my mind work differently to these people? i could choose to pretend to be a particular religion if i felt it necessary (and for so much of history, many people really did feel it necessary and for good reason). i can choose to go to church or mosque and i can choose to pretend i'm praying. what i cannot choose to do is believe something. really, i can't. am i in the psychological minority here? am i the only one who cannot instruct my mind on what it must believe?

or is anyone going to put their hand up and say "yes, i can choose what to believe, i don't know why you can't but it's a shame you're going to be tortured for it"?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Jamie or NuneGa](#) on Sat, 15 Jan 2011 14:56:12 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

hell is brilliant... god is this all powerful being that for your sins will cast you down to eternal

damnation... but he loves you.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [ELiT3FLyR](#) on Sat, 15 Jan 2011 16:28:57 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

god is overpowered, nerf plx

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Hitman](#) on Sat, 15 Jan 2011 16:48:25 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

fuck god

thanks for reading!

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Hypnos](#) on Sat, 15 Jan 2011 17:43:21 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

You're not the only one who's mind operates in a logical way. It's against all logic to believe in something that has no material evidence.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spony](#) on Sat, 15 Jan 2011 18:18:01 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Never mind for a moment how much evidence there isn't. I'm asking if anyone else can, after making a choice, will themselves to believe something.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Hypnos](#) on Sat, 15 Jan 2011 18:36:26 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Well, there's bound to be some people that do, as time has proven in the past due to governmental circumstances or due to not wanting to let down the family etc.

I know that I personally couldn't will myself into believing something, I need hard evidence to set my mind at ease, not have someone tell me it's face value without proving how it is.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Starbuzz](#) on Sat, 15 Jan 2011 22:27:56 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Spoony, since you pretty much grew as atheist and you had the sheer luxury of having superb parents, maybe that's why you are asking this. So I will say what a former-indoctrinated person would know:

I remember back in 2000 when me and my sister went up in the church and "confess" and were known as "saved." We were baptized a week later and we were told, "now you are in God's magnifying glass."

For younger people at the time like myself, it's really a matter of just believing. Since religion preys fully on the emotions of vulnerable people, it is much easier to believe something with the flick of a switch.

1 important thing to note here: the act of a young Christian believing is NOT a sovereign action of one's mind. It is always based on the yearly cumulative surrounding religious influences on the mind of the individual. Sunday school, church attendance, creationist documentaries, even the very act of praying before a meal...the influencing factors are too numerous to name. It is like being given a multiple choice question but with only 1 choice. So the individual at some point in entering youth-age, simply has no choice or obligation but just does what he was moulded to do: circle the 1 choice on the question.

Now, that is for younger folks. For adults, it is an entirely different process:

In all my life, I had heard only 1 Christian (Kirk Cameron) openly and honestly saying how the whole tactic is used on adults, i.e, "try to make people make a decision emotionally rather than allowing them to use their intellect to question what they are actually doing...by using "conviction" rather than reason, people can be saved."

If this does not make you feel terrible, then I don't know what does. He said this in a YouTube video long time ago; perhaps in 2007; I was a Christian at the time but still felt sick by it.

No wonder such a tactic hopelessly fails with smart people who reason. It's the exact opposite for a religious person; he is steered away from the intellectual questioning process altogether and rather allows his emotions to climax to the orgasmic point of suddenly allowing himself to be convinced and believing that "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Personal Saviour" upon which he is told he is "saved." I have experienced it.

The ugly part is that with all emotions, the experience wears off within weeks/months and the warm-fuzzy feelings of the soft emotional sex in which the person accepted a comforting lie falls apart. The person is then back to square 1 surrounded by the same feelings of despair in not having the answers and the solutions. Actually, I say he never left square 1, the religion just creates an illusion of changing the carpet to make it look like square 10. It is a terrible falsehood to go thru...but at the time it doesn't seem as such and actually feels very comforting.

I lost count of how many times people who are so vulnerable in their lives do this over and over and "give their lives to Jesus" to "make the problems go away." I saw this over and over many

times in my life. People would come crying to church with so many problems, terminally-ill loved ones, suicide cases, pure desperate unemployment...it is the same deal. I don't blame them trying to find an answer through praying...it comforts them while giving nothing in return while managing to rip their money.

This is the same deal with every religion, you are born into it, you get the religious education, and you end up acting as if the religion you were born into is the true one.

An intellectual mind that strongly reasons is automatically hell-bound. I have people in my family whose automated responses to some of my sneaky tough questions are "you can't think like that" or "you can't ask that" and "you cannot question god." The best one is "those are god's secrets."

If a young child is brought up in a religious environment, he is not going to have any trouble believing. For an adult, the Cameron-tactic's (which is every preacher/evangelists tactic btw) success rate depends on the mental abilities of the adult along with any problems/issues he is going thru at the time. Evangelism has always been about the exploitation of those who are weak.

So no, the whole, "choose to believe" concept is nothing but a verbal safehouse for theists.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Herr Surth](#) on Sat, 15 Jan 2011 23:25:21 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

i love my parents

people should have parents like me and spoony have <3

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoon](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 06:04:11 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

^^ true dat

my brother's agnostic and my sister, though she's an atheist, teaches RE.

