

Biblical Resource Database

Search this site:

[About](#) [Authors](#) [Topics](#) [Video](#) [Audio](#) [Journals](#) [Believers Bible Commentary - MacDonald](#) [Buy Christian Music](#)

Search: Keywords



William MacDonald Archive



One Day at a Time

Audio

Bio

Kevin Engle recollections

Remembrances on
Facebook

AUTHORS



feedjit

Home » [Food For the Flock](#) » [Food for the Flock Vol 14:3 \(Mar 1968\)](#)

Is God Dead?

Submitted by [James Naismith](#) on Wed, 04/02/2008 - 15:36

Is God Dead?

Dr. James Naismith

"Many centuries ago, at the dawn of human history, a question was asked — the first to be recorded in Holy Writ — the first in the long story of man. That primeval question — "Hath God said?" — has kept recurring through the intervening ages right to modern times, to be joined at intervals by others. The most recent, and most blasphemous in the series, asked by the creature about the Creator — "Is God dead?" — has startled and stunned Christians and non-Christians alike. We may be sure that it has the same satanic origin as did that first question instilled in the minds of our first parents in Eden's garden. Let us examine this so-called "New Radical Theology," concocted by the puny, infinitesimal creature who announces the death of the Infinite, Almighty Creator. Such blasphemy scarcely merits our consideration, but we are confronted with it and have to answer the questions of our fellows who are "without hope and without God in the world." Let us pray that our study may establish our faith in "the living God" and challenge our lives that we may more effectively make Him known.

Let us consider:

1. The Character of the New Radical Theology.

Who has enunciated this heresy? Whence has it emanated? Avowed atheists? Professed agnostics? Blatant infidels? So we might have anticipated. But no! Strange as it may seem, this "theology" has come out of "theological colleges," devised by "divinity" professors, who call themselves "Christian atheists" (Paradox of paradoxes!). The names of the leaders and originators — Thomas J. Altizer, Professor of Bible and Religion at Emory University; Professor Wm. Hamilton, member of the faculty of Colgate - Rochester Divinity School; and Paul Van Buren of Temple University — are familiar to readers of popular periodicals which have, over the past year or so, aired their views.

What is the nature of this new philosophy? Here we face a difficulty — for the proponents of the "God is dead theology" (few though they are) are divided among themselves and contradict one another. With varying degrees of emphasis, they seem to assert, however, that the death of God is an event that has actually taken place. It is not simply that the God of our thinking has died and that we have to re-orientate our ideas of God. No! The death of God is a literal fact. Altizer, most emphatically, states this: "We shall understand the death of God as an historical event: God has died in **our** time, in **our** history, in **our** existence... . If God has truly died in our history, then he must be negated by the word of faith. It is the Christian who must murder God, or, rather, it is the Christian who must bury the decomposing God who continues to haunt our memory of things past." Hamilton is only slightly less dogmatic: "What does it mean to say that God is dead? ... It is really that we do not know, do not adore, do not possess, do not believe in God ... God is dead. We are not talking about the absence of the experience of God, but about the experience of the absence of God... . Death of God is a public event in our history." Nor is he perturbed by the discovery or sorrowful because of the bereavement: "However acute the experience of the death of God may be for us, however much silence and loneliness are entailed during our time of waiting for the absent God, we are not particularly cast down or perplexed by this." (All quotations from "Radical Theology and the Death of God," by Altizer and Hamilton, 1966).

Such statements from the pens of these "theologians" expose their blatant blasphemies. Yet, many of them profess to believe in Christ and present Him as the object of faith. Their philosophy has been summed up thus: "God is dead! Long live Jesus!" and "There is no God, and Jesus is His Son." To what depths of absurdity man can descend!

Let us examine now:

2. The Causes of the New Radical Theology.

Why has this theory been propounded? What has motivated such blasphemies? Several reasons could be suggested:

a. As already indicated, the **satanic origin** of this modern lie about God is evident — it comes from the one whom our Lord described as "a liar, and the father of it," who "abode not in the truth" ([John 8:44](#)). At the outset of human history, he questioned the revelation of the true God ([Gen. 3:1](#)); now, near its close, he denies the reality of the living God. Through the centuries, he has been the slanderer of God's people to God ([Job 1:11; 2:5](#)) and of God to His people.

Select Language

Powered by [Google Translate](#)

Featured

[Food for the Flock](#) - James Gunn/Others

[Ministry in Focus](#) - W. Ross Rainey/Others

[Things New and Old](#) - C. H. Mackintosh/Others

[Help and Food](#) - F.W. Grant/Others

[John Nelson Darby Archive](#)

[Good article about reading JND about JND Synopsis](#)

[William Kelly](#)

[William MacDonald](#)

[J.B. Nicholson](#)

[Henry Allan "H.A." Ironside](#)

[Daniel Snaddon](#)

[Wayne Grudem](#)

[Daniel Wallace Vid](#)

[Otis Jean Gibson](#)

[Amos & Attwood Video](#)

[Ken & MaryLou Engle II Cor. 5:8](#)



Live Traffic Feed



A visitor from Olathe, Kansas viewed "[Is God Dead?](#)"

[Biblical Resource Database](#)" 16 mins ago
A visitor from United States viewed "[The Story Behind... Let the Lower Lights](#)"

[Behind... Let the Lower Lights](#)" 16 mins ago
A visitor from Grand Rapids, Michigan viewed "[Chapter 9 Hymn Writers of America](#)"

[Biblical Resource Database](#)" 21 mins ago
A visitor from United States viewed "[Biblical Resource Database](#)"

