

Friday, July 22, 2011

Nide's Snide

A Christian who is apparently reluctant to identify his true name, has been active in the comments sections of my previous two blog entries, [Considering Tony's Offerings](#) and [A Proof that the Christian God Does Not Exist](#)

This individual usually posts under the moniker "r_c321" but occasionally posts under the name "Nide Corniell." When r_c321 posted under Nide Corniell, he wrote: "Nide is not my name. I accidentally signed in with someone else [sic] account" (comment posted July 12, 2011 7:22 PM on [this blog](#)). Since then, r_c321 has "accidentally" signed in on this other person's account a handful of times. It's hard to fathom that one would "accidentally" sign in with someone else's account one time. It strains credulity to suppose he's done it several times.

But this is not the only story of Nide's that I find unconvincing. Nide has come to defend Christianity, and as the record in the two comments sections testifies, he's been doing a pretty poor job of it. One might be forgiven for supposing he's done an awful job at it.

Nide claims that the Christian god is real and that "God the father draws men unto himself through Jesus Christ and by the holy spirit raises them from 'spiritual deadness'" (posted July 13, 2011 12:11 AM on [this blog](#)).

I have pointed out to Nide that I can surely *imagine* the things he claims. But Nide wants me to accept the claim that these things are real, not merely imaginary, even though he has not indicated any alternative to one's imagination as the faculty by which one can apprehend the god and other supernatural things he says are real. I have asked Nide repeatedly to explain how something that I imagine, is not imaginary. In response to this, he quoted Romans 1:18-20, even though this does not explain how something I'm imagining is not real. In fact, he has nowhere challenged the fact that I am imagining his god when he tells me about it, nor has he explained how what I am imagining is not imaginary. So Nide, and frankly all Christians, have a huge problem on their hands.

But Nide continues to resent me calling his god imaginary, even though he has not identified any alternative to man's imagination as the means by which anyone could "know" his god. It's as if he wants us to disregard the fact that we are imagining when we consider his god-belief claims, and pretend that what we are really only imagining is actually real, when in fact it is merely imaginary.

Now he writes:

Sir, you keep making the claim that I am imagining things. But haven't been able to prove it. So, when will you?

Nide must not be reading very carefully. Not only has he not shown that I have not proved this, he ignores the fact that I have in fact proved it. I posted a link several times in our discussion, as well as [in the very blog to which he has posted numerous comments](#), to an earlier entry on my blog, one which identifies 13 points of evidence to support the conclusion that the Christian believer is actually imagining his god. Here's the link again: [The Imaginative Nature of Christian Theism](#).

The question for Christians to consider is this:

What alternative to the imagination does any man have in seeking to apprehend what Christianity describes as its god, the other supernatural beings it describes, supernatural destinations like heaven and hell, and the narratives which are found in the Christian bible depicting characters and events that supposedly took place on earth some 2000 years ago?

I can imagine a garden and a naked man and woman walking around in their "Blue Lagoon" innocence. I can

imagine a talking snake. I can imagine a man named Noah building a giant vessel. I can imagine him packing it with thousands of animals. I can imagine it raining for 40 days and 40 nights. I can imagine the vessel coming to rest and its occupants getting out and repopulating the earth. I can imagine a man named Moses confronting the Egyptian pharaoh. I can imagine Jonah being swallowed by a whale. I can imagine a virgin giving birth to a child. I can imagine a man rising from the dead.

I can imagine all these things. The question is: what alternative to my imagination do I have in apprehending all this? If there's no alternative to my imagination in apprehending all this, then on what basis could I possibly say it's all true? A rational basis is one which, at the very least, recognizes that the imaginary is not real. So I would have to abandon rationality in order to claim that all this stuff that I can *only* imagine, is real. This is the root reason why people sense that faith and reason are somehow at odds with each other. They are at odds with each other. Faith is a pretense while reason requires an unflinching commitment to honesty. An honest man will not try to carry on as if what he is imagining is real.

Consider the relevant facts here:

Fact 1: Christians tell me that what the bible claims is all true.

Fact 2: I can *imagine* all the characters, places and events depicted in the bible.

Fact 3: Christians fail to identify any alternative to the imagination as the proper faculty for apprehending what the bible claims.

Fact 4: When Christians are confronted with this problem and are challenged to explain how something one imagines is not imaginary, they have a profoundly difficult time addressing it (e.g., quoting bible passages just gives the problem another opportunity to manifest itself).

Christianity requires man to accept as real that which he can only imagine. And in so doing, Christianity requires man to abandon his honesty, just as biblegod required Abraham to be *willing* to kill his own child on command in Genesis 22. It requires one to sacrifice his honesty on the cross, just as the Christian god sacrificed his own son on the cross. What kind of man abandons his own honesty? What kind of father abandons his own child? The former is what Christianity requires of man, and the latter is what Christianity holds up as the model which men are expected to accept as their ideal.