Starbuzz wrote on Sat, 15 January 2011 16:27I remember back in 2000 when me and my sister went up in the church and "confess" and were known as "saved." We were baptized a week later and we were told, "now you are in God's magnifying glass."

see, they probably thought that's a comforting thing to say. big brother is watching you. i can't help but shudder. it's like when people use the word "salvation" to mean "obey him and he won't torture you"

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Starbuzz](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 06:24:18 GMT

Spoony wrote on Sun, 16 January 2011 00:04Starbuzzz wrote on Sat, 15 January 2011 16:27I remember back in 2000 when me and my sister went up in the church and "confess" and were known as "saved." We were baptized a week later and we were told, "now you are in God's magnifying glass."

see, they probably thought that's a comforting thing to say. big brother is watching you. i can't help but shudder. it's like when people use the word "salvation" to mean "obey him and he won't torture you"

of course...almost every religious marketing phrase has a sinister real meaning. It makes me not just shudder but also sick at how immoral, heartless, and unquestioning zombies it has made its followers.

When my grandfather died back in August, my dad in his anguish took a picture of my grandfather to church to pray over it to find solace. This was the non-denominational church we have been going to for the past 1 year. The first thing the pastor asked my dad was "was he a believer?"

I felt truly sick and gutted and took it as an insult to the memory of my grandfather. Basically the pastor asked for his own curiosity, "is he in heaven or trashing about in hell fire?"

My disgust with such a hateful threat-based religion has no boundaries. No matter what sugar-coated words are used, it always boils down to hell: the immoral disgusting threat of punishment that has kept Christians in line for this many centuries.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Hypnos](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 08:15:17 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

If the preachers put their energy into something useful, like teaching people basic science, then we wouldn't have this problem.

I feel for those who come from this type of background you described, Starbuzzz, I'm lucky that I come from the third generation, so to speak, in my family because the roots of my family on my father's side are strong Irish Catholics, and due to my grandmother marrying a protestant, we have somewhat been singled out from the family, and I attended a non-denominational school and therefore only had the odd hymn here and there once a week, and it wasn't really rammed down my throat.

My mother was a strong catholic through her childhood due to her parents but by the age of eighteen, with her father dying and then the church refusing to "help" due to the fact she had sinned, kind of put her off and she took a step in the right direction, in my opinion at least.

At the end of the day, religion is sheer hypocrisy, sugar-coated to look pretty and is layed upon the weak or narrow minded to continue their regime.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 14:31:28 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Quote:and due to my grandmother marrying a protestant, we have somewhat been singled out from the family

Quote:My mother was a strong catholic through her childhood due to her parents but by the age of eighteen, with her father dying and then the church refusing to "help" due to the fact she had sinned
there you have it.

y'know when that villainous old slug the Pope was here, he basically said atheists are nazis? well, back in the 30s and 40s the only nazi the catholic church ever excommunicated was goebbels... for marrying a protestant. stomp all over europe, put millions in gas chambers... no problem. marry someone from a SLIGHTLY different religion and it's an outrage

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Hitman](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 14:47:54 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

the pope we got now could of come straight out of a horror movie or something ;/

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Hypnos](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 14:50:10 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Hitman wrote on Sun, 16 January 2011 14:47the pope we got now could of come straight out of a horror movie or something ;/

He has. He was enlisted in Hitler Youth, but maybe, just maybe he didn't believe the propaganda and his parents forced him into it.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 14:51:04 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Hypnos](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 14:55:46 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

That was his acting career before he turned to Catholicism.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 15:09:41 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

different coloured cloak; same thirst for power, lack of conscience and indifference to human suffering

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Herr Surth](#) on Sun, 16 Jan 2011 15:52:43 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

RANDOMNESS ENSUES

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [reborn](#) on Tue, 18 Jan 2011 10:35:46 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Spoony wrote on Sat, 15 January 2011 13:18

I'm asking if anyone else can, after making a choice, will themself to believe something.

Absolutely not, and most faiths require that true belief. Faking it simply wont cut it.

Perhaps you can kid yourself for a while maybe, but I would imagine that to be able to truely claim you can will yourself to believe something, you would have to be mentally disturbed.

I think that people can believe there is a chance of it being real, and that's all that has been needed for religion to exist.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [GEORGE ZIMMER](#) on Sun, 30 Jan 2011 13:45:15 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Herr Surth wrote on Sun, 16 January 2011 08:52RANDOMNESS ENSUES

I officially like you

SMBC is the greatest comic ever

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [argathol3](#) on Tue, 01 Feb 2011 02:02:35 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I guess someone along the line figured that the best way to maintain a healthy and cohesive civilization is to create a religion with a zero tolerance policy (which in all honesty, is just a set of rules backed up by another set of rules but these are created and held up by the current government)

I guess God is a good crutch to lean on when your creating an empire. I mean sure there's been a lot of bloodshed but the creation of religion has worked magnificently do you not agree?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [bmr_71](#) on Tue, 01 Feb 2011 05:39:32 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

why are you people so fucking butthurt over what other people do

let other people be idiots and profit off them. you aren't going to change anyone's mind anyway, mostly because you are a faggot

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Rocko](#) on Sun, 13 Feb 2011 05:54:43 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

bmr_71 wrote on Mon, 31 January 2011 22:39why are you people so fucking butthurt over what other people do

let other people be idiots and profit off them. you aren't going to change anyone's mind anyway, mostly because you are a faggot
rage about rage

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [HaTe](#) on Sun, 13 Feb 2011 16:58:38 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Fear, hope, and tradition control the belief of god.

Fear that your afterlife will not be that of your liking if you do not believe.

Hope that god will somehow save you from misery and depression.

Tradition that says because our parents believe in it, we should too.

Quite honestly I don't give into any of these three. I'm with Hypnos as Spooky.....I need hard evidence, and let's be honest here....there is none supporting that god exists.

