



the god album : companion

Preface: *This work is not about God. It is a criticism of the socio-political system which is a consequence of having belief in a supernatural being, namely: religion. As such, the purpose of The God Album is not to disprove or marginalise personal belief; it is intended to be a rational assessment of organised religion and its role in modern society. If this set of songs achieves anything the hope is that it will make the listener question the source of whatever belief they have in order to feel comfortable with what they conclude and, most importantly, not to be afraid of that conclusion.*

It is not fair to say that the album has an atheistic intent. Atheists and deists may argue forever about the God question and never be satisfied with the answer. The personal message is that: if you believe in a higher power then consider that the master plan does not centre on strict control and subjugation of a small group of sentient creatures in one corner of a vast Universe. There are thousands of choices of religion today and thousands more which have disappeared into history, so the chances of stumbling upon the "correct" choice are slim, while bearing in mind that so many religions are unforgiving of competing beliefs.

If everyone had confidence that, on a geologically stable planet, destiny lies in their own hands and not at the whim of a Creator that randomly answers or ignores prayers then there is a much greater chance of people taking ownership of their actions. This includes how we treat others and our environment.

It has been said that religion provides a moral basis for an individual within society and this gives it relevance. The response has to be that religion and its leaders have not, over time, provided a shining moral example to live by; which proves its fallibility and gives due cause for scepticism. But aside from this, it seems clear that progressive society is always one step ahead of religion which later adopts the accepted standard. Ironically: religion evolves. A good example of this is women and homosexuals.

Women have been marginalised by most societies and religions since the dawn of humanity. Unfortunately for the ladies, men are physically dominant which, until comparatively recently, has been a deciding factor. Belief systems, codified by men, spread an attitude of women as second class citizens because, specifically, religious texts and practices are misogynistic. Then suddenly, through education and enlightenment, women realised that they were getting a raw deal. Interestingly, no woman ever woke up one morning and proclaimed a vision from God that gave divine assistance to seek a better lot for her kind; she used logic and hard work to win her freedom. The struggle goes on to this day where resistance to change is a result of stubborn cultural values often rooted or justified by religion.

More recently homosexual men and women have successfully campaigned for equal rights in western societies, in the face of huge opposition from various religious groups on "moral grounds". Again, without the need for revelation, civil liberties have been won as a result of logic and hard work. One hundred years from now (a short time in the grand scheme of things) no one will remember what the fuss was about even if, lamentably, religion still has a presence in the prevailing culture.

The only "compelling" consideration in favour of religion, especially in a black and white embodiment such as Christianity, is framed by the question (to a non-believer): "What are the consequences if you are wrong?" This is a thinly veiled threat that if you reject the presented beliefs you will, quite literally, burn in hell for all eternity. Many modern Christians veer away from fire and brimstone preaching and dilute their message with talk of a God of love and everlasting peace; however, they have to back the history of their beliefs. The Christian Bible is very clear that anything less than unquestioning devotion to God, Jesus and his rules carries a grave price.

Turning back to the homosexual case study: many Christians (particularly, one would hope, homosexual Christians) now believe that it is not a 'burn in hell for all eternity' sin to be homosexual. In short, their previous belief (which may have changed within one lifetime) was wrong. So the answer to the challenge "what are the consequences if you are wrong?" is, "I don't know, do you?" because the set of rules changes over time. Did a man stoned to death for homosexuality two thousand years ago end up in hell or not? In that time and until recently a priest would proclaim "as an abomination of God's creation, of course." Today many would be uncomfortable giving an answer at all, many more would say, "...well, no. Not if they were a good person."

No one has all the answers because quite literally it is not possible for one person to remember the combined knowledge of the age. Therefore, we are left with reason and logic to determine our own answers. If we follow this path, on balance, there is a good possibility that religious tradition will be abandoned.

