

## Wishing and the Christian Deity

Below I present some more thoughts in response to Paul Manata's 4 Nov. [diatribe against me](#).

Those who have paid attention thus far will remember that Paul denied that his god *wishes*. [He explicitly stated this](#):

The problem is that God doesn't wish.

In response to this amazing statement of denial, I [quoted 13 bible verses](#) which affirm that the biblical god *does* wish. I also quoted several definitions of 'wish' to clarify what is being discussed. For instance, wish means:

1. to want; desire; long for (usually fol. by an infinitive or a clause): I wish to travel. I wish that it were morning.
2. to desire (a person or thing) to be (as specified): to wish the problem settled.

If Paul's god does not wish, then, accordingly, it must not either want or desire. But below we'll see that Paul affirms that his god does want! This is most topsy-turvy. According to the dictionary source which I had quoted, *wish* is just another word for *want*; they're basically interchangeable. By trying to dispute everything I say (simply because I'm a "wicked unbeliever," and Paul doesn't want to be caught agreeing with any "unbeliever"), Paul's managed to get himself into quite a pickle here.

In addition to numerous bible verses, I also quoted the granddaddy of presuppositional apologetics himself, Cornelius Van Til, who also affirmed that the Christian god *wishes*:

... it was God's will that sin should come into the world. He *wished* to enhance his glory by means of its punishment and removal. (*The Defense of the Faith*, p. 160; emphasis added).

In response to this, [Paul wrote](#):

Obviously "wished" here is used differently than what a little child does on his birthday.

What does this have to do with anything? When [I make a statement](#) such as:

According to its spokesmen, this magic-endowed personal agent can wish things into existence (cf. "creation ex nihilo")

does Paul think I am equating the Christian god specifically with "what a little child does on his birthday"? If he really thinks this, *why* does he think this? He gives us no clue. The question is: do Christians think that their god wishes, or not? That's the issue. I have already quoted numerous verses from the bible which indicate that its authors thought their god wishes, and I quoted Van Til, who likewise indicated that he believed the Christian god wishes. So what's the problem? Why does Paul insist that his god "doesn't wish"? He seems to have adopted a minority position, one which is in direct conflict with the bible. Don't they call that "heresy"?

Paul recited two of the 13 bible passages I had quoted which make it clear that the bible's authors believed their god wishes. They were:

**Psalms 115:3:** "Our God is in the heavens, and he does as he wishes."

**Proverbs 21:1:** "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes."

When confronted with evidence that solidly contradicts his own statement about his god, Paul wrote:

Obviously here, "wishes" MEANS wants. Yes, God does whatever He wants to do. He furthermore has the power to achieve what He wants to do.

And according to the dictionary I quoted, *wishes* is an appropriate word for this, and both biblical authors and Cornelius Van Til obviously agree, for they used exactly this word. But how does Paul's exclamation that his "God doesn't wish" fare against this evidence? The evidence clearly contradicts his statement that his "God doesn't wish." Does he take back his earlier statement? No, he does not. Does he admit that he was mistaken? No, he does not.

Instead, he gives statements like this:

Bethrick's song and dance only works on the other monkey's who applaud his antics in his combox. Nevertheless, the world of thinkers sees Bethrick all hairy, with a party hat on and a tutu on.

When caught in a contradiction, he doesn't come forward and acknowledge it. I thought Christians were supposed to be humble and confess their wrongdoings. But notice that, in place of contrition or an argument which might explain his earlier denial, Paul resorts to ridiculing and maligning people who visit my blog and post their comments. Not only is Paul unable to back up his earlier claim that his "God doesn't wish," he's being rude to my guests when he's caught contradicting the bible! He had better apologize and learn to treat my blog's visitors with respect, or his comments are not going to be welcome on this blog any more.

I wrote:

So according to the bible, which I always thought spoke for Christianity, the Christian god is in fact supposed to wish.

Paul responded:

Not in the way Bethrick means it, and we all know it.

Well, what is so objectionable about the way I mean it? Obviously I could not have a little kid in mind when I apply the word "wish" to the Christian god, for I acknowledge that, according to Christian mythology, its god gets whatever it wishes for, and gets it immediately, just for the wishing. The Christian god wishes that the universe exists, and POOF, PRESTO, ABRACADABRA, there it is! According to this view, reality conforms directly to its wishes. Where does Paul get the idea that I think this describes "what a little child does on his birthday"? Blank out.

Paul continued:

To side with Bethrick here is to throw out any desire to make sure you understand your opponant [sic] and treat his position with care.

Look who's talking! What "desire" does Paul have to understand *his* opponents? What care does he apply in treating his opponents' positions? Paul dishes out more of his home-fired hypocrisy. We have already seen how he tries repeatedly to slink around very basic axioms which are not in the least controversial (unless of course you embrace a worldview built on imagination instead of facts). See [here](#) and [here](#), for instance. Meanwhile, Paul fails to deliver an argument. He's standing on the side of a rural road shaking his fist at a passing bus because it didn't stop to pick him up. You show 'em, Paul!

I wrote:

Again, Paul thinks that he can say that his god does not wish, because Paul determines what his god is and is not, what his god can and cannot do. The reason why Christians have so many internal disagreements is because one Christian will imagine his god one way, while another Christian imagines his god another way, and never shall the two meet.

Paul responded:

More ridiculous claims by Bethrick. Hmmm, out of the 20 or so responses I could give here, which should I choose? I'll choose this one: The reason atheists have so many internal disagreements is because one atheist imagines the world one way while the other another way, and never the twain shall meet. Bethrick just makes up a worldview, and so do his biddies. [?] Then they all argue about their made up worldviews. But to us they all look like monkey's fighting over a banana.

How is it ridiculous to observe that differing religious views (such as the bible's version of a wishing god as opposed to Paul's god which "doesn't wish") are informed by the believers' imaginations? Human beings do have the ability to imagine, and there's ample evidence supporting the conclusion that religious ideas have their basis in imagination rather than empirical inputs. Rather than offer any intelligent response to this, Paul reaches for a tu quoque. His retort essentially reduces to "so do you, atheist!" He chose this "out of the 20 or so responses" that he says he could muster. Was this the best of the lot? Responding to a charge is one thing, but answering it is altogether different. Paul chooses to respond with wise-cracking reactions (are the readers of Triablogue really impressed by such antics?), but nowhere answers the point. By Paul's own stated standard, I thereby "win this point by default" while all the squabblers who prod irresolvable Christian infighting "look like monkey's fighting over a banana."

by Dawson Bethrick

Labels: [Christian god](#), [imagination](#), [Paul Manata](#), [wishing](#)

*posted by Bahnsen Burner at [9:00 AM](#)*

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