I also find myself agreeing with arghathol. It's much like the movie "The Book of Eli". The bible comforts many people, and gives them standards to live by in a mostly confused society. I believe in the belief of god. That is, that people truly believe there is a god, and I personally see that as a good thing. Some people do indeed need this belief in their lives. I'm not one of them, however.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [shippo](#) on Fri, 25 Feb 2011 01:14:21 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

@ spooky

I am a Christian and I would like to try to clarify something that I think many Christians and non-Christians misunderstand. Hell is a place of torment because of the separation from God. In the Bible it doesn't say that in Hell there is fire or that Satan walks around ruling the place, it was originally designed as a place for the angels that rebelled along with Satan to be sent to, NOT for us. However, we sinned and basically doomed our selves there. Now this is the part I was trying to get at, most pp think that "God sends pp to Hell because they don't believe in him" right? Well the point the Bible tries to get across is, that we are already going there and because God is loving, he wants to prevent us from going there.

Now as far as your questions, I'm sensing that you may have ran across a lot of "street corner preachers" or "turn or burn preachers" (these are Christians who while trying to share the message, are going about it the wrong way). I do apologize if you or anyone else who is reading this, has ever run across this. Our goal I think is best stated in my paragraph above.

As far as your question on believe or not to believe, and how it is a moral dilemma, I will simply state that everyone has been given free will. You can chose to believe anything you want, our job as Christians is just to share with you what God has given to us in the Bible.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spooky](#) on Fri, 25 Feb 2011 02:07:08 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

shippo wrote on Thu, 24 February 2011 18:14Hell is a place of torment because of the separation

from God.

i don't see why that would be any kind of punishment for an atheist.

Quote:In the Bible it doesn't say that in Hell there is fire
it's true that the description of hell in the bible is rather vague, which may explain why you think many christians are wrong about it (as i'm sure they think you are if you say there's no fire). do you think Revelation is canonical?

Quote:or that Satan walks around ruling the place, it was originally designed as a place for the angels that rebelled along with Satan to be sent to, NOT for us. However, we sinned and basically doomed our selves there.
who's we?

your point seems irrelevant; you're still saying it was decided by this god of yours that we'll be sent there as a punishment, although i'm not sure what crime you're talking about. it would have to be an enormously grievous crime, wouldn't it?

Quote:Now this is the part I was trying to get at, most pp think that "God sends pp to Hell because they don't believe in him" right? Well the point the Bible tries to get across is, that we are already going there and because God is loving, he wants to prevent us from going there.
so why doesn't he just stop sending people there? how about this arrangement: when atheists die, that's it? cos i'd prefer that. i don't want an afterlife, certainly not one that has anything to do with the god of the bible.

Quote:As far as your question on believe or not to believe, and how it is a moral dilemma, I will simply state that everyone has been given free will. You can chose to believe anything you want, our job as Christians is just to share with you what God has given to us in the Bible.
did you actually read the original question in my first post? the bit where i say that belief is not a choice at all? if it is a choice in your case, then your mind works differently from mine, and apparently other peoples' too (because of the many people i've asked the question "can you choose to believe something?" the overwhelming majority said no)

finally, "given free will"? if you're given it by the whim of a dictator, it's not free. and if there's a punishment for choosing the wrong thing, then that's not free either.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [shippo](#) on Fri, 25 Feb 2011 05:14:18 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I'm sorry I think I may have mis-interpreted your question lol

Allright before we go on let me make sure I'm on the same page of music so to speak.

To simplify your question, basicly you are asking:

How can we realy have free choice if we are only given two options? Obey God or Disobey God and be punished?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Fri, 25 Feb 2011 05:23:52 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

shippo wrote on Thu, 24 February 2011 22:14 I'm sorry I think I may have mis-interpreted your question lol

Allright before we go on let me make sure I'm on the same page of music so to speak.

To simplify your question, basicly you are asking:

How can we realy have free choice if we are only given two options? Obey God or Disobey God and be punished?

have you read the original post of the thread?

the question is can a person choose to believe something? it doesn't seem to me that i can. i could, if i wanted to, decide to go to church, pretend like i was enjoying myself and taking it all in, pretend to pray. but i can't decide to believe any of it. i can't decide "i will believe X and Y from now on". actions are choices; beliefs aren't.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [shippo](#) on Fri, 25 Feb 2011 12:54:28 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

um... of corse you can chose to believe in something.

example: There is a salesman telling me all the great things about this car. I can chose whether to believe this salesman or not.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Hypnos](#) on Fri, 25 Feb 2011 14:52:24 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

That's just manipulation...

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Fri, 25 Feb 2011 16:06:48 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

shippo wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 05:54 um... of corse you can chose to believe in something.

example: There is a salesman telling me all the great things about this car. I can chose whether to believe this salesman or not.

Well, then, I finally find someone who answers yes to the question. Your mind seems to work very differently from the overwhelming majority.

Given that the rest of us can't, does this make you reconsider the fact we'll be punished for not being the right religion? If you don't object to the fact that this negates the whole concept of freedom of religion, and if you don't object to the fact it's torture, do you at least object to the fact that we're being threatened unless we do something we can't do?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [HaTe](#) on Fri, 25 Feb 2011 21:58:23 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

The question you proposed has nothing to do with religion, Spooky. Yet you keep bringing it up. You can chose to believe in something, yes. Will you actually follow through in your belief is the real question...

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spooky](#) on Fri, 25 Feb 2011 23:46:28 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

HaTe wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 14:58The question you proposed has nothing to do with religion, Spooky. Yet you keep bringing it up.

It has everything to do with religion, or at least those religions which threaten us with appalling punishments if we think the wrong thing/don't think the right thing.