EVERYTHING YOU BELIEVE IS A LIE

Christ, a myth or man?
Now no longer matters
Message is so distorted by the words of men
The actual son of god?
A flesh embodiment
For all eternity, such arrogance overlooked

Everything you believe is a lie
Everything you believe is a lie

History has a victim
An act well rehearsed
Self-pity reigns in the Kingdom of Israel
Central theme
Of a chosen race
Began the divide, tracing back to Abraham

Vision of heaven
A quaint concept to me
Alive only in dreams

Present day enemy
Just one more crusade
No innocence in a war on progress waged
Never showed a sign
of the slightest sympathy
Stood in the way with a tradition of ignorance

Everything you believe is a lie
Everything you believe is a lie
Everything you believe is a lie
Because all of them cannot be right

These are only three examples
Worthy of a blunt exposure
The contempt that they show for each other
Eventually will
turn inward.

"Everything You Believe is a Lie" is a three pronged attack on the major white light religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. The title was adopted because it sounds nicely controversial and makes a clear statement. It is probably even true.

Christianity is first in the firing line because this is the mythology most Anglo-Saxons and/or Europeans (the predominant race/culture of heavy metal) are raised in and is hence most familiar. There is no attempt to pass judgement over the moral pedestal upon which it stands but instead the song uses a logical commentary; specifically: 1) whether Jesus existed or not does not really matter in the context of the distortions of truth and Church-fuelled atrocities that have occurred over the last two thousand years; 2) Christianity is designed to trump other religions because its prophet is literally the son of God. This is just an arrogant statement which is unverifiable. A personal view is that if Jesus did exist and was a sane, genuine good guy with a positive message, then at no point did he declare he was the son of God. This assertion comes later from a Church that seeks to promote its prophet as being more worthy than any of the competing choices.

Judaism holds a peculiar place in history in that it has a claim to being a race and a religion with blurred boundaries therebetween. What is unfair about this status is that to speak out against it is therefore deemed racist; or worse, decried as an anti-Semitic or holocaust denying rant. As an overly simple summary it seems that Jews have turned feeling sorry for themselves and fostering the guilt of others into an art form. This attitude and a pure belief of being a "chosen people" will inevitably lead to a backlash from everyone else. That doesn't mean that the tough ride Jews have had over the years is justifiable or forgivable; but it is understandable.

It would seem that Islam gets off lighter than the others if you take the words at face value, but that was not the intention. This religion is perhaps the most intolerant of all the available choices today. "Moderate" Muslims will spin a story of a progressive faith that preaches love and peace but the history of Islam is soaked in as much blood as Christianity. The open contempt for women and non-believers flies in the face of what modern civilisation considers appropriate. If one were cynical, Islam's stubbornness should be applauded because it appears to be less malleable than other religions. A cornerstone of religion is that it cannot and should not be progressive because the revered texts must set rules that endure for all time, otherwise what is there to rely on? If societal standards deem an aspect of a religion no longer acceptable then surely that is a killing blow for the entire faith. God does not make mistakes in his guidance yet scriptures, handed down from God, have become outdated.

MONOMYTHIC

Theme, recurring epoch
Ages now long gone
Seek and you will find the link you looked for all along
Follow reasoned path
Most objective view
Question what you ask before you ask it

Monomythic
Timeless gimmick
Common story
That defines a hero
Monomythic
With a thousand faces
Basic pattern
For the trials he must undergo

Adventure, refusal, supernatural
One mission as initiation, temptation
From death to rebirth, now exalted
Atone in triumph, apotheosis

This is not a message of blasphemy
This is some guidance for how it has to be

All mythology in Heaven
Does not describe the truth
The wonder I have seen in colours of existence
Fraudulent construct
It seems the game is up
You know you're not a saviour you are

Monomythic
Timeless gimmick
Common story
That defines a hero
Monomythic
With a thousand faces
Basic pattern
For the trials he must undergo

"Because I have called, and ye refused ... I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. ... For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

Proverbs 1:24-27 and 32

The "monomyth" refers to the idea that all stories in legend follow a strikingly similar pattern, such that they are really only variations on a repeated theme. The hero of a myth usually has supernatural parentage or intervention at birth and undergoes trials in some kind of quest to search for something profound. In many old religions the prophet dies and is reborn with greater power. Not surprisingly the concept is intriguing because it suggests that all modern religions are simply based on earlier prototypes. The stories evolve and sometimes become more elaborate but they are basically the same.

