

God is a psychological need essay



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In C. E. M. Joad's essay "How Religion Arose, and Why it Flourished," Religion is described as a "psychological need." Joad explains that we use God as a comfort device. Religious people look to God to abolish their fears that they may have. Joad argues that people are simply afraid of death. Joad claims believing in God is a security blanket; that God will protect them in death.

I do not believe that religion is just a psychological device to make our lives better. I have faith and believe in God for the miracles he performs and guidance he provides in my life. C. E. M. Joad goes on to say that people invented God to fill a need. Joad writes, "Thus the great religions of the world are not theology, but psychology; witnesses, not to the attributes of God, but to the inventive faculty of man"(Joad 172).

In other words Joad says people invented religion to psychologically help cope with fear rather than have faith and praise God for all he has done for us. For example, these are the people who only pray when they hit a rough spot in their lives and seek consolation, as opposed to those avid believers who pray everyday, good or bad.

Religion does comfort us when we are afraid and when ask God for help we feel a sense of hope. God is looked at as a powerful force that can save us from the things that may hurt us or may fear us in the world.

If you look to the Bible you will find that God is here for us and will apply comfort to our lives. One verse that supports this statement is Psalm 23: 4, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

Another way God works for us is when we are lonely and/or needs safety.

Again Joad believes that when only in need, God is our support system to get us through the tough times. C. E. M. Joad says “..., it is obvious that there must be more in the religious consciousness to-day than in the savage fears and flatteries from which it may be shown to have arisen” (Joad 171).

According to Joad man invented religion to have an idea of hope when times are getting difficult. God does say in the Bible, in Psalm 4: 8 “ I will down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

God works miracles for us to be safe. For example over the summer my parents were out on our boat on Lake Michigan in the middle of a big storm. The waves were 8-12 feet and gusts of 100mph winds. They were in the middle of the lake with no where to go. They called the coast guard and were escorted in to the coast guard station in Chicago by a helicopter.

That day the coast guard had two other calls and my parents were the only ones who made it in with their boats, the other lost there boats to the storm. People may just say that it was luck or it was the good job done by the Coast Guard but I believe that God was with them and allowed them to make it in safely. This helps Joad’s argument, my prayers for my parents to make it home safely was in a time of need; but this is not the only time I pray to God. Fear and unhappiness are not the only emotions a religious person has when they pray to God.

Everyday Christians and even other religions praise their God or gods when everything is going well for them. For example, a “ C” average student gets

accepted to a highly regarded university, after praying about the acceptance for awhile.

God answered the students prayers and in return the student praises God for all of his glory. Praising God makes every circumstance of our lives complete and worthwhile. Praise God for His grace (Ephesians 1: 6).

Praise Him for His goodness (Psalm 135: 3). Praise God for His kindness (Psalm 117). Praise God for His salvation (Ephesians 2: 8-9)

These are all versus in the Bible that tells us specifically why we should praise our almighty father.

Followers of God not only pray to him for answers and ease to their problems but also praise him for all the good he has done in our lives. C. E. M. Joad argues that religious people has a conscience within them that determines the bad, the good and the consequences that will follow. To follow God and act as his servant you must follow the Ten Commandments and the Bible. Joad says that religion makes it easier for people to follow the social contract and think about the consequences such as hell. “

The conclusion is that morality, which is simply the habit of acting in a manner of which other people approve, is not natural to man; on the contrary, it runs counter to his natural interests, frustrates his natural desires, and requires him to surrender his natural rights”(Joad 175).

Man’s natural instincts will most likely go against the social contract of society. For example in class Professor Wilson asked the class “ If there was a God but no Heaven or Hell would you still live your life the way you do now

or would you change the way you live knowing there would be no consequences of going to Hell?”

About ninety-percent of the class raised their hands saying that they would change the way they lived. In this small survey done in class, it shows evidence to support Joad’s argument. If there was no Heaven or Hell you would not have to abide by the social contract that religion typically follows.

You would not have the subconscious decisions to follow the Bible and Ten Commandments, now knowing that there is no consequence of going to Hell. I do not feel this is fair. God performs many miracles and helps us everyday with our struggles. Is it fair to take advantage of him and look out for yourself? God is someone to keep us in line and keep us on track to a healthy lifestyle.

The Bible says in Deuteronomy 6: 5, “ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” Churches, religious leaders, and the Bible are the basic stepping stones to help us walk in life safely and securely. God is not a need that we want to be true to comfort us; but a teacher that tells us to follow in Jesus’ steps and become servants of God.