[Database](#)" 22 mins ago
A visitor from Albuquerque, New Mexico viewed "[The Doctrine of Imminence](#)"

[Biblical Resource Database](#)" 28 mins ago
A visitor from Road Town viewed "[The Story Behind... Blessed Assurance](#)"

[Biblical Resource Database](#)" 34 mins ago
A visitor from Avondale, Colorado viewed "[The Story Behind... 'When the Roll is Called'](#)"

[Biblical Resource Database](#)" 42 mins ago
A visitor from Milpitas, California viewed "[Bible Christian Training](#)"

[Biblical Resource Database](#)" 50 mins ago
A visitor from Bridgetown, Saint Michael viewed "[Lesson 8 Grievances And Offenses](#)"

[Biblical Resource Database](#)" 52 mins ago
A visitor from Markham, Ontario viewed "[From Bethlehem To Egypt To Nazareth](#)"

[Biblical Resource Database](#)" 52 mins ago
A visitor from Markham, Ontario viewed "[From Bethlehem To Egypt To Nazareth](#)"

b. In the "new theology," we can discern the influence of the secular age in which we live — with its humanistic philosophies. Man's striking achievements, in technological and other spheres, have made him so self-sufficient and self-reliant that he has dispensed with God. Not only has he no time for God — he has no need for Him either. The "death of God theology" is the contemporary theology for the nineteen sixties, the religion of the "secular city," in which the sacred is no longer held dear, and obsession with this world has shut out the other world. How easily does the world around us mould our thoughts and our lives! How necessary, therefore, the repeated warnings of Scripture: "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2); "Love not the world" (1 John 2:15)!

c. The "death of God theology" — or, to use a term coined for it, "Theothanatology" — has arisen out of the background of recent and contemporary theology — modernism, neoorthodoxy, existentialism. (All its proponents were profoundly influenced by neo-orthodoxy). In these schools, the authority and reliability of the Bible have been denied — and from there it is but a small step to discrediting the living God of Biblical revelation. Theologians have, for years, been endeavouring to destroy the great doctrines of the faith — the inspiration of Scriptures, Deity of Christ, His virgin birth, miraculous life, atoning death and physical resurrection. Is it so surprising, after all, that they add to all this the doctrine of God Himself?

d. **Human egotism** is strikingly evident in the announcements by which the "Theothanatologists" have startled an open-eared world. Their slogan — "God is Dead" — flames from journals and periodicals. Their names have suddenly risen from oblivion to world "renown." By frequent changes of theological posture, they contrive to keep themselves in the headlines. As a publicity stunt, it has been an unqualified success!

e. Let us search our lives and see if we ourselves, believers in the living God, have not contributed, in some measure, to this blasphemous heresy. What evidence do our lives present of the reality of a God who is alive? Alas, have not many of us become a part of the secular age? Has not the materialism of our fellows made inroads into our lives too? If all God's people of this generation had been truly manifesting the living God in their lives, could a "God is dead" philosophy have gained a hearing in our world?

We must now discuss

3. The Conflict of the New Radical Theology.

What is our attitude to this manmade "theology"? How do we answer the question it poses? Is God really dead? To ask the question is to answer it. The very idea is in conflict with:

a. **Our traditional upbringing**, beliefs and thinking. Our minds are appalled by the mere suggestion. Most of us have been brought up to believe in an eternal God. We do not readily welcome anything that so drastically challenges our traditions. It is sometimes necessary, however, to discard traditions. Let us be sure that our answers to the questions are based on a more solid foundation than our cherished traditions. But the new theology runs counter to:

b. **The Word of God** — the Holy Scriptures that declare that our God is "the eternal God" whose "everlasting arms" are underneath us ([Deut. 33:27](#)), and who is "from everlasting to everlasting" ([Ps. 90:2](#)). The New Testament seems to have anticipated the rise of this heresy, and describes the "only wise God" as not only "eternal" but "immortal" (1 [Tim. 1:17](#)), and reiterates that He "only hath immortality" (1 [Tim. 6:16](#)). Fifteen times in the Old Testament, and 16 times in the New, He is referred to as the "living God."

Moreover, the "death of God theology" is in conflict with:

c. **The evidence in the world** around us, which bears ample witness to a living Sovereign who guides and controls the universe, maintaining perfect harmony in the realm over which He reigns; and

d. **The experience of believers** all over the world — including ourselves. He is still the "great God of wonders," performing His miracles in the lives of men who trust in Him. To say that He is dead is to ignore the countless times and ways in which He still responds to the prayers of His people and delivers those who call upon Him.

Finally we must give heed to:

4. The Challenge of the New Radical Theology.

God is able to work His sovereign purposes despite the errors and blasphemies to clarify truth and to glorify Himself. We may be sure that this is no exception. The heresy that God has died is a challenge to everyone who has "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 [Thess. 1:9](#)); to all who "trust in the living God" (1 [Tim. 4:10](#)); to every saint living in a secular world where God is deemed irrelevant and man all-important. We are challenged, first, to **learn** more about the living God — to have right thoughts about Him; to search the Scriptures to discover the true God as opposed to the false gods of popular opinion; and to commune with Him daily. Secondly, we should live as if He were alive; forsaking the idols of our business and pleasure, homes and cars, education and sport — and, having forsaken all, trusting Him wholly and serving Him only. Finally, we are challenged to communicate the living God to others who may be unconvinced as they have looked at our lives in the past — to make it clear to them that He lives in our lives, and to explain that they too can have a real experience of the living God through Christ who is THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE.