The closing passage from Proverbs was found in a Wiki on the subject of the monomyth. The direct relevance is unclear but it sounded totally evil and fit with the music perfectly.

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

Evil of establishment
Clearly it is evident
You would think we would be closer to
An era of enlightenment
Choked by misguidance
Dominance does not mean truth
Know the only difference
Cult to religious
Is the count of worshipers
Superstition become fact
Repetition of a pact
By design, a twisted view is born

Next messiah waits for his turn
The enemy of my enemy is still my enemy

Self-important usurper
Aspire to superhuman power
To take ideals not yours
From time immemorial
"Do what thou wilt" did not work
Cannot act in absolutes
Eternally deceive yourself
Weak, not strong, this law deserts
Rituals achieve nothing
It's a private nemesis
Philosophy of hatred cursed
Hail Satan? You're the biggest fool

There is no answer in someone else's words
Do not let the rhetoric ever sway your choice
Let freedom reign supreme above all else
And never trust the motives of any priest

These lyrics undergo an evolution as they progress from start to finish, covering a few concepts; firstly, the idea that a cult (outcast and ridiculed by society) and a religion (respected and expectant of special treatment) differ only in the number of followers, i.e. how popular they are. Consider that believing in an all powerful entity, watching your every move and granting wishes (prayers) to a select few, is every bit as ridiculous as committing mass suicide. It is also similarly self-destructive because any control of faith seeks to make the believer reliant on the system (be it a priest or grand wizard).

Secondly, Satanism is stupid. It is a reasonable observation that Satanists wear homoerotic clothing and start black metal bands with a view to being 'grim and necro'. This is not very helpful and will not promote a wider move away from religion in mainstream society which many proclaim to be their goal. Furthermore, crimes such as church burning are tragic because these are beautiful old buildings with a lot of historical value. The perception that has evolved of Satanists is unfortunate because there is probably some useful philosophy within Satanic doctrine, but the fact they like to wear black, paint pictures of devils and are embarked on a quest to "become the superman" is tiresome.

Finally, the outro anthem brings it all together: that you cannot trust anyone but yourself on matters of belief. A priest is just an insurance salesman where the premium is a terrible waste of your time and energy and the policy never pays out.

ORIGIN

Down to the simplest form
There is will to remain
Immortality in the genes you host
Can a miracle be seen?
In absolute destiny
The truth is so much more than this manmade dream

Journey of a seed
On winds of a global road
Shows the path for all in a natural world
Let the strongest live
As the weak may die
Each into its place, the answer "why"

Light will be thrown on the origin of man
Chain of being is now redefined

If landscapes can be transfigured by slow change, so surely,
could flesh modify in the same way

Archive of the rocks is a series of snapshots
Only taken at long intervals
With a badly focussed camera, the analogy goes
In good time disturbs all graves
No vestige of beginning, no prospect of an end
Think of all the species unknown
To taste oblivion is to master nemesis
The clock of Long Now, it strikes the hour

The idea that the Universe has been preserved since Creation
is now dead and cannot reverse

When perfectly viewed
Through an objective lens
The legacy of resistance falls away

Light will be thrown on the origin of man
Chain of being is now redefined
There is grandeur in this view of life
And endless forms, most beautiful

It should come as no surprise that the inspiration for this song was a result of reading "Almost Like a Whale" by Steve Jones; a book which is effectively an update of "On The Origin of Species" with the benefit of modern hindsight. There are several Darwin quotes throughout the song because there is no point rewriting the insight of a genius (especially when it is out of copyright).