Quote:You can chose to believe in something, yes.

Rephrase that, please. You mean "I can choose to believe something"

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [snpr1101](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2011 00:33:55 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

The car salesman analogy to me, is not a good one. Why? Well for starters there is clearly a big difference in consequences between the two scenarios. The consequences of buying a car that has none of the attributes the salesman described and won't start are completely insignificant and minuscule in comparison to spending an eternity in hell because you refused to believe in a Religion or a God.

I realize this was just an example given in an attempt to prove that you could "choose" to believe in someone or something. However, in light of the consequences of whatever you may or may not choose to believe in, the "choice" may become a bit harder.

I think there is a difference between accepting what the car salesman says and truly 100% with all your heart believing in him. Which is silly to expect; who has such strong thoughts for what a car

salesman says? Not to mention other holes like the car salesman actually being tangible at present; and knowing that you will be able to inspect the car at some point. That's why I don't like the example.

Back to the original question however - "Can somebody choose to believe".

In my opinion, we are probably capable of believing in something like a God with about 99% assurance. Why? Because with zero evidence of a supreme being existing somewhere for whatever reason in the past, during or after our lives; our logical selves (However lacking that may be in some) will always question and seek logical answers. Logical answers. Tangible proof. Not spiritual energy floating around in the cosmos. Not the warm fuzzy feeling in your chest. Not images of the great one cupping the world in his hands; something on the same plane of existence as us that we can either see, touch, feel, hear or even smell.

Speaking from experience, I 99% believed in a god when I was younger. Went to Sunday school. Went to a Christian school. When you're surrounded and intoxicated with religion 24/7; it becomes not to accept it. When an adult with authority in the eyes of a child tells an impressionable child that God exists, and all those who do not accept him into your hearts will suffer in eternity in hell; you really do not have a choice. Yet that 1% is the constant niggling doubt in your mind. Asking questions; seeking answers that eventually nobody can answer. And I think that has helped me to "see the light" as such.

So can somebody choose to believe? They probably could with the right environment. I realize it may sound like you can be forced into believing; which probably isn't a bad description. But at the end of the day, you make the decision with the stimuli you have.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [shippo](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2011 00:35:15 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 09:06 Given that the rest of us can't

? what do you mean when you say "the rest of us can't"?

The rest of you can't chose to believe in someting?

Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 09:06 Given that the rest of us can't, does this make you reconsider the fact we'll be punished for not being the right religion?

Nope

Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 09:06

If you don't object to the fact that this negates the whole concept of freedom of religion, and if you don't object to the fact it's torture, do you at least object to the fact that we're being threatened unless we do something we can't do?

who is doing the threatening? do you mean God?

@snpr1101

snpr1101 wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 17:33 So can somebody choose to believe? They probably could with the right environment. I realize it may sound like you can be forced into believing; which probably isn't a bad description. But at the end of the day, you make the decision with the stimuli you have.

sounds reasonable, but what about this:

I am a Corpsman in the US Navy, I am a christian, and yet I am surrounded by 90% non christians. how does that work?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [snpr1101](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2011 00:50:19 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

shippo wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 17:35

I am a Corpsman in the US Navy, I am a christian, and yet I am surrounded by 90% non christians. how does that work?

I presume that by being in the US. Navy that you're not a child? I also presume that you didn't just find out about religion yesterday? The point I was making was that being surrounded by such people and beliefs at an impressionable age has a huge effect on what you believe.

If you don't know (This I also assume, but if you have proof, please for the sake of humanity share it with us) that God exists, than how can you believe that he does?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2011 01:58:42 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

shippo wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 17:35? what do you mean when you say "the rest of us can't"?

The rest of you can't chose to believe in someting?

I don't want to sound rude, but it seems like you just aren't reading what the other people in the conversation are saying.

Yes, my original question was whether people can decide to believe something (doesn't matter what it is for the purposes of the question; it's just a question of how the human mind works)

if you say yes then your mind works differently to mine, simple as that. i cannot make a decision to believe something. i could choose go to church and bow my head in prayer and sing the hymns etc... but what i can't choose to do is instruct my mind what to believe. i can control my actions, but not my beliefs.

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 09:06 Given that the rest of us can't, does this make you reconsider the fact we'll be punished for not being the right religion?

Nope

well, there you go. the prospect of people being tortured forever as punishment for not being the right religion doesn't bother you at all? either you don't really believe it either or you don't have any human compassion (i think i know which one it is)

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 09:06

If you don't object to the fact that this negates the whole concept of freedom of religion, and if you don't object to the fact it's torture, do you at least object to the fact that we're being threatened unless we do something we can't do?

who is doing the threatening? do you mean God?

Christians/Christianity. The religion and its adherents say it. I am inclined to think it is not actually true, but this doesn't make it OK to make the threat anymore than it's acceptable to mug someone with a fake gun.

Quote:snpr1101 wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 17:33So can somebody choose to believe? They probably could with the right environment. I realize it may sound like you can be forced into believing; which probably isn't a bad description. But at the end of the day, you make the decision with the stimuli you have.

sounds reasonable, but what about this:

I am a Corpsman in the US Navy, I am a christian, and yet I am surrounded by 90% non christians. how does that work?

Did you have a "religious upbringing", i.e. what was the attitude of your parents and your school (two different questions, obviously) in regard to religion?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [shippo](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2011 15:57:33 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 18:58

if you say yes then your mind works differently to mine, simple as that. i cannot make a decision to believe something. i could choose go to church and bow my head in prayer and sing the hymns etc... but what i can't choose to do is instruct my mind what to believe. i can control my actions, but not my beliefs.

