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DAILY RUN Afterbirth Daily Discussion - 7th Jan

THE BINDING OF ISAAC REDDIT

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How much does the (anti-)religious theme influence your experience of the game?

(self.bindingofisaac)

submitted 1 year ago * (last edited 1 year ago) by WouldBeSomething

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What I mean is does the Biblical iconography and the satire of the Isaac story resonate with you at all? If so, for what reasons? Or does this not even register with you? Perhaps the religious characters / items could be replaced with generic ones and you wouldn't mind.

Personally, I was bought up pretty much untouched by religion and so the satire in Isaac might not have the same impact on me as others who were raised to treat the Bible sacredly.

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[–] Sir--Goat 35 points 1 year ago

I'm catholic, and none. Its just a videogame (though an awesomely fun one!).

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[–] [deleted] 6 points 1 year ago

I am catholic as well, and whenever I see a religious item, I say to myself "Hey, I actually know what that is!" Its a cool feeling. I also don't think the game is anti or pro religion, it just references it.

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[–] CasterMojave 23 points 1 year ago

The Binding of Isaac is not anti-religious.

I am a Christian and don't find it offensive in the least, the kind of people it (and more specifically the character of Isaac's Mother) are lampooning deserve to be lampooned.

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[–] kyle_phillips 12 points 1 year ago

I attend a Baptist church and have been a Christian all my life. I just see Isaac's mom as a psychopath using Christianity as an excuse to abuse her son and I've never been one for caring about the plot of a game especially at the expense of gameplay and mechanics. I'm also into death metal and while I know most of the lyrics are counter to what I believe, I wouldn't be listening to it if the musical performances weren't great since vocals are the least important thing for my enjoyment of any death metal band.

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Rules

1. Be excellent to each other and follow reddiquette.
2. If appropriate, use a link flair to tag your submissions (e.g. Fan Art, Item Ideas)
3. Keep submissions related to the Binding of Isaac. No low-effort memes.
4. Don't beg for games.
5. Self-promotion is allowed but do not spam (max once per week)
6. Please send a mod message before posting a [META] thread.
7. Don't trust the egg. Don't believe his lies.

For more detailed rule explanations click here

Wikis

- Binding of Isaac: Rebirth Wiki (Gamepedia.com)
- Binding of Isaac Wiki (Wikia.com)
- BoI:R seeds database by /u/SneakyK
- Version History wiki page

Online Guides & Tools

- Afterbirth Item Cheat Sheet by /u/elucidater
- Missing HUD Stats Overlay by /u/networkme
- GreedButt.com daily leaderboard by /u/eur0pa

[–] **DoomAssault** **1 point** 1 year ago

Death metal lyrics aren't anti-Christian at ALL. That's black metal

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[–] **Ranoro8289** **11 points** 1 year ago

I've logged over 300 hours in the game. It's gotten to the point where I barely even think about the theme anymore and it's just a numbers game (especially with the spider mod). The only time it really comes up is when I'm playing in front of other people and they ask something along the lines of "Oh my god what the hell are you playing?!" and then I remember I'm controlling a naked child.

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[–] **JimmyGetaway** **25 points** 1 year ago

Having been brought up in a Christian environment, the religious elements constitute a huge part of why I love the game.

I've never found it particularly shocking or vengeful, as the anti-religious streak of the game is fairly tame really, but the religious symbols resonate with a kind of cultural power for me that makes their function in the game seem much darker/funnier.

I also can relate to the way that the game structures Isaac's psychological journey around religion ie defeating himself as the seven deadly sins, as a christ-like ascending figure, etc.

I don't believe in Christianity but it's had a role in my life and consequently lots of archaic childhood ideas in my head are partially formed out of religious myth and iconography. For this reason I find Isaac wickedly funny and sometimes quite moving. I think if all that stuff wasn't in the game I wouldn't care very much about it.

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[–] **KeviNOlighT** **6 points** 1 year ago

Similarly, without all its themes, I guess I would still really liked the game and thought it's a lot of fun and I would've respect it a lot (like I do with Spelunky), but I wouldn't have ended up loving it so much. BoI just resonates with me (and surely with much more people) and I haven't been as excited for a game before as with Rebirth, heh (I also loved Dark Souls so freaking much and I was so excited for DkS2, I thought I couldn't top that hah). Specifically about religion, I grew up catholic and now I'm an atheist. Sorry if I went a bit off-topic, I wanted to say how I agreed and just show some appreciation for BoI.

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[–] **Memoski** Artist **6 points** 1 year ago

I went to a catholic middle school and got very attached to the bible as a means to cope with bullying, but I forgot most of it on high school and I'm practically an atheist/agnostic now. Or, as my father says, a social-catholic, because I'm fine with the festivities and weddings and so (we're all catholics, but we only go to churches when doing tourism or for weddings. None of us is truly devoted)

However, I find it odd that this game has actually made me like religion again, somewhat. I mean, I spent hours doing research for my item ideas, which involved reading many bible passages (like the mustard seed teaching of Jesus) and so on. I even looked for my middle school bible to give it a reading. When you don't take this stuff at face value, it's actually fascinating.

How ironic that pseudo-anti-christian propaganda actually made me more attached to religion. Knowing more truly adds to the experience. Kudos, Edmund. Kudos.