It is refreshing to introduce a subject which is not just philosophical conjecture like the rest of the album. Evolution by natural selection is as close to a fact as gravity (i.e. the mechanism is not necessarily fully understood but the theory seems to work and is verifiable) yet still is a contentious issue for fundamentalists of many religions. Of course at its heart was Darwin, a "good Christian man" who had an idea which was troubling but so evident after careful study that he had the courage to eventually stake his reputation on it.

While his big idea was controversial, Darwin was the perfect person to present and get away with it because his credentials were impeccable. Also, from all accounts Charles Darwin, the man, was a really nice bloke and doting father. This song is dedicated to all really nice blokes and doting fathers.

FALSE MIRACLE

Face on the moon made from shadows in gloom
Is a wrong revelation, a logic vacuum
Invisible shape that is all in the mind
These marvels are like clouds in the sky

Stigmata is a fraud
A false miracle never performed

Unverified claims parading as truth
A zeitgeist is spawned when your fear is let loose
An odour of sanctity, stories abound
No question there is work to be done

Hugo's music for this song was only finished days before entering the studio and so the lyrics were written on the fly. We kicked around some ideas and stigmata came up as a good candidate for a subject, so this was expanded to the general idea of fraudulent religious experience (which is all of them). You may have read about the face of Jesus on the moon and conclude that this is as much evidence of a miracle as seeing an animal shape in the clouds. Our imagination is a wonderful thing; we just sometimes let it get the better of us.

GOD

Every - single - self serving incarnation
Every - passion - that it tried to block
Betray - reason - the stuff of legend
Every page of every holy book
Is a living, breathing lie

God has abandoned you
When you needed it most
The fundamental error
Faith is a path to nowhere

Petty - jealous – figure from the Old Testament
Anger - for prayers - never answered
What the - truth is - you will never know
No evidence, coincidental chance
Find divine in the widest gaps

God is the human mind
And it tricks us sometimes
If you must believe in something
Why don't you make it yourself?

The God Album is prefaced by the irony that this work is not about "God" at all; and is barely mentioned until this song. But even the message here is not an attack on an actual god; it is an attack on the man-made version of a "One True God™" presented by religion. Primarily, the point is that the Authority described in the Judeo-Christian Bible (admittedly more relevant to the Old Testament) is not a likeable character. "He" is actually quite pathetic and exemplifies the most negative attributes of mankind – pettiness, jealousy and wrath. Who exactly would choose to worship such a deity? The answer is nobody; which is why "free will" is a misnomer. In Christianity, God demands absolute servitude or the penalty is hell and damnation. If one accepts biblical mythology as the truth then that is no choice.

In honesty the chorus is somewhat vindictive because it challenges people of faith to love their god even after they experience tragedy. This is a troubling subject and represents a nagging doubt that lingers in many a religious mind, namely "if God is so great and loves me so much, why is there pain and suffering in the world". The priest replies with, "Because these are only the trials of this mortal coil, paradise awaits in the afterlife (...just follow my rules)". This is a bullshit answer with no accountability. It should give as much comfort to the listener as a handful of magic beans.

LET IT GO

I realise it is hard to discard
All that you knew from birth
Sacred message shown
Conditioned to feed a divine ego
It will seem like the loss of a safety net, a great unknown

Just let it go
Let it go
Let it go!!!!

Plea for reason, no compromise for an end to intolerance, this should be the dream of ages

Is it losing faith or running free?
Don't be afraid to fall
In this you're not alone
Step forward from a deluded past
No more a world of hate, those walls are coming down

Just let it go
Let it go
Let it go!!!!

The message is thus: people of faith are understandably a fearful bunch because they are told they have so much to lose. Rational thinkers are here to tell them, "No. Your immortal soul is not in danger if you masturbate into a sock or eat pork or forget to put on your funny hat. Please open your eyes and enjoy yourself. Be good to other people and your environment because that in itself can be very rewarding..... and if you don't you are a dick. If that doesn't work for you, society, diverged from a religious moral source, will punish you for breaking certain fundamental rules anyway."