[kenengle.com](#) [SpecialSlideshow](#)

[Philippines](#) [CMMML Obit pdf](#)

[Uplook Obit on Page 9](#)

[Radio Archive](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#)

[Video](#) [Memorial](#) [Eulogy](#)

[HQ Remastered Radio Archive](#)

[MaryLou Leonard Engle Music](#)



[William MacDonald](#) [Comments about Ken Engle](#)

Visitors

See more ▶

	201,605		140
	29,153		138
	20,479		129
	8,174		126
	6,950		124
	5,890		120
	5,150		117
	3,582		116
	3,297		114
	2,504		112
	2,404		111
	2,041		100
	1,902		97
	1,777		93
	1,464		91
	1,411		89
	1,377		89
	1,099		87
	1,069		86
	1,032		86
	1,023		83
	962		80
	926		78
	923		75
	846		71
	783		69
	777		66
	722		63
	672		62
	648		61
	635		60
	618		56
	545		54
	521		54
	479		54
	463		53
	455		53
	454		50
	445		49
	428		48
	424		48
	391		45
	375		45
	370		44
	364		44
	348		43
	312		42
	288		42
	283		40
	267		38
	255		36
	255		35
	251		33
	228		32
	226		32
	217		30
	216		29
	212		29
	208		28
	207		28
	202		27
	199		27
	187		25
	186		24
	184		24
	179		24
	176		23
	166		22
	150		22
	150		21
	149		21
	144		20
	143		20

FLAG counter

◀ Profitable Things --Part 16

up

Different—But How! ▶



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

God Is Dead

From All The Tropes

[Quotes](#) •
 [Headscratchers](#) •
 [Playing With](#) •
 [Useful Notes](#) •
 [Analysis](#) •
 [Image Links](#) •
 [Haiku](#) •
 [Laconic](#)

Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.
 —**Friedrich Nietzsche**, *The Gay Science*, Aphorism 125 ("The Madman")

In the beginning, God created Heaven and Earth. Whether it took six days or six billion years for Him (or It, or Her, or Them, you know) to complete the Creation, there's nobody to give the award plaque to. Why not, you ask? Because, somewhere along the way, God croaked. Went belly up. Bought the farm. Kicked the bucket. Answered the last prayer. Played the last game of skee-ball. Named the last prophet.

This is going a step beyond Have You Seen My God?; they've called off the search and alerted the next of kin. The Council of Angels is now running around trying to figure out who's in charge.

Of course, the subject of Nietzsche's pronouncement is one of the most serious debates in the academic world.^[1]

This trope can occur in either a monotheistic or a polytheistic setting; of course, the ramifications of a God dying vary in severity, depending on if there are many Gods or just one.

Compare Gotterdammerung and Death of the Old Gods, which is the general end of the age of Gods, and Kill the God, wherein a (usually mortal) character destroys a God. Not to be confused with Shinigami or The Grim Reaper, which are divine manifestations of the death principle (God Is Death).

Examples

Contents

- 1 Anime & Manga
- 2 Comicbooks
- 3 Films
- 4 Literature
- 5 Live-Action TV
- 6 Music
- 7 Mythology
- 8 Puppet Shows
- 9 Tabletop Games
- 10 Videogames
- 11 Web Originals

■ 12 Real Life

Anime & Manga

- In *Dragonball Z*, a creature named Buu killed off much of the order of the Kais, the closest thing to a god in their universe, since they rule over everything.
- *Angel Sanctuary*: The very first sentence: **God Is Dead**. He's not actually dead until the very end. He's just been absent from Heaven for so long that a lot of the angels think he's dead. He turns out to be kind of an evil dick, so it's not a big loss when he gets killed.
- Volume 48 of *Bleach* is entitled **God Is Dead**.
- Yukko in *Nichijou* uses this exact phrase, in English, after Mai hits her on the head with a book. This is followed by a dramatic camera angle change to focus on the (possibly reincarnated) wooden Buddha statue on the desk in front of her, and the narrator exclaims "*Kami ga shinda*" accompanied by a lightning strike in the background.
- This happens with *High School DxD* where the protagonists find out that Micheal's the one running heaven.

Comicbooks

- *Ruins*, a Marvel Comics graphic novel, shows a newspaper headline with a photo of Galactus' corpse and the headline reading: "God Found Dead In Space" (http://images.comicbookresources.com/solicits/marvelcomics/200901/RUINS_cov.jpg).
- The Millennium story for *The Authority* was about a creature who created the Earth and is explicitly described as the closest thing there is to God. This creature was the being that had physically collected the matter that the Earth is formed of and placed it into orbit around the sun, but its plan was to return someday and use the Earth as a home; the evolution of life was a completely unplanned event that stemmed from a freak asteroid collision billions of years ago. The creature, as large as the moon and of comparable power, planned to de-terraform the planet back to its original state before taking up residence, unconcerned with the extinction of humanity since we are less than microorganisms compared to it. It was killed by Jenny Sparks in a Heroic Sacrifice (as the Spirit Of The 20th Century, her time was up anyway -- until she was resurrected as Jenny Quantum). The creature qualifies for this trope. Jenny does not.
- At the end of *Preacher* (Comic Book), the Saint of Killers kills god.

Films

- Only temporary, but *Dogma* makes killing God (or at least, Her current mortal guise, an old man on life support) crucial to the plot.
- When Bower confronts Payton/Gallo in *Pandorum*, he asserts that God died along with the rest of humanity, and that there is nobody left to judge their actions as the concepts of right and wrong and good and evil have ceased to exist.

