WHAT IF CHRISTIANITY WERE TRUE

BY P.Z. MYERS

If this religion were true, here is what we have to live with

* Our lives are miserable and evil, tainted everywhere by sin. Only in our death do we have an opportunity to escape.
* We are pawns in a war between a god and an army of demigods (angels), and Satan and his army of demons. Satan is constantly trying to corrupt us.
* When we die, we have two possible fates. The most likely is that we’ll end up in Satan’s clutches, which means an eternity (Forever! Endlessly!) of pain and agony and grief, tortured in a lake of fire.
* If we win the god’s favor, we get to spend an eternity (Forever! Endlessly!) servilely worshipping this deity.
* We have a purpose. It is to be slaves to god. That’s right, under Christianity we are all slaves to a omnipotent, omniscient master.
* In some Christian sects, everything is predestined. Your efforts are futile, your ultimate fate in heaven and hell is set. No amount of struggle will change what will happen to you.
* In other sects, you have free will, and can influence where you end up. Unfortunately, the exercise of your will is irrelevant except in your ability to follow arbitrary and peculiar rules: you may not masturbate, for instance, and you must avoid eating certain foods. You are free to obey god’s capricious whims, or not.
* Your god loves you so much that he will kill his own son for you. But there’s a catch: you have to believe that god is the kind of guy who would murder his own son (and worship him for it!), or you will go to hell.
* Your god is the kind of monster who would exterminate just about every living thing on the planet because they were wicked. But at the same time, it’s dogma that every one of us is a wicked sinner. The axe is always suspended above your neck, the only thing keeping it away are the fancies of a tyrant.
* This god is not a moral being: he has advocated rape, genocide, the murder of children, slavery, and blood sacrifice. The purpose of these horrific acts? His glorification.

Now please notice: I am not making the fallacious argument that because these consequences are awful, god is not real. I’m stipulating that the Christian god actually exists, and I’m asking Christians whether that would be a good thing or not — whether we should exult or be downcast at the idea of Jehovah’s existence.

If it would help, because I know they’re so soaked in the indoctrination that says an immortal incarnation of Dexter is a great thing that they’ll find it difficult to see beyond that, imagine if Allah were the one true god and you were expected to follow Muslim practices in order to be in his good graces. Or if that’s still too benign for you (I can’t imagine how), picture what eternity would be like if the True God were Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec god of war and human sacrifice.

I rather suspect that extortion on a cosmic scale will dictate what most Christians can say. The existence of the Christian god would be a colossal catastrophe for humanity, reducing us to inconsequential slave to an invulnerable authoritarian megalomaniac, but if you really believe in such a nightmare, you wouldn’t be able to complain — you’ll LOVE GOD AS HE DEMANDS, or he’ll SET YOU ON FIRE. And if you have any doubt, if you speak out and suggest that maybe his rule is a bit scary, he’ll just wish you into the cornfield.

But try, for just a moment, to admit that that god is damned evil. If he’s not so evil, he’ll forgive you a little doubt, right? And if he is that evil, why are you planning to spend eternity worshipping him?