Religion, while it has provided a useful framework in the past for human organisation and advancement, is now surplus to requirements. It is time to find a better way.

(HYMN OF) FIRE

Cracks have formed in the rationale
Common sense over ancient texts
A moral code is human
Not born from the spiritual world

Life and death unavoidable
As sure as Earth circles the Sun
Learn before you play the judge
Sentenced heretic, condemned
To fire

Monuments to atrocity, found in all religions
Stay preserved or swept away by fire
(swept away) by fire

Terrified of the emptiness
Face the fact we might be alone
For all sins you compromise
When no other logic will hold

The more we know the less to luck
See the wall of reason is strong
There can be peace in a mortal coil
Long before the answer is told

Frost forms, patterns
New birth from nothing
Shows that there is hope still to be found

Those who would dare to ask
"There must be something more?"
Look around to see all secrets revealed
No longer possible for just one man
To possess all knowledge
Even in a thousand lifetimes

To burn words
Is to snuff thought
To burn "The word"
Is to find freedom

An afternoon in a garden, like any other
Alone with a cult of one, the Empire of self
How many shades of light cloak this day?
Never a second chance to live this moment.

As some kind of closure "Fire" gives an overview and hopeful spin on the theme winding its way through The God Album. History is still here and we, its present custodians, have not wiped ourselves from existence just yet. Science and philosophy provide a verifiable dialogue and forum to explore new ideas where human thought should always be in a happy state of flux.

The song concludes with an introspective view: that we only have one life that we know of for certain (afterall: "I think, therefore I am") and every second that passes is another moment closer to the end of that experience. You wouldn't want to waste it.

Afterword: Religion can bring a sense of belonging and this has led to happiness in many cases. It is wrong to preach that all people will be miserable in the service of an institution which is all they have ever known. Such a sermon would be a lie because countless talented and intelligent people have devoted their lives to a church and have died completely fulfilled. Their experiences were absolutely genuine, but the reality is that ultimately their worldview was most likely incorrect.

In many ways one can argue that the correctness of a worldview does not matter because all anyone should ever hope to achieve is happiness, so long as it is not at the expense of others. The problem is that all religions are based on the premise that "I am right and you are wrong" so there is a fundamental conflict which cannot be resolved unless one faith totally dominates. However, the chances of a one world faith are remote. Christianity alone has tens of thousands of subdivisions, each with its own interpretation of the truth. A unifying faith will spontaneously appear only if one of the myths becomes fact. That is to say God walks among us and talks to everybody to make his message and the conditions of authority absolutely clear. You can draw your own conclusions as to the likelihood of such an event.

Cynical defenders of religion will proclaim, "If mankind does not have religion to fight about then it will only find something else." This is a defeatist response with a very low opinion of humanity. As a species we have evolved to achieve more than any other known being in the Universe but still that fact does not seem enough for those of faith to have a little faith in human nature.

On balance, the removal of blind obedience from the human equation will almost certainly lead to a positive result. Of course, it is only one part of a necessary societal overhaul but it is something that every individual can do easily without reliance on external forces (e.g. the economy and government). One simply needs to be educated and make informed decisions about a subject in which everybody is qualified: their own happiness.

Further thinking: After reading a few pages of <http://whatjewsbelieve.org>, there are some interesting conclusions about the theological conflict between Jews and Christians and, based on words alone, the Jews come across as a more reasonable religion. However, before getting into that, there is a brilliant quote about the Jewish mission which is to "be a light unto the nations, by our actions, and by our invitation to all others to join us in our mission by converting to Judaism and thereby becoming Jews". The state of Israel hardly has an exemplary record in connection with its decisions over the years. Something to think about.