Literature

- In *Towing Jehovah* by James Morrow, God's corpse is found in the Atlantic Ocean. The Vatican decides to bury it in Antarctica, while pissed-off atheists want to destroy it, as even a dead God is proof that they were wrong all along. In the next book of the trilogy, God gets posthumously put on trial for crimes against humanity.
 - Well, Not Quite Posthumous, as it turns out. At the end of the second, though, He gets Killed Off for Real. The third novel is about how a visible reminder of God's death -- a giant skull in geosynchronous orbit -- affects Western civilization.
- God (aka "The Authority") died in *The Amber Spyglass*. In the His Dark Materials verse, God was simply the first and most powerful angel. By the time Lyra and Will show up, he is senile and tortured by his eternal life. They simply let him out of his protective enclosure and he is freed, but he's too fragile to live in the world from sheer age, so he disintegrates from a slight breeze. Oh, the vicious irony.
- *Discworld*: In *Monstrous Regiment*, the Borogravian god Nuggan died some time ago. Since gods live or die based on their worshippers' belief. It is revealed that Nuggan died because everyone came to believe in his numerous abominations more than Nuggan himself.
 - In *Small Gods*, the Great God Om narrowly avoids this fate.
- *Our Friends From Frolix 8*, by Phillip K. Dick:

"God is dead," Nick said. "They found his carcass in 2019. Floating out in space near Alpha."
 "They found the remains of an organism advanced several thousand times over what we are," Charley said. "And it evidently could create habitable worlds and populate them with living organisms, derived from itself. But that doesn't prove it was God."

- In *Gods Debris*, God killed Himself, resulting in the Big Bang.
- Robert Rankin's *Waiting for Godalming*: God is shot dead in an alleyway. Later subverted, when it is revealed that God's death was faked as part of a massive insurance scam.
- In the book *IT*, by Stephen King, the Turtle created the universe (because of a stomach ache). Later, it's revealed that the Turtle died in the thirty-year time gap of the novel.
- In a Woody Allen short story, existential detective Kaiser Lupowitz is hired to find God; and becomes chief suspect when His body is found.
- In *Clay* by David Almond, upon going insane, Stephen Rose claims that God is dead, and died sometime in the 60's.
- In *The Egyptian*, the Cretan God (really a kind of sea monster) is dead. The priest keeps killing the human sacrifices to keep people from noticing this.
- Karl Edward Wagner's Kane is based on Cain from The Bible. Kane was one of the first humans, created by a mad god. In the story *At First Just Ghostly*, Kane claims to have later killed this god.
- In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Proctor invokes this trope when accused of witchcraft. "I say... I say... God is dead! A fire, a fire is burning! I hear the boot of Lucifer, I see his filthy face! And it is my face, and yours, Danforth! For them that quail to bring men out of ignorance, as I have quailed, and you quail now when you know in all your black hearts that this be fraud - God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together!"
- At the end of *The Way of Kings*, Dalinar receives a "prerecorded" vision from the Almighty, the setting's god. in which He reveals that He is actually dead, having been killed by a God of Evil named Odium at some point prior to the beginning of the book. This also has some crossover with *God Is Evil*, since Odium is now the world's *de facto* God.

- Except Cultivation, the third of Roshar's shard gods, is still around (although we haven't met her yet), and since the setting is actually part of the Cosmere, all the other shard gods are still running around on other worlds (apart from the ones Odium has Splintered, like Aona and Skai). Plus, it would be more accurate to say Tanavast, the man who became Honor, is dead, as Honor's power is still out there and it is possible another person may take up his shard. Got all that?
- As far as Vorinism, Roshar's dominant religion, is concerned, the trope is in full force, since Honor/The Almighty is/was their only recognized god.
- In Clive Barker's *Imajica*, God is killed by his own fire when the restoration of the titular circle causes it to boomerang through the dominions.

Live-Action TV

- A *Kids in The Hall* sketch centers around this. "God is dead...and here is the body to prove it."
 - ...and what was most surprising was how short He was...
- In season 5 of *Supernatural*, the Archangel Raphael informed Castiel that the reason Cas cannot find God is because He is dead. However, it's implied in the season 5 finale that Chuck is God, and therefore God is not, in fact, dead. Death does reveal that God will eventually die at the end of time by his hand.
- *Possibly* the case in *The Lost Room*. Some say that the Event that created the Objects was the death of God.
- Stated by Anthony Jr. in season 2 of *The Sopranos*, as part of his briefly becoming a Nietzsche Wannabe.

Music

- Heavy Metal - Too many songs to count.
- Nine Inch Nails - as listed in the page quote.
- Elton John, "Levon":

When the New York Times said God is dead
And the war's begun

- One of the most famous songs by Italian band *I Nomadi* ("The Nomads") is titled just that. Except, in this case, "God is dead" is meant as a metaphor, with God standing for near damn every value and ideal. The last part of the song subverts it though, because as long as there's "a newborn hope", as the song itself puts it, "if God dies, it's just for three days, and then he's born again".

Mythology

- In Norse Mythology, most of the important and well-known gods, such as Thor, Loki, Frey, and Odin end up dying permanently in the final battle of Ragnarok. Interestingly, when the Scandinavians began to accept Christianity, they actually merged Norse mythology with Christian ideas, by stating that Ragnarok had actually taken place already, and that it was a "prequel" to Christianity--that Adam and Eve were the

only survivors of Ragnarok.

- In Miami homeless children's street culture (<http://www.miaminewtimes.com/1997-06-05/news/myths-over-miami/>), it is sometimes believed that God is dead.
 - *Digger* based an in-universe myth on this.

Puppet Shows

- God from *Wonder Showzen* kills himself after losing a competition over the fate of the Earth and then they eat him.

