

New Religious Landscape Study from Pew Research

Post by "Cassius" of February 28, 2025 at 9:53 AM

[Quote from Titus](#)

(Supernatural) Religion is a mechanism of life that very often benefits the people pursuing it. In a functional way of understanding it can make sense, as it helps people to connect with each other, giving an ethical framework and trust in the world.

Yes, but the same could be said for cannibalism or any other system of the type that Epicurus references in [PD10](#). No matter how ridiculous the system, since there is in fact no "fate" or "supernatural gods." then it is "possible" for even the most upside down theories to provide pleasure at least for short periods of time. It's probably greatly exciting and even pleasurable for the first couple of seconds to fly through the air after jumping off a skyscraper. And there are examples of terrible people who succeed in remaining on the top of the heap for very long periods of time.

So yes even supernatural religion "can" sometimes lead to success, and in fact Epicurus says it would be better to believe in such things rather than give in to hard determinism.

But I don't think that observations makes "both statements true" in terms of them "making sense." It does not "make sense" to structure one's life based on fantasies and made-up notions about supernatural forces unless you are in an extremely unusual situation -- extreme to the point of practical nonexistence.

Also I think it's useful to point out that you're right that supernatural religion does give people a way to "connect" with each other and provides an ethical framework. That's why "connecting" -- even "friendship" itself -- has to be seen for what it is -- a TOOL, and "instrument," which is sometimes very productive, and sometimes the worst thing you can do. Unless you have solid plans to be the "top cannibal" yourself, I wouldn't want to be a "connected" with a group of cannibals.