

Pascal's Wager

Pascal The Man

Context

No formal education.
Educated by mathematician father.
Contemporary of R Descartes.

The Observation

"the metaphysical proofs for the existence of God are so remote from human reasoning and so complex that they have little impact"

Meaning

God cannot be contained in our reason.
'The Philosophers' God'

Keywords

Atheist Agnostic
Theist Deist

What is P's W?

Formally

1. If you believe in God and God does exist, you will be rewarded in the afterlife.
2. If you do not believe in God and God does exist, you will be punished in the afterlife.
3. If God does not exist, nothing will happen to you in the afterlife whether you believed in him or not.
4. Clearly there is more to gain from believing than not believing in God.
5. Therefore it makes sense to believe in God.

	God is Real/Exists	God does not exist
you believe	you live in paradise	nothing happens
you do not believe	you live in hell	nothing happens

so clearly the only thing to do is to choose between
[BIG + or nothing] or [BIG - or nothing]

Does it work?

Objection to "you lose nothing by believing".

Depends on what religion is.
Life of sacrifice?

Is this a good reason to believe?

Remember Plato.
Pascal gives a motivation, but not any evidence.

Is the real wager between belief and 'not'.

There are many religions. What happens if you pick the wrong one?
Is God bigger than one religion?