Tabletop Games

- In *Demon: The Fallen*, Lucifer murders a monk for even *suggesting* that God, who has, to this point, been missing in action, may have really died to save the earth: The Sundering was not God's punishment for rebel angels breaking Her commandment of not revealing themselves to humanity, it was God sacrificing Herself by *catching the world* as it fell due to the violation of some cosmic law. The suggestion would haunt Lucifer until the End of Days.
- In *Planescape*, dead gods are a part of the setting, their corpses floating in the Astral Plane. There's even a high-level adventure entitled "Dead Gods". Also, the Lady of Pain killed the god Aoskar for daring to set up shop in Sigil; this is one of the greatest demonstrations of why you really don't mess with her.
 - She didn't attack him when he merely came there and has a portfolio that covered her portals. She killed him when his followers started to talk about her as his aspect aloud and some of her servants became his worshippers. Not only does she flay people with her gaze even for attempting to worship her as a deity in her own right, but in *Planescape*, the "aspect" part alone sometimes causes problems to the target (e.g. Bast didn't make it through).
 - The *Dungeons and Dragons* Forgotten Realms setting has a tendency to kill off some gods and introduce new ones every time a new edition of the game rules is released.
 - And then there are resurrection attempts. In *Finder's Bane*, for one.
- In *Kult*, God is dead, and the Devil is the only one who wants him back. Also, god is dying retroactively, being dead further and further back in history. It's mostly a good thing (as far as anything can be good in this Crapsack World).
- In *Warhammer 40000*, all but three members of the Eldar pantheon were killed with the birth of the Chaos God Slaanesh. The God-Emperor of Mankind is a far more complicated case - despite his power, he fiercely denied his divinity, but after being mortally wounded during the Horus Heresy books, he was placed on the Golden Throne and kept in a psychically-active vegetative state, leaving his followers to proclaim him a deity. If ten millennia of worship has elevated him to proper godhood, this trope will probably soon apply due to the recently-discovered irreparable malfunctions in the Golden Throne.^[2]
- In *Exalted*, this can (depending on your ST's preference for where to take the story) happen in the Endgame chapter of *Return of the Scarlet Emperor* with Infernal Exalted, possibly backed up by demons or even Abyssals, breaking into the Jade Pleasure Dome through a long-forgotten 'back door' and assassinating the Unconquered Sun, who lacked his usual invulnerability because he was addicted to the Games of Divinity. The Ebon Dragon never expected the massive power boost every Solar Exalt in Creation got when their patron Incarnae was killed.

Videogames

- The *Baldur's Gate* series is essentially the posthumous Batman Gambit of the god Bhaal, who foresaw his own death and arranged to be resurrected. Things usually don't work out quite perfectly for him. There's a side quest in the 2nd game in the temple of a different dead god who has since stopped being dead.
- *Grandia II* has the revelation that Granas, the God of Light, died fighting Valmar the Devil of Darkness long ago. Turns out they were both just Sufficiently Advanced Aliens though.
- *Neverwinter Nights 2: Mask of the Betrayer* features a dead god in an important role.
- The creation myth told by the cultists in *Silent Hill* ends with God dying.
- One of the possible final bosses in *Guardian Heroes* is "The Creator". When you beat him, he admits that he was just toying with humanity all along, and now that he's dying, humans are free to choose their own destiny.
- The entire premise of the *God of War* series is about the protagonist going on a quest to essentially kill all of the Greek gods, and he's already taken down Ares and Athena. At the end of God of War 3, every God Kratos encountered is dead, with the exceptions of Artemis and Aphrodite.
- Implied in *Tears to Tiara*. The Council of Angels are the ones running the show and, without supervision, have gone a little overboard on the whole Heaven on Earth thing. Watos (the supreme creator deity) hasn't been seen since existence started. Probably seen as less offensive than an actual evil God when we already have a good Satan.
- In the Zul'drak region of *World of Warcraft*, the Drakkari trolls native to the region have been killing their gods and stealing their powers in a desperate bid to protect themselves from the Scourge. Your character can go through a quest chain in which you try to save the gods or, failing that, Mercy Kill them or help them avenge themselves on their killers.
- The whole *Shin Megami Tensei* series. You have gods. You get to fight gods. YHVH is effectively immortal, however, even though he is temporarily killed in SMT II. As long as there is even one human who believes in a higher power, God will exist.
- In the *Left 4 Dead* campaign 'Dead Air', some of the graffiti on the walls says 'GOD IS DEAD'. Occasionally, Zoey can be heard saying, "Oh no, the zombies killed God!" when passing by this message.
- The majority of the Aedra of the *Elder Scrolls* universe invested so much of their essence into the Mundus that they became mortal and died. Earthbones, the laws of reality which bind mortals, are magical restraints created from their deaths. In all, only eight remain alive and they're halfway to dead themselves.
- The Creator Deity-slash-Eldritch Abomination Ormagoden from the Creation Myth in *Brutal Legend* chose to self-terminate rather than have his fire extinguished by the First Ones' dirt, destroying the ancient world and creating the Age of Metal from his own body in process.
- In *The Reconstruction*, Tezkhra is. (You have to bring him Back From the Dead.) Subverted in that he isn't actually a god, he's a sufficiently advanced alien, and just as killable as anyone else.
- In Mass Effect Cerebus agents find the corpse of a Reaper who they estimate had been rendered non-operational 37 million years ago. As they investigate it they begin to become indoctrinated by the Reaper, despite it being dead, and their minds start melding together as shown by them sharing memories that only logically they should know which is a side effect of the Reaper's hive mind. After a while everyone goes crazy and the only survivor makes an Apocalyptic Log talking about the Reapers as if they were Gods and that even a dead god (in this case the dead Reaper they found) can dream. In his own words he talks about how a true god, not the white-bearded old man with magic powers told about in mythology, is a verb, a force of nature that warps reality just by existing it doesn't have to desire affecting

things around it for it to do so. In this case he wishes that they had never found god.