I know for a fact that back when I was trying to be a Christian, the Christian worldview activated itself within my imagination, for that is where the story establishes itself- in the believer's imagination. It's all story from a storybook, like Harry Potter, like the tales of Narnia, like Tolkien's "Ring" series, like *The Wizard of Oz*, etc. When one reads a story, he has no alternative but to imagine the characters and events he reads about.

I have asked Nide repeatedly to explain how *what I am imagining* when I imagine his god, is not imaginary. Nide finally reposted Romans 1:18-20, as if he wanted me to think that this somehow answers my question. It doesn't answer my question, and to demonstrate how poor a response it is to my question, I explained that his answer requires me to rely on my imagination no less than 10 separate times just to consider it. I wrote:

Here's the only way I can interpret this as a response to my question:

First I must imagine that there is a god (1). Then I must imagine that this god has wrath (2), it is "revealing" its wrath (3), and that it is revealing its wrath from something else that I must imagine, namely something called "heaven" (4). Then I must imagine that people (apparently *all* people) are "wicked" and "unrighteous" (5), that they are somehow aware of this god's revealed wrath (6), and that they all "suppress" this awareness "by their wickedness" (7). Then I must imagine that "what may be known" about this god that I must imagine, is somehow "plain" to these wicked people (8). Then I must imagine that the reason why "what may be known about God" is "made plain" to everyone is that its "invisible qualities... have been clearly seen" by the wicked people (9), and thereby I must imagine that they are therefore without excuse (10).

In order to consider Nide's response to my question, I had to use my imagination no less than 10 separate times. So again, how is what I imagine when I imagine Nide's god, not imaginary?

Blank out.

See how unhelpful to the Christian's challenge quoting bible passages is? It's as if Nide simply doesn't understand the magnitude of the challenge before him, or he simply doesn't know what to do in response to it. Neither predicament bodes well for his worldview's claim to philosophical solvency.

More broadly, it can safely be taken for granted that all human beings who have initiated their conceptual development have the capacity to imagine. Nide himself, for instance, is someone who has the ability to imagine. Since we can be assured that the Christian believer is capable of imagining, just as any other human thinker is, then we must consider the possibility that he is merely imagining the god and other supernatural spooks that you claim exist. We must consider this because we ourselves, as bystanders looking at Christianity from the outside, have no alternative to the imagination when it comes to considering Christianity's totems and beliefs.

Indeed, Nide has failed to identify any alternative to the imagination by which his readers can apprehend what he claims when he claims that his god is real. I have no alternative to imagining it, and Nide identifies no alternative to my imagination as the psychological faculty by which I can apprehend what he claims. So even if he wants to deny that his own imagination is involved, he's made no progress toward removing the imagination as the active faculty in my own effort to apprehend what he claims is real. So the problem he faces is very real, if in fact he wants to answer me.

I know it's difficult for believer's to allow themselves to come to the honest realization that what they've invested themselves emotionally into believing, is really only imaginary. For one, they sense that there is too much at stake. Socially they will lose face big time, and psychologically their whole world will be turned on its head. It is an experience that is comparable to suddenly find yourself becoming exempt from gravity. To embrace honesty will mean that the edifices that the believer has constructed from an enormous constellation of emotional indulgences, will come crashing down, and he will in effect have to start completely over in re-learning how to deal with the world. Regaining honesty once one has renounced it and turned his back on it, is not an easy thing to do, and few are man enough to do it. I did it, so I know it's possible. But since I did it, I know how difficult it was for me to do it. But I wasn't even halfway in as deep as Nide apparently is, at least in *defending* the belief. The very act of defending the belief in question will only serve to cement the believer's devotion to the labyrinth of lies that he has swallowed in constructing the imaginative complex that informs his worldview.

As for me, I was a reluctant believer; I was unhappy from the get-go (believing in the Christian god certainly did not bring me joy), and happiness has always been very important to me. And one thing I have really come to understand is the truth of Rand's view of happiness - that "happiness is a state of non-contradictory joy" (*Atlas Shrugged*). Nide will not make this discovery by reading the bible, and since he has already announced that he "reject[s] everything [R]and says" (comment posted July 18, 2011 8:53 PM on [this blog](#)), he must - if he thinks joy has any place in happiness - suppose that happiness is possible in spite of contradictions choking one's joy.

The Christian worldview is teeming with contradictions. Many contradictions have already been pointed out to Nide. In fact, I have argued that Christianity *is* essentially the worship of contradiction (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

But the fundamental contradiction is in its adherence to the primacy of consciousness (see for instance [here](#)), its blurring of the distinction between reality and imagination (see, among others, [here](#) and [here](#)), and the dishonesty it requires on the part of the faithful adherent (I expose this throughout my blog).

I could not sustain the dishonesty that Christianity required of me - I could not keep conning myself that it was all really true, when in fact it so clearly wasn't true, since it was merely imaginary. Eventually I had to face my abandonment from dishonesty, and find a way to reunite with it. That's not possible for someone who has made the determination to continue propping up the lies that Christianity seeks to have men swallow.

by Dawson Bethrick

Labels: [Christian Psychopathy](#), [imagination](#)

posted by Bahnsen Burner at [4:00 PM](#)