I do apologize if I am just not reading it right. I guess to put my view of it simply, I can choose to instruct my body to do things, but I can also chose what I will believe in, and what I will not to believe in.

Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 18:58

well, there you go. the prospect of people being tortured forever as punishment for not being the right religion doesn't bother you at all? either you don't really believe it either or you don't have any human compassion (i think i know which one it is)

actually it is because we as christians view it differently than most non-Christians. Like I said earlier, we nor God are here to punish,or send you anywere, all we want to do is say "this is the way".

Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 18:58

Christians/Christianity. The religion and its adherents say it. I am inclined to think it is not actually true, but this doesn't make it OK to make the threat anymore than it's acceptable to mug someone with a fake gun.

Let me throw this at you: says who? if you don't believe in any religion or god, what is the basis of your moral values?

snpr1101 wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 17:33you have a "religious upbringing", i.e. what was the attitude of your parents and your school (two different questions, obviously) in regard to religion?

Yes I did. I was rased in a christian home. As far as school, I went to a public school untill second grade. my sister was being homeschoold by my mom because she was geting into trouble in highscool I saw what they did and I wanted to give that a try. and I liked it. now if you ask what did you do for friends, we had alot of other homeschoold families that i would visit and I also had alot of friends at church.

so ya I guess it does have alot to do with how you were raised, but i also believe it is based on the child's personality as well.

also you stated about if i had proof of God's existance to share, well I do but it will take us down the path of Evolution vs Creation, so don't know if we should make another topic for that.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Altzan](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2011 19:14:27 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

And to think I just watched a kid's show that said you don't have to understand something to believe in it.

And it specifically stated that "you just have to choose to believe."

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Sat, 26 Feb 2011 20:39:09 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

shippo wrote on Sat, 26 February 2011 08:57Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 18:58
if you say yes then your mind works differently to mine, simple as that. i cannot make a decision to believe something. i could choose go to church and bow my head in prayer and sing the hymns etc... but what i can't choose to do is instruct my mind what to believe. i can control my actions, but not my beliefs.

I do apologize if I am just not reading it right. I guess to put my view of it simply, I can choose to instruct my body to do things, but I can also chose what I will believe in, and what I will not to believe in.

so, like i said, your mind works differently to mine.

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 18:58

well, there you go. the prospect of people being tortured forever as punishment for not being the right religion doesn't bother you at all? either you don't really believe it either or you don't have any human compassion (i think i know which one it is)

actually it is because we as christians view it differently than most non-Christians. Like I said earlier, we nor God are here to punish,or send you anywere, all we want to do is say "this is the way".

...and threaten everlasting torture if we don't believe it or don't like it?

Quote:Spoony wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 18:58

Christians/Christianity. The religion and its adherents say it. I am inclined to think it is not actually true, but this doesn't make it OK to make the threat anymore than it's acceptable to mug someone with a fake gun.

Let me throw this at you: says who? if you don't believe in any religion or god, what is the basis of your moral values?

that's a waste of a question. you might as well ask: if you don't eat at mcdonalds, where on earth do you get your food from? it hasn't yet been established that food can only come from mcdonalds.

Quote:snpr1101 wrote on Fri, 25 February 2011 17:33you have a "religious upbringing", i.e. what was the attitude of your parents and your school (two different questions, obviously) in regard to

religion?

Yes I did. I was raised in a christian home.

thought so. that's why it doesn't matter that you say your adult colleagues in the Navy are mostly atheists; religion's main target audience is children, as well as old/sick/dying people.

Quote:also you stated about if i had proof of God's existance to share, well I do but it will take us down the path of Evolution vs Creation, so don't know if we should make another topic for that. if you think you can prove the existence of a god, i encourage you to have a crack at it. by all means start another thread. but then you'll also have the task of proving the truth of one particular religion, surely? i.e. proving not just that this god of yours exists, but that you know quite a few details about that god. christianity isn't just believing in a god, is it? you have to believe a lot of stuff about what that god wants, you have to believe a lot of stuff about jesus, etc.

and if you can do THAT, we'll still have the moral question. if this god of yours really is real, and the bible is an accurate depiction, that wouldn't be enough for me to become a christian.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Starbuzz](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 01:53:33 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

shippo wrote on Sat, 26 February 2011 08:57Yes I did. I was raised in a christian home. As far as school, I went to a public school untill second grade. my sister was being homeschoold by my mom because she was geting into trouble in highscool I saw what they did and I wanted to give that a try. and I liked it. now if you ask what did you do for friends, we had alot of other homeschoold families that i would visit and I also had alot of friends at church.

so ya I guess it does have alot to do with how you were raised, but i also believe it is based on the child's personality as well.

shippo, can you please clarify what you mean by the part I highlighted in orange? What exactly do you mean by a "child's personality" playing a role in the process? just curious

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [shippo](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 04:07:00 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I say that because I have 2 sisters and both were brought up with just about the same upbringing, however one of them wants nothing to do with God or Christianity. I also have worked with kids before and when it comes to teaching them or telling them to do something it seems to me to be alot based on their personality.

There was also there was a debate amongst some phycologists (forgot their names at the moment) but they were debating whether or not for a person who shows leadership ability, did it come from their up bringing or was it they were born with this ability.

Anyway in my opinion for kids, 80% would be stimuli and the other 20% would be there own personality.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"
Posted by [HaTe](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 07:15:57 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I choose to believe that I will not die of cancer.

I choose to believe that one day I will find true love.

I choose to believe that there is not poison in my food everyday.