Web Originals

- In The Salvation War Satan's already dead via anti-ship missile to the face, Jesus appears to have been nuked, and Yahweh's been killed by Michael-Lan.
- Played for laughs in the Team Starkid production *Starship*, set in the distant future. Tootsie Noodles mentions early on that there is empirical proof that science killed God^[3]. Anytime the word God is used, dead precedes it.

Junior: Thank dead God I caught you!

Real Life

- The April 8, 1966 cover of *Time* read, "Is God Dead?" The accompanying article described a movement known as "theothanatology" (in other words, the study of God's death).
- "The Theistic God is Dead - A Casualty of Terrorism. (<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/Protestant/2001/10/The-Theistic-God-Is-Dead-A-Casualty-Of-Terrorism.aspx>)" An article by John Shelby Spong, a liberal theologian and a former Episcopalian bishop.
- Certain theological theories deriving from Deism, Pantheism, or Pandeism hold our Universe to be the physical remains of an essentially "dead" deity.

Notes

1. ↑ What he was probably trying to get at is that modern people have started to wake up to the "fact" that everything is meaningless, and there is no such thing as universal truths, absolute values, or any sort of afterlife -- thus, a more accurate statement (according to Nietzsche) would be "God never even existed", but that wouldn't quite manage to convey the poetic severity of the message. Thankfully, we don't need to dwell on grim philosophical intangibles to enjoy a story about the mortality of the divine
2. ↑ A more optimistic, and therefore heretical, theory is that if the Emperor's mortal shell ever truly dies, he will finally be free to become the all-powerful god he is worshiped as.
3. ↑ He'd like to think that when He died, He went to heaven.

Retrieved from "https://allthetropes.orain.org/w/index.php?title=God_Is_Dead&oldid=1012892"


Categories: Trope | Religion Tropes | God Is Dead

- This page was last modified on 7 May 2014, at 10:10.
- This page has been accessed 67 times.
- Content is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license unless otherwise noted. See Copyrights for details.

Death of God theology

Part of a series on

Christianity



✝

 Christianity portal

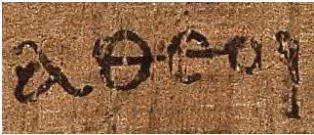
v

t

e^[1]

Part of a series on

Atheism



Types and concepts

Types

•

Implicit and explicit

•

Negative and positive

•

Christian

•

Hindu

•

Jewish

•

State atheism

Concepts

•

Antitheism

•

Atheism and religion

History and criticism

•


History of atheism

•

New Atheism

•

Criticism of atheism

Arguments for atheism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Against God's existence Atheist's Wager Fate of the unlearned Free will God of the gaps Hitchens's razor Incompatible properties Inconsistent revelation Nonbelief Omnipotence paradox Poor design Problem of evil Problem of Hell Russell's teapot Theological noncognitivism Ultimate Boeing 747 gambit
People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographics Discrimination and persecution of atheists Notable atheists
Related concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Atheism portal WikiProject
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v t e ^[2]

Death of God theology is a Christian movement in which the belief in the traditional theistic God is either absent, or God is posited as having "died" in a historical or pre-historical event. The death of God movement is sometimes technically referred to as "theothanatology," deriving from the Greek *theos* (God) and *thanatos* (death). The main proponents of this radical theology included the Christian theologians Gabriel Vahanian, Paul Van Buren, William Hamilton, John A.T. Robinson, Thomas J. J. Altizer, John D. Caputo, and the rabbi Richard L. Rubenstein.

History

Mysticism

Some of the earliest traces of *Death of God* theology can be found in the work of the great Christian mystics. Drawing upon the Neoplatonism of Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite's *Mystical Theology* speaks of a God "that transcends all being," that is to say, does not properly exist.^[3] This emphasis upon a God who is "beyond Being" would continue into the high Middle Ages appearing in the works of Nicholas of Cusa, Meister Eckhart, and John of the Cross, among many others.

The theme of God's "death" became considerably more explicit in the theosophism of the 18th and 19th century mystic William Blake. In his intricately engraved illuminated books, Blake sought to throw off the dogmatism of his contemporary Christianity and, guided by a lifetime of vivid visions, examine the dark, destructive, and apocalyptic undercurrent of theology. Most notably, Blake refused to view the crucifixion of Jesus as a simple bodily death, and rather, saw in this event a *kenosis*, a self-emptying of God. As Altizer writes, Blake "celebrates a cosmic and historical movement of the Godhead that culminates in the death of God himself."^[4]

19th Century Philosophy

In the 19th century, *Death of God* thought entered philosophical consciousness through the work of German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Drawing upon the mysticism of Jakob Böhme and the Idealism of Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, Hegel sought to revise Immanuel Kant's Idealism through the introduction of a dialectical methodology. Adapting this dialectic to the chief theological problem, the nature of God, Hegel argued that God (as Absolute or Father) is radically negated by the concrete incarnation of God (as Christ or Son). This negation is subsequently itself negated at the Crucifixion of Jesus, resulting in the emergence of the Holy Spirit, God as both concrete (the church) and absolute (spiritual community). In Hegelian thought, therefore, the death of God does not result in a strict negativity, but rather, permits the emergence of the full revelation of God: Absolute Consciousness.^[5]

The most (in-)famous proponent of the *Death of God* was the German philosopher and proto-existentialist Friedrich Nietzsche, who was largely responsible for bringing the phrase "God is Dead" (German: ☛) "*Gott ist tot*" [Wikipedia:Media helpFile:De-Gott_ist_tot.ogg](#)) into public consciousness. This phrase first appears in *The Gay Science* (German: *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*), in sections 108 (New Struggles), 125 (The Madman), and for a third time in section 343 (The Meaning of our Cheerfulness). It is also found in Nietzsche's work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (German: *Also sprach Zarathustra*), which is most responsible for popularizing the phrase. The idea is stated in "The Madman" as follows:

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. Yet his shadow still looms. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?

—Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Section 125, tr. Walter Kaufmann^[6]

20th Century Philosophy/Theology

Though he preceded the formal *Death of God* movement, the prominent 20th-century Protestant theologian Paul Tillich remains highly influential in the field. Drawing upon the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, Friedrich Schelling, and Jacob Boehme, Tillich developed a notion of God as the "ground of Being" and the response to nihilism.^[7] Central to this notion was Tillich's rejection of traditional theism and insistence upon a "God above the God of theism." In *The Courage to Be* he writes:

The courage to take the anxiety of meaninglessness upon oneself is the boundary line up to which the courage to be can go. Beyond it is mere non-being. Within it all forms of courage are re-established in the power of the God above the God of theism. The courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt.^[8]

In 1961, Gianni Vahanian's *The Death of God* was published. Vahanian argued that modern secular culture had lost all sense of the sacred, lacking any sacramental meaning, no transcendental purpose or sense of providence. He concluded that for the modern mind "God is dead". In Vahanian's vision a transformed post-Christian and post-modern culture was needed to create a renewed experience of deity.

Altizer offered a radical theology of the *death of God* that drew upon William Blake, Hegelian thought and Nietzschean ideas. He conceived of theology as a form of poetry in which the immanence (presence) of God could be encountered in faith communities. However, he no longer accepted the possibility of affirming belief in a transcendent God. Altizer concluded that God had incarnated in Christ and imparted his immanent spirit which remained in the world even though Jesus was dead. Unlike Nietzsche, Altizer believed that God truly died. He is considered to be the leading exponent of the Death of God movement.

Richard L. Rubenstein represented that radical edge of Jewish thought working through the impact of the Holocaust. In a technical sense he maintained, based on the Kabbalah, that God had "died" in creating the world. However, for modern Jewish culture he argued that the death of God occurred in Auschwitz. Although the literal death of God did not occur at this point, this was the moment in time in which humanity was awakened to the idea that a theistic God may not exist. In Rubenstein's work, it was no longer possible to believe in an orthodox/traditional theistic God of the Abrahamic covenant; rather, God is a historical process.^[9]

Although the direct linkage between the Lacanian-Marxist critical theory of Slavoj Žižek and *Death of God* thought is not immediately apparent, his explicitly Hegelian reading of Christianity, defended most conspicuously in the 2009 *The Monstrosity of Christ*, strongly lends itself to this tradition. Strongly influenced by both Dietrich Bonhoeffer and G.K. Chesterton, Žižek advocates a variant of christian atheism, more or less strongly depending upon context. As early as Adam Kotsko's 2008 *Žižek and Theology* a direct linkage between Žižek and this tradition has been maintained. Initially, reviewers vigorously rejected this connection, but following the publication of *The Monstrosity of Christ* as well as subsequent co-paneled sessions,^[10] the direct relation between Žižek and Thomas Altizer has become clear.^[11]

Theology

Secularism

See also: Current issues in secularization|Secularization § Current issues in secularization|Current issues in secularization

Vahanian, Van Buren, and Hamilton agree that the concept of transcendence had lost any meaningful place in modern thought. According to the norms of contemporary modern thought, God *is* dead. In responding to this collapse of transcendence, Vahanian proposes a radically post-Christian alternative to traditional theism. Van Buren and Hamilton offered secular people the option of Jesus as the model human who acted in love. The encounter with the Christ of faith would be open in a church-community.

God's existence

To what extent God may properly be understood as "dead" is highly debated among death of God theologians. In its strongest forms, God is said to have literally died, often as incarnated on the cross or at the moment of creation. Thomas J.J. Altizer remains the clearest proponent of this perspective. Weaker forms of this theological bent often posit this "death" as a metaphor or existential recognition of God's existence outside of (or beyond) Being.

Time Magazine

The cover of the April 8, 1966 edition of *Time* magazine asked the question "Is God Dead?"^[12] and the accompanying article addressed growing atheism in America at the time, as well as the growing popularity of Death of God theology.^[13]

Death of God Theologians

- Thomas J. J. Altizer
- William Blake
- John D. Caputo
- Meister Eckhart
- William Hamilton
- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
- Friedrich Nietzsche
- Pseudo-Dionysius
- John Robinson (bishop of Woolwich)
- Richard L. Rubenstein
- Paul Tillich
- Gabriel Vahanian
- Paul van Buren
- Gianni Vattimo
- Slavoj Žižek