The author of the articles, a Rabbi, categorically states that one cannot be a Jew if one has converted to another faith, but can remain a Jew if simply neglecting to observe any Jewish cultural aspects. This seems fair enough and the analogy of a national citizen is given. You can be a citizen of one country and live in another, unless (because of the laws of your citizenship) you specifically denounce your "home" country for a new citizenship.

Anyway, a central theme is that a Jew cannot believe that Jesus is the son of God because it conflicts with a pure monotheistic belief; i.e. that there is only one god and he is indivisible. Following the same logic, the duality of a good god and an evil satan does not exist in Judaism. In Christianity, Satan is an independent agent of evil that works against God. In Judaism God has all the power and "The Satan" is simply an agent of God performing certain functions.

Because God is judgement but forgiveness, the Jews do not believe in hell and assert that references to hell in the Old Testament are mistranslations. As I have stated before, the main disagreeable aspect of Christianity is that there is an ever present threat of punishment for not adopting its doctrine. This is a simple deal that, if you are aware of Jesus, you must accept him as your saviour...or burn in hell. Without him you are a "broken branch" and incapable of later redemption. (John 15:6)

Another very interesting part of the analysis (and in fact the bit which prompted me to write these further notes) is the deception employed by the Christian Church for converting people to Christianity. It is justifiable to deceive people in this way because, ultimately, they are saving the new converts. The example given is the numerous organisations like "Jews for Jesus" that try to cloud the distinctions of religion. These groups attempt to maintain some basic Jewish culture, but promote the idea of Jesus as the son of God. Mainstream Judaism rejects this possibility as in basic conflict with the indivisible God concept. Hence Judaism is fundamentally incompatible with Christianity.

History has many examples of this "deceit at all costs" to promote Christianity in the sense that missionaries travelled to other cultures to fit Christianity into the existing beliefs/culture to get a foothold. It is mildly amusing that the serpent is a symbol of evil in European culture but a symbol of good in South America and features positively in religious artwork. The Church simply did what it had to do to "save as many souls as possible". I suppose the irony is that if these people had been left alone in the first place they would have been less exposed to the prospect of hell and damnation because, since they did not know of Jesus, they are subject to a different judgement than those who are aware of but reject Jesus as the son of God.

Last Words I have tried to make it clear in my writing that I do not hold any answers, just the presentation of observation and topics for discussion. There is no revelation or miracle in the real world but you should also not listen to anybody that tells you that there is no God, because personal experience is all you can rely on. To paraphrase: "I may see God in the face of mountains, or the bright wings of a butterfly, or the chaos of a waterfall; but in rituals you will find no truth". Whether or not I choose to attribute the grandeur of the observable Universe to a sentient Creator is my business. It is something I feel or don't feel. However, if I do feel it, there is then a giant leap from that belief in the existence of a Creator to the teachings of any religion.

This is my message to anyone that truly believes in God: keep believing, because I honestly think you will be happier that way, however, take a very long hard look at each and every aspect of your religion and ask yourself if you really need it. Consider all those times when you thought, "I am not sure that I really agree with what the preacher is saying" and realise you were right to make a challenge. However, whatever you do (literally, for God's sake) do not just rewrite the religion to suit yourself.

Finally and lamentably, the problem most of us have is that, even when we have reacted against the culture in which we were raised, the God seed is already planted. As a child, the story of an invisible wise man watching our every move is told when we are most vulnerable to believe it. In that sense, I am tainted. So don't believe what I say either, I might just be angry that I never had the chance to truly think an original thought.

The only hope we have is for the next generation and the generations thereafter. Respect your children and do not cripple them with the same package of beliefs that you never fully agreed with. Love them so that one day they will be wiser than you.

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All music by Blade except "False Miracle" by Wilkinson

MONSTERWORKS

the god album

Hugo – Bass
Marcus – Lead Guitar
Jon – Guitar / Vocals
James – Drums

Engineered, mixed and mastered by Lewis Childs at Earth Terminal Studios, Hampshire, UK
Produced by Blade and Monsterworks