Am I certain of any of that? No. Do I still believe them to be true? Yes.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"
Posted by [Spoony](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 09:09:08 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

you really consider those to be choices?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"
Posted by [snpr1101](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 10:02:04 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

HaTe wrote on Sun, 27 February 2011 00:15| choose to believe that I will not die of cancer.

I choose to believe that one day I will find true love.

I choose to believe that there is not poison in my food everyday.

Am I certain of any of that? No. Do I still believe them to be true? Yes.

You don't really believe that though. You're just writing words. Just because you can say or write that you believe in something doesn't mean you automatically believe it. It's easy to play the devils advocate and say "I believe the moon is fucking purple" and then go "See, told ya I can believe in whatever i want lololololol" Because if you know otherwise, or don't completely know, you won't ever truly accept something to be factual or real unless you're given evidence to accept something with complete certainty. That is my understanding of how we think. What is not known surely cannot be believed? It does not make any logical sense.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [HaTe](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 18:55:59 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

So I shouldn't believe that there isn't poison in my food? I do believe that there isn't....and yes, Spooky. Everything is a choice, and everything has alternative choices. I can choose to either believe my food is poisoned, or not to. I choose to not to. It's both a belief and a choice.

Quote:What is not known surely cannot be believed?

That makes no sense whatsoever. Beliefs aren't based solely on facts, but opinions as well. God is the best example....I may not KNOW he is real, but I can still very much so believe he is.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [R315r4z0r](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 20:46:20 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

If you can take the word "believe" from a sentence and replace it with the word "hope" and the sentence still means the same thing, then you aren't using the word "believe" in the same context as "believing" in a faith.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [snpr1101](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 22:05:17 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

HaTe wrote on Sun, 27 February 2011 11:55So I shouldn't believe that there isn't poison in my food? I do believe that there isn't....and yes, Spooky. Everything is a choice, and everything has alternative choices. I can choose to either believe my food is poisoned, or not to. I choose to not to. It's both a belief and a choice.

Quote:What is not known surely cannot be believed?

That makes no sense whatsoever. Beliefs aren't based solely on facts, but opinions as well. God is the best example....I may not KNOW he is real, but I can still very much so believe he is.

This confuses me. I've always thought that actually knowing that whatever you're believing in is actually real or factual was a pre-requisite to "believing". Maybe it isn't. Maybe people are deceived as such. Maybe people don't require to know before believing; which I find hard to understand. Where is the line drawn between accepting what someone says, and actually believing them?

I dunno, this is getting too muddled for me. I can't understand the logic behind it. If I tell you x existed, but I had no evidence whatsoever to support it, then what information do you have to warrant belief other than this might end up being beneficial to you? (I.e, Heaven yayy!) I can't think in such a way.

So by the looks of it, the answer to the OP is looking towards, yes, you probably could choose to believe; no matter how misinformed you may be.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [HaTe](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 22:10:35 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Exactly snpr. You can believe something, and be completely wrong. That's the beauty of beliefs, and why so many people have died in the past fighting for them.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [snpr1101](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 22:20:14 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

HaTe wrote on Sun, 27 February 2011 15:10 Exactly snpr. You can believe something, and be completely wrong. That's the beauty of beliefs, and why so many people have died in the past fighting for them.

Indeed. But in terms of people fighting wars over religion. They may say they believe in their God, but how sure are they? And does this certainty or lack there of diminish their belief? My guess would be that a lot of people would be that delusional that there'd be no question to them that their God exists; thus fighting wars and dying in their names. Even to lesser extends; like an every day Christian. How sure are they truly?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [HaTe](#) on Sun, 27 Feb 2011 22:54:20 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

If you're willing to die for it, I'd say they'd have to be positive....but quite honestly, I'm not really sure.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [ChewML](#) on Tue, 01 Mar 2011 20:00:26 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Spoony, you and I have discussed/debated religion quite a few times before. I respect your thoughts regarding religion and all it's subtopics. You are a very logical person.

Most of the other people in this thread just don't want to submit to anything. Not that they should without being convinced, but they lack the intellect you use in your post.

"God is overpowered, nerf plox"

"fuck god, thanks for reading"

"something about burning in hell, but god loves you"

Those are not the kinda post that are worth anything in such a topic. The third one is the most relevant, but I don't put in any stock in hell myself (I think I might be the one that you mentioned didn't believe in hell).

Now that is out of the way, my response to the question raised in the OP.

I myself was of course raised in a kinda religious family. My grandparents were very into religion, and my mom pretends to be. From the age of 11 to 17 I didn't attend church meetings regularly, I think the passover (annual) is the only thing we never missed.

When I was 17 I worked in a resturant where I discovered I worked with 2 people that shared my beliefs and practiced them. So I started going again. I on my own initiative started studying The Bible and religion in general.

Jehovah's Witnesses use the phrase, "making the truth your own".

I will not deny the fact that I was raised around these beliefs probably influenced me in some amount. I won't say that is the only reason why I chose or willed myself to believe. I was pretty into it for a while, but I couldn't manage to get my stuff together to go all the way with it. Nobody likes a hypocrite.

I have not been religiously active in the last year. It seemed as if I had lost my will to do it (even missed the passover). I still believe, there is too much for me to completely deny there is a higher power (intelligent design), but it seems as if there is also too much for my mind to comprehend.

Religion is kinda scary, with the end of the world coming and trying to imagine how it will play out is a lot to think about. So I find myself kinda in the middle now, and I am not sure how much of it is willingly...

I figured I would respond with that to see what thoughts you might have on how it is psychological. I do not wish to argue with anyone just simply hear opinions that are well put together (not insults to my intelligence).

