

Is it reasonable to
believe in god in the
21st century?



In a scientific age, it is getting harder and harder to believe in god due to the frequent scientific discoveries but does that really change the thoughts and opinions of those who choose to believe in such a thing? This is a very hotly debated question as over 51 per cent of the population believe in God but there is evidence to suggest that a hundred years ago, a smaller number but a higher percentage of people believed in a God. So therefore why has the percentage gone down and is it reasonable for it to do so?

First of all, I think I need to look at some of the Christian beliefs; Christians believe there is only one God (monotheism) who is all powerful and all knowing, their God is a loving God who cares how people behave and treat each other and they believe in the principle of the trinity, which shows that God can be shown in three different ways - as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Some of the more obvious beliefs are that they believed God created the universe and is active in the world and performs miracles such as healing the sick for the benefit of society.

The religion of Christianity has been around for over 1950 years so what are the reasons why Christians believe in God and follow those beliefs? There are three main arguments for the existence of god. The first one being the ontological argument which is the argument based on the idea that God is greater than anything else people can think of.

A bit like the childish argument when one child says to the other " I'm a million times better than you!" and the other child says in response I'm a million and one times better than you!" thinking he has one the argument but then the first child says " I'm everything you say plus one!". This basically means whatever child B says, child A is always better. One <https://assignbuster.com/is-it-reasonable-to-believe-in-god-in-the-21st-century/>

Christian man named Anselm summed up this argument perfectly in a quotation and said God should be described as 'that which nothing greater can be conceived'. Also meaning that God must exist otherwise we would not be able to produce this opinion.

Anselm suggested that, if the greatest possible being lives in the mind, then surely they must exist. So if you can imagine the greatest possible being, then surely if you could imagine such a thing then it must exist, otherwise you wouldn't be able to imagine it in the first place. Later on in the seventeenth century, Rene Descartes then deployed a similar argument, suggesting that there is never going to be a definitive answer for whom god is or what he is like but what we do know is that he is an all power super being and the greatest yet.

The second main argument for the existence of the God is called the cosmological argument which is summarised by the argument of Thomas Aquinas (1225-75), a priest of the Roman Catholic Church and one of the most significant theologians of history. He argued that all things are in a state of motion i. e. change and you cannot create or destroy energy. Therefore, he argued, there must be a source of that energy/change. So he concluded the source must be external so therefore the source must be God.

At this point if you were a scientist then you would argue that the source wasn't God and probably say it was the sun or something like that but I don't think you would be able to argue with the logic of at least the first three statements Thomas Aquinas made. The third and last (of the main arguments) is the teleological argument. This was first introduced in the 1700s by William Paley, an English Christian philosopher. Paley said that if <https://assignbuster.com/is-it-reasonable-to-believe-in-god-in-the-21st-century/>

you're a walking through a moor and you kick a stone, then you would think nothing of it. You can't argue with the logic of that!

He then went on to say that if you were to kick a pocket watch, you would pick it up and then look at it. After looking at it, you would conclude that the watch shows elements of design. So if the watch has elements of design, then it must have a designer. William then observed the complexity of the eye and also concluded that that must have a designer as well. He also thought the regularity of the solar system also implied design. After pondering over these great items of design, he concluded that the designer must be god because how else would all these 'items' be designed?

All these three arguments help influence people's decisions when deciding to choose to believe or become an atheist because the ordinary person, who isn't very scientific, like myself, would see those three arguments as being very strong and well-structured arguments. These arguments also help strengthen Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, etc. beliefs of their God's, as the average person would not be able to argue, convincingly, about the three points.

Another big unanswered question for scientists or atheists, questioning the existence of God, is the occurrence of miracles. The definition of a miracle is a marvellous event that cannot be explained by any human activity. Christians believe that the miracle is evidence of God intervening in the world at a time of crisis.

There is no scientific theorem or explanation for miracles so therefore people who believe in God believe that miracles are something to do with God.

There are many examples of miracles in the Bible which help create a clearer and bolder picture of God being the all-power and showing his kindness for all of humanity. An example of a miracle in the Old Testament is when the Israelites had to fight the Amorites. God helped the Israelites by throwing giant hailstones from heaven which killed the Amorites.

This miracle shows God intervening in the world in a very dramatic and physical way. There are also a number of accounts of miracles performed by Jesus, some of these being; Jesus calming a storm out at sea casting out demons, he restored the sight of a blind man and he brought the daughter of Jairus back to life. A common misconception for people is that miracles only happened in the past but there are many miracles that have been sited, by many people, recently.

A very recent and famous miracle is that of Marie-Bernard Soubirous. The story goes Marie was searching for wood and sighted Virgin Mary which shocked many people because they thought if Virgin Mary was to be sighted then she would be sighted by someone rich or important but no she is sighted by a poor French girl with a sick family. Theists see miracles as a reason that cannot be argued or questioned by atheists as they cannot explain them.

A handful of people suffer from stigmata each year; this is the spontaneous appearance of wounds marks that are believed to be of the crucified Lord on a person's body. The reason why this is a very superstitious and strange problem is because stigmata cannot be medical explained and happens spontaneously.

This is amazing because scientists cannot prove why it happens so therefore theists believe stigmata is again yet another way of God intervening in the world. So far during this argument, I have only included arguments defending theists so therefore to balance the argument I will put the point across of an atheists (someone who doesn't believe in a God). Many atheists believe the universe was created by an expanded of many millions of year due to its extremely hot and dense initial condition this is called ' the big bang theory'. " But how was this created?" you may ask.

The answer is very complicated but basically when the sun ignited many billions of years ago this banished materials with low melting points to the outer solar system and left the rocky bodies like Earth in the inner solar system where it then expanded.

This has scientifically proven so therefore has been accepted by many theists but many still choose not to believe in this theory as they argue ' how can you be so sure if you weren't there'. Even so this is a major reason against the early stated question ' is reasonable to believe in God in the 21st century.' So what do scientists and many atheists believe?

Most people would say that an atheist would not believe in anything which is not true. An atheist is simply just someone who doesn't believe in a God so therefore they could believe in love or beauty for example.

Also it would be wrong to assume that an atheist is pinned with someone who is practically scientific or political. Say that most atheists believe that the universe was created due to science not god, obviously because they do

not believe in a God. Being an atheist myself, I have actually been shocked with the argument from the religious side of the 'debate'.

You can probably tell by the way that I have written a lot more points, unbiasedly, in favour of the religious side of the argument, all be it some of the points were stronger and the atheist side but even still that surprised.

I also think the best points for the religious side of the argument are the latter two, those being the occurrence of miracles and that of Stigmata. The fact that miracles have happened recently as well as in the bible prove to atheists that they weren't just created by Jesus and his disciples to show their all-power and for them to help tell a parabolic story. So it is possible that many of them could have actually happened. This is amazing if you really think about it!

Secondly, the stigmata helps strengthen the religious side of the argument because the stigmata cannot be scientifically proven or estimated so it is yet another unanswered question for scientists. In conclusion, surprisingly, I actually believe it is reasonable to believe in God in the 21st century due to the significantly higher amount of points I was able to make in favour of this.