Further reading

- Altizer, Thomas J. J. (1967). *The Altizer-Montgomery Dialogue a Chapter in the God is Dead Controversy*. Inter-Varsity Press.
- Altizer, Thomas J. J. (2002). *The New Gospel of Christian Atheism*. The Davies Group. ISBN 1-888570-65-2.
- Altizer, J. J. and William Hamilton (1966). *Radical Theology and the Death of God*. Bobbs-Merrill.
- Blake, William (2001). *William Blake: The Complete Illuminated Books*. Thames & Hudson. ISBN 0500282455.
- Caputo, John D., Gianni Vattimo (2007). *After the Death of God*. Columbia University. ISBN 978-0231141253.
- Hamilton, William (1994). *A Quest for the Post-Historical Jesus*. Continuum International publishing Group. ISBN 978-0826406415.
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1977). *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0198245971.
- Heidegger, Martin (2002). *The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead,' in Holzwege, edited and translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ice, Jackson, and Carey, J. ed. (1967). *The Death of God Debate*. Westminster Press.
- Kaufmann, Walter (1974). *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. Princeton University Press. ISBN 978-0691019833.
- Montgomery, J. (1966). *The 'Is God Dead?' Controversy*. Zondervan.

- Murchland, Bernard (1967). *The Meaning of the Death of God*. Random House.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1974). *The Gay Science*. Vintage. ISBN 978-0394719856.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich (1977). *The Portable Nietzsche*. Penguin Books. ISBN 978-0140150629.
- Pseudo-Dionysius (1988). *The Complete Works*. Paulist Press. ISBN 0809128381.
- Roberts, Tyler T. (1998). *Contesting Spirit: Nietzsche, Affirmation, Religion*. Princeton University Press. ISBN 978-0691059372.
- Tillich, Paul (1952). *The Courage to Be*. Yale University Press. ISBN 978-0300084719.
- Vahanian, Gabriel (1961). *The Death of God: The Culture of our Post-Christian Era*. George Braziller. ISBN 1606089846.
- Van Til, Cornelius (1966). *Is God Dead?*. Presbyterian and Reformed.
- Žižek, Slavoj (2009). *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?*. The MIT Press. ISBN 0262012715.

References

- [1] <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:Christianity&action=edit>
- [2] http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:Atheism_sidebar&action=edit
- [3] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. "The Mystical Theology" (<http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeII/MysticalTheology.html>)
- [4] William Blake and the Role of Myth in the Radical Christian Vision (<http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=537&C=595>), Thomas J.J. Altizer
- [5] The Deaths of God in Hegel and Nietzsche and the Crisis of Values in Secular Modernity and Post-secular Postmodernity (<http://sitemason.vanderbilt.edu/files/dVIZh6/The20Deaths20of20God20in20Hegel20and20Nietzsche20and20the20Crisis20of20Values20in20Secular20Modernity.pdf>), William Franke
- [6] Friedrich Nietzsche. "The Madman" in *The Gay Science* trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage, 1974)
- [7] Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952)
- [8] *ibid*, 190.
- [9] Richard L. Rubenstein. "God After the Death of God" in *After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism*. 2nd. ed (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 293–306
- [10] "Whither the 'Death of God': A Continuing Currency?" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YalQEnIsiac>)
- [11] Adam Kotsko, "And Fur Sich 'Altizer as the third rail of academic theology'" (<http://itself.wordpress.com/2013/02/05/altizer-as-the-third-rail-of-academic-theology/>)
- [12] Time Magazine, Is God Dead? (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,835309-2,00.html>), April 8, 1966
- [13] Alister McGrath. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers), 255

External links

- John M. Frame, "Death of God Theology" (http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/1988Death.html)
- Austin Cline, "Nihilism and Christianity: Death of God Theology" (<http://atheism.about.com/od/nihilismnihilists/a/christianity.htm>)
- "The reality is near - Let's Wake up Together" (<http://www.yourawake.com>)

Article Sources and Contributors

Death of God theology *Source:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=604685288> *Contributors:* BD2412, Bordello, Eb7473, Jleavittpearl, Khazar2, Mangoe, Mauro Lanari, Nirvana2013, Sergio7z, Trivialist, 42 anonymous edits

Image Sources, Licenses and Contributors

File:StJohnsAshfield StainedGlass GoodShepherd Portrait.jpg *Source:* http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:StJohnsAshfield_StainedGlass_GoodShepherd_Portrait.jpg *License:* Creative Commons Attribution-Sharealike 3.0 *Contributors:* Stained glass: Alfred Handel, d. 1946, photo:Toby Hudson

File:P christianity.svg *Source:* http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:P_christianity.svg *License:* GNU Free Documentation License *Contributors:* Booyabazooka, NuclearWarfare, Rocket000, Wst

File:Ephesians 2,12 - Greek atheos.jpg *Source:* http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Ephesians_2,12_-_Greek_atheos.jpg *License:* Public Domain *Contributors:* Image uploaded to en.wikipedia by en:User:Brian0918 on 15:48, 29 March 2007.

File:Atheism template.svg *Source:* http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Atheism_template.svg *License:* Creative Commons Attribution-Sharealike 3.0 *Contributors:* Atom_of_Atheism-Zanaq.svg: User:Zanaq Blank_template.svg: User:Urutseg derivative work: Teox (talk)

File:Loudspeaker.svg *Source:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Loudspeaker.svg> *License:* Public Domain *Contributors:* Bayo, Frank C. Müller, Gmaxwell, Gnosygnu, Graphium, Husky, Iamunknown, Mirithing, Myself488, Nethac DIU, Nixón, Omegatron, Rocket000, Shanmugamp7, Snow Blizzard, Steinsplitter, The Evil IP address, Túrelío, Wouterhagens, 29 anonymous edits

File:Is God Dead.jpg *Source:* http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Is_God_Dead.jpg *License:* unknown *Contributors:* User:Lampman

License

Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0
[//creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)