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Tue, 01 Mar 2011 20:10:24 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

I agree there were some rather useless posts on the first page.

Chew wrote on Tue, 01 March 2011 13:00but I don't put in any stock in hell myself (I think I might be the one that you mentioned didn't believe in hell).

Yes, I remember you saying you thought it was a misinterpretation. Gehenna and all that

business. But do you think Revelation is canonical (I ask because I've heard Christians who think it shouldn't be there, and it's worth checking) - and if you do, what do you think it's actually describing? Past events, a prediction, or what? Cos once you hear that line about the Lake of Fire it's a little hard to forget.

Quote:I have not been religiously active in the last year. It seemed as if I had lost my will to do it. I still believe, there is too much for me to completely deny there is a higher power (intelligent design), but it seems as if there is also too much for my mind to comprehend.

Well, the good thing about atheism/agnosticism/secularism is nobody's telling you you have to believe X and Y. it isn't necessary to assert the non-existence of any particular god, or to believe that evolution is true (for example). it's just a non-acceptance of the specific claims made by religions.

Quote:Religion is kinda scary, with the end of the world coming and trying to imagine how it will play out is a lot to think about. So I find myself kinda in the middle now, and I am not sure how much of it is willingly...

I figured I would respond with that to see what thoughts you might have on how it is psychological. I do not wish to argue with anyone just simply hear opinions that are well put together (not insults to my intelligence).

about my original question about whether belief is a choice... this

"I won't say that is the only reason why I chose or willed myself to believe."

sorta says yes, doesn't it?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [ChewML](#) on Tue, 01 Mar 2011 20:38:10 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Revelation how I understand it, is a very symbolic read.

Few big examples that I can remember well enough off the top of my head are:

The 7 headed beast = the governments (7 world powers)

Babylon the Great / The Harlot = The collective group of False religion including most of what is considered Christianity

The 4 horsemen = famine, death, sickness, Jesus (IIRC)

The Dragon = Satan (lols)

With those 4 in mind I can kinda summarize.

Revelation starts off Micheal the Arch Angel stands up throws Satan out of heaven to the earth. Woa to the Earth and to the seas for The Devil has come down to you with great anger knowing he has a short period of time.

According to some other scriptures and prophecies that was in October 1914 (I am sure I have made a big post somewhere about that).

4 horsemen start riding, we see more death, famine and sickness (which is accurate about the last century according to historians).

Eventually the beast turns on The Harlot and pretty much eats her, because God puts it in them to do so. So the governments will turn on all of religion, some quotes could be pulled from the news that might hint at that. Plus with all the holy wars, talk about same sex marriages, or whatever else it's not too far fetched to see that coming.

There is not going to literally be a 7 headed 10 horned beast, it is symbolism to something we have already seen.

It is still somewhat scary in my mind to think that the world as we know it could be in for a ride... if The Bible is right and my understanding is correct of course.

If I were assuming that is is, I would say Revelation definitely should be there, and it was a prediction prophecy that we are living in now, so there is more to come, luckily it does have a rather nice ending.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Wed, 02 Mar 2011 04:17:43 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Chew wrote on Tue, 01 March 2011 13:38The 7 headed beast = the governments (7 world powers)

i remember you saying bear = russia, lion = britain etc. the funny part was you said dragon = china. i'll come back to that in just a second...

Quote:The Dragon = Satan (lols)

mmhmm. and isn't Revelation when it was decided that the "serpent" in Eden was Satan? cos there's nothing in Genesis about Satan. Nothing. So thousands of years later someone on an island in the Med decides that the snake was actually Satan?

The serpent is Satan because it suits you, and the dragon is Satan because it suits you, except when it's China...

Quote:Revelation starts off Micheal the Arch Angel stands up throws Satan out of heaven to the earth. Woa to the Earth and to the seas for The Devil has come down to you with great anger knowing he has a short period of time.

According to some other scriptures and prophecies that was in October 1914 (I am sure I have made a big post somewhere about that).

yes, i remember it well. i remember my reply, too. you basically turned the rules of mathematics into balloon animals. anyone could have come up with all sorts of different dates by approaching it the way you did.

but the question of Revelation's timeline is very interesting to me, and i'll come back to that too.

Quote:4 horsemen start riding, we see more death, famine and sickness (which is accurate about the last century according to historians).
...and every century?

Quote:Eventually the beast turns on The Harlot and pretty much eats her, because God puts it in them to do so. So the governments will turn on all of religion, some quotes could be pulled from the news that might hint at that.
sure, and some quotes can be pulled from the news which say it's the opposite.

Quote:If I were assuming that is is, I would say Revelation definetly should be there, and it was a prediction prophecy that we are living in now, so there is more to come, luckily it does have a rather nice ending.
firstly, the bit about the Lake of Fire isn't nice.

secondly, back to the question about the timeline, i.e. is it a prediction or a description of past events? (they aren't the only two options of course, it could also be the ravings of a lunatic or just some rather bad fiction, either of which seems a lot more likely)
y'know i started a thread asking people which version of the bible they use, and recommend? well, my KJV is probably a lot older than anyone else's here; it's been in my family for generations and it's very old and battered. i honestly don't know how old it is. it contains something you don't seem to see in bibles anymore; dates in the margin of every page. it says when all the events took place. e.g. it puts Genesis at 4004 BC (lol), the Ten Commandments at 1491 BC, the death of Jesus at 33 AD (his birth at 5 BC, which raises some questions...)
but to the question about Revelation; it dates the events to 96 AD. (that's a few years after the book was written, making it a prediction of the near future at the time). well, maybe bibles don't say that anymore, but they used to. why was that the common belief, do you think? why did the printers of the King James Bible decide that this should be included in the bible? equally valid question, why did they decide that it should no longer?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [JohnDoe](#) on Wed, 02 Mar 2011 11:08:18 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Spoony seems very reasonable and logical when arguing with Jehovah's Witnesses or Baptist mindrape victims. There are enough Christians that don't believe in heaven and especially hell as literal places, or believe that the Ougabongo tribe is going to hell because missionaries never visited their part of the rain forrest.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [snpr1101](#) on Wed, 02 Mar 2011 11:27:14 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

