

THE NEW ATHEISM



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Outrageous Quotes by New Atheists

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”

Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 51.

“The only difference between *The Da Vinci Code* and the gospels is that the gospels are ancient fiction while *The Da Vinci Code* is modern fiction.”

Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 123.

“The nineteenth century is the last time when it was possible for an educated person to admit to believing in miracles like the virgin birth without embarrassment.”

Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 187.

“More generally (and this applies to Christianity no less than to Islam), what is really pernicious is the practice of teaching children that faith itself is a virtue. Faith is an evil precisely because it requires no justification and brooks no argument.”

Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 347.

“I suspect that the Binker [imaginary friend] phenomenon of childhood may be a good model for understanding theistic belief in adults. I do not know whether psychologists have studied it from this point of view, but it would be a worthwhile piece of research. Companion and confidant, a Binker for life: that is surely one role that God plays—one gap that might be left if God were to go.”

Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 390–91.

“It is time that we admitted that faith is nothing more than the license religious people give one another to keep believing when reasons fail. While believing strongly, without evidence, is considered a mark of madness or stupidity in any other area of our lives, faith in God still holds immense prestige in our society.”

Sam Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation*, 67.

“[I]f God exists, He is the most prolific abortionist of all.”

Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation*, 38,
upon citing percentages of pregnancies which end in
so-called “spontaneous abortions”

“[T]he United States is unique among wealthy democracies in its level of religious adherence; it is also uniquely beleaguered by high rates of homicide, abortion, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, and infant mortality . . . three of the five most dangerous cities in the United States are in the pious state of Texas.”

Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation*, 44–45.

“[T]he biblical God is a fiction, like Zeus and the thousands of other dead gods whom most sane human beings now ignore. . . . [J]ust imagine if we lived in a society where people spent tens of billions of dollars of their personal income each year propitiating the gods of Mount Olympus, . . . where untold billions more in tax subsidies were given to pagan temples, where elected officials did their best to impede medical research out of deference to *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, and where every debate about public policy was subverted to the whims of ancient authors who wrote well, but who didn’t know enough about the nature of reality to keep their excrement out of their food. This would be a horrific misappropriation of our material, moral, and intellectual resources. And yet this is exactly the society we are living in.”

Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation*, 55–56.

“It is time we recognized the boundless narcissism and self-deceit of the saved. It is time we acknowledged how disgraceful it is for the survivors of a catastrophe to believe themselves spared by a loving God, while this same God drowned infants in their cribs [after Katrina hit New Orleans]. Once you stop swaddling the reality of the world’s suffering in religious fantasies, you will feel in your bones just how precious life is—and, indeed, how unfortunate it is that millions of human beings suffer the most harrowing abridgements of their happiness for no good reason at all.”

Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation*, 54.

“Speaking for myself, if the biblical heaven and hell exist, I would choose Hell. Having to spend eternity pretending to worship a petty tyrant who tortures those who insult his authority would be more hellish than baking in eternal flames. There is no way such a bully can earn my admiration.”

Dan Barker, *godless*, 170.

“Those who advocate a piece of folly like the theory of an ‘intelligent creator’ should be held accountable for their folly; they have no right to be offended for being called fools until they establish that they are not in fact fools.”

S.T. Joshi, *Atheism: A Reader*, 20.

“The kindly God who lovingly fashioned each and every one of us (all creatures great and small) and sprinkled the sky with shining stars for our delight—*that* God is, like Santa Claus, a myth of childhood, not anything a sane, undeluded adult could literally believe in. *That* God must either be turned into a symbol for something less concrete or abandoned altogether.”

Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*, 18.

“I should emphasize this, to keep well-meaning but misguided multiculturalists at bay: the theoretical entities in which these tribal people frankly believe—the gods and other spirits—don’t exist. These people are mistaken, and you know it as well as I do. It is possible for highly intelligent people to have a very useful but mistaken theory, and we don’t have to pretend otherwise in order to show respect for these people and their ways.”

Dennett, *Breaking the Spell*, 401n5.

“But I am not joking when I say that I have had to forgive my friends who said that they were *praying* for me. I have resisted the temptation to respond, ‘Thanks, I appreciate it, but did you also sacrifice a goat?’ I feel about this the same way I would feel if one of them said, ‘I just paid a voodoo doctor to cast a spell on your health.’ What a gullible waste of money that could have been spent on more important projects! Don’t expect me to be grateful, or even indifferent. I do appreciate the affection and generosity of spirit that motivated you, but wish you had found a more reasonable way of expressing it.”

Dennett, “Thank Goodness,” in *The Portable Atheist*, 280.

“Many people are good. But they are not good because of religion. They are good despite religion.”

Victor J. Stenger, *God: The Failed Hypothesis*, 248.

“Violent, irrational, intolerant, allied to racism and tribalism and bigotry, invested in ignorance and hostile to free inquiry, contemptuous of women and coercive toward children: organized religion ought to have a great deal on its conscience. There is one more charge to be added to the bill of indictment. With a necessary part of its collective mind, religion looks forward to the destruction of the world. By this I do not mean it ‘looks forward’ in the purely eschatological sense of anticipating the end. I mean, rather, that it openly or covertly wishes that end to occur. Perhaps half aware that its unsupported arguments are not entirely persuasive, and perhaps uneasy about its own greedy accumulation of temporal power and wealth, religion has never ceased to proclaim the Apocalypse and the day of judgment.”

Christopher Hitchens, *god is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, 56.

“Faith is the surrender of the mind; it’s the surrender of reason, it’s the surrender of the only thing that makes us different from other mammals. It’s our need to believe, and to surrender our skepticism and our reason, our yearning to discard that and put all our trust or faith in someone or something, that is the sinister thing to me. Of all the supposed virtues, faith must be the most overrated.”

Hitchens, on *Penn & Teller: Bullsh*t!*,
Season 3, Episode 4: “Holier Than Thou,” aired 23 May 2005.

“We have no more reason to believe Jesus rose from the dead than that a pot of fish did.”

Richard Carrier, “Why the Resurrection is Unbelievable,” in *The Christian Delusion*, 309.