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- ModdingOfIsaac.com mod database

Videos

- Northernlion's Let's Play Series
- Bisnap's Video Series

Chat

- Discord server
- Rizon.net IRC channel

Official Sites

- Edmund's Blog
- Official Rebirth Blog
- Nicalis' games (including Rebirth)

Sister Subreddits

- /r/themoddingofisaac - Rebirth modding community
- /r/edmundm - General Edmund McMillen game discussion
- /r/TBoIRule34 - The mature side of Isaac **(NSFW)**
- /r/fingeredgame - JamesID + Edmund's hyperrealisic 'whodunnit' game
- /r/isaacharacters - Cross-post your isaac combinations here!
- /r/isaacthegathering - Isaac and Magic the Gathering mashup

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discussions in /r/bindingofisaac X

245 points · 79 comments

Drawing of ALL AFTERBIRTH BOSSES [COMPLETE]

[–] **unabatedshagie** **2 points** 1 year ago

Means nothing to me, I don't even know what some of it means. Sure I've heard of Judas etc.

All I care about is the gameplay, the religious theme doesn't even register.

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> [–] **is_a_jerk** **0 points** 1 year ago
>
> Agreed. I play this game because it's fun and relatively well balanced. I don't even think about the imagery 99% of the time.
>
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[–] **vgman20** **3 points** 1 year ago

It's *not* anti-religious, Ed has brought this up several times. Its based in religion and draws off of it, but it looks at it in both positive and negative ways.

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[–] **SneakNSnore** **6 points** 1 year ago

Isaac is not "anti-religion". Nothing in the game bashes religion. It contains many things that religious people might take offence too, but it never shows anything "anti-religious". It uses religion to tell its story, but there are crazy atheists too. Isaac's mom just happens to be Christian.

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[–] **DarkDXZ** **2 points** 1 year ago

Catholic (more like agnostic now though) here.
It enriches the experience but doesn't have a greater impact on my faith (or lack thereof) - it's just a game, but a damn good one.

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[–] **_RageToast** **2 points** 1 year ago

I'm not fully Christian, but as someone who has gone to private school and had many years of religion classes and having a loose belief in Christianity, I think it's a cool feeling getting all the references. For example, starting with Judas, you get 3 pennies. Judas sold Jesus Christ to Pontius Pilate for 30 silver coins so that he'd be executed. There's plenty more, I just can't name them right off the top of my head. I think tying all the Christian references with such a morbid feeling and art style in Isaac ties to Ed's childhood of a rather negative introduction to Catholicism.

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[+] *[deleted] 1 year ago (5 children)*

[–] **Gyvon** **2 points** 1 year ago

It's a stylized retelling of a story from Genesis. The game is not anti religious

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[–] **certainlysquare** **2 points** 1 year ago

I was raised in a half atheist half Jewish household, and the game plays well to my satirical mood towards religion. As a result of the atheist parent and modern anti-religious culture, I have been brought up thinking religion is, in a way, a joke of sorts, and this game plays very well with that. Edit: that being said, I respect religion and religious people (except for Jim cuz he's a dick)

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[–] **flying-sheep** Mod **2 points** 1 year ago

i am an anti-theist who views religion as something necessarily harmful and poisonous (religious people, this is nothing against you: i love every human, it's just some ideas that i hate)

that being said, i don't view TBOI as something anti-religious. it is simply criticizing religious extremism, a criticism something most people can get behind nowadays, religious or not.

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[–] **FuturaStalkee** **1 point** 1 year ago

I'm a Catholic, and I don't think it's exactly anti-religious. It's done tastefully because it's more about the characters' interpretations of Christianity, and it's not like Jesus comes down and does a 360 kickflip while smoking a spliff.

I've seen people commenting on Youtube that they were offended by things like the song in the Rebirth trailer, but I think they're just looking for reasons to be annoyed.

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[–] **Namaztak** **1 point** 1 year ago

I remember buying this game for a friend, then having him come into work like "It's just anti religion, yes!" And I kinda hated that that was all he seemed to take from it.

I'm not even religious and I was kinda put off by that. I'd just taken it as a neat game by someone I like with a bunch of biblical references in it.

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[–] **awfulmemory** **1 point** 1 year ago

I have lived in Alabama all my life so I have been inundated with religion and religious people. I don't really pay much attention to it other than to laugh at some of the items. I have known people who are similar to Isaac's mother, and so I know where Edmund got the idea. Other than that, I don't notice things although a generic non religious theme wouldn't be as much fun I think.

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[–] **Dude579** **1 point** 1 year ago

For me (speaking as who was a Christian for 7 years but am not longer I feel that this game just has religious theme and if you want to take away from the game that religion is bad or good that is up to you. That being said I find it fascinating to think upon Isaac's personal experience and about the reason or context we are playing the game (since this game is open to interpretation) from time to time. It also looks at the effects of religion on people. But most of the time playing I am more focused on if I can pick up polyphemus or not.

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[–] **DoomZero755** Wiki Admin **1 point** 1 year ago

Perhaps you should edit your post to ask people what their religion is. I'm sure that'll be a helpful piece of information in the context of their response.

I'm athiest, my immediate family is athiest, but in the past I guess my extended family was Christian. The effect of the theme on my experience of the game is *exceedingly* minimal. The religious iconography holds little meaning to me within the game. My experience with religion has no effect on my enjoyment of the game. Similarly, this game has no effect on my perception of religion.

Edmund is asked religious questions quite frequently on his blog. I'm pretty sure the general trend of his answers is "It's just a theme. I have no

message on Christianity, or toward Christians in general."

That said, the religious theme makes sense within the game for defining many things. If you were to remove the religious theme, the game would suffer. Its theme really ties a lot of the different elements of the game together.

I dunno. I'm trying to write more but I've suddenly realized that I just don't care enough about the topic to continue.

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[–] **lkanacanyon** **1 point** 1 year ago

While I cant really say right now where exactly I am in the religion topic, I can say that I have been a devoted christian for most of my life, and I have no issues with the themes of The Binding of Isaac.

Id like to point out first, that **The Binding if Isaac is not anti-religious