JohnDoe wrote on Wed, 02 March 2011 04:08Spoony seems very reasonable and logical when arguing with Jehovah's Witnesses or Baptist mindrape victims. There are enough Christians that don't believe in heaven and especially hell as literal places, or believe that the Ougabongo tribe is going to hell because missionaries never visited their part of the rain forrest.

With the amount of inconsistency in beliefs. With the amount of picking and choosing that seems to go on if you call yourself a Christian / insert religion here. "Oh I believe this and this, however this part of the Bible / teachings is bullshit. "Oh I don't take this literally"

It fucking pisses me off to no end. If there is a God and I am called before such a being one day to answer for my sins and why I did not follow the righteous one; I will promptly point out the amount of fucking inconsistency and bullshit that existed between people in my lifetime and argue that there was no clear path to follow.

Futile to even think up scenarios like this If I ever did find myself in this situation, I know. An all knowing being surely knows what I am going to say and have some amazingly enlightening answer for me on my way to a literal, figurative, metaphorical (Insert your bullshit definition for hell here).

The amount of denominations that stem from one religion or religious figure, let alone the entirety of religions - forms one big fucking cesspit of lies, deception, conflicting stories, conflicting beliefs etc. If you choose to align yourself with such people, then I no longer question the reasoning behind your beliefs. I bid you good luck and hope your God turns out to be real after all; because you have some serious competition.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Spoony](#) on Wed, 02 Mar 2011 12:54:55 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

JohnDoe wrote on Wed, 02 March 2011 04:08Spoony seems very reasonable and logical when arguing with Jehovah's Witnesses or Baptist mindrape victims. There are enough Christians that don't believe in heaven and especially hell as literal places, or believe that the Ougabongo tribe is going to hell because missionaries never visited their part of the rain forrest.

I'm quite happy to have the same conversation with those Christians... my first question would probably be why don't they believe those things are literally true?

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Starbuzz](#) on Wed, 02 Mar 2011 16:00:02 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

Like as if the other chasms of Christianity are any different! It's the same ice cream but different toppings each vying for canonical dominance depending on social trends.

I guess we should just look at the latest modernized "cleaned-up" belief strain of the religion as the ultimate final say.

Where will the Amazon tribesmen go in their afterlife? The Christian stance on that is throughly divided. Some will say they don't know. Some will say they are going to hell and yet, some will claim the gospel has to be brought to them (meaning they have to be saved from hell).

According to a suggestion above, we should listen to the latest modernized believers who outright believe things that aren't biblical or simply cop out of the question grandly by saying "I don't believe so." This begs the follow-up question asked by Spoony, "why not?"

Such modernist revisions of the religion conflict with those majority groups who held onto their dogmas on biblical authority for thousands of years alone while rejecting outside social influences; the very same secular influences which made us revisit the subject of hell from the prespective of a more mature moral dimension.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [JohnDoe](#) on Wed, 02 Mar 2011 16:47:27 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

it only makes sense for a holy book to be written in a language the people could wrap their minds around...such language becomes more and more obsolete as humans become more aware about life

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Starbuzz](#) on Mon, 07 Mar 2011 04:30:29 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

JohnDoe wrote on Wed, 02 March 2011 09:47it only makes sense for a holy book to be written in a language the people could wrap their minds around...such language becomes more and more obsolete as humans become more aware about life

Literally, we have quiet accurate translations from the original texts (or so we think). But if you mean it figuratively, I don't know if what we are seeing has to do with "language." I don't see language being changed but the very content, concepts, ideals, and purported facts that were once held to be the truth.

Good example is where will people of different religions go in the afterlife. Christians around the world have always been told that it was hell. Now in the era of telephones, video conferencing, jet planes, and most importantly: interfaith dialogue groups(!), the very biblical and Christian idea of non-Christians going to hell had quickly become out of style.

Eitherway, in hindsight, this is a very good thing. It's quiet amusing to see the latest youngsters coming fresh off the line with significantly different concepts reflecting social trends. While it is quiet disappointing to see the newer breeds and strains claiming canon-status (lol), Christianity's trend towards a more deistic, easy-style spirituality ruled by convenience is positively encouraging.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [JohnDoe](#) on Mon, 07 Mar 2011 13:01:58 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

People would be more inclined to give your posts a fair shot if you dropped the anime villain writing style. I'm not Christian, so you're neither coming off as clever, nor particularly eloquent.

It doesn't matter whether hell describes a fiery place with torture chambers you're sent to for bad actions or the state of everlasting misery you've put your soul in through said bad actions. Neither is desirable and you should draw the same consequences.

Subject: Re: A psychological question: "choose to believe"

Posted by [Starbuzz](#) on Mon, 07 Mar 2011 14:42:49 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

That wasn't my intention and I understand you aren't Christian; just writing down a curious note on the religion's tendencies to change itself. I feel that for any Christian to deny/disbelieve in hell (per your earlier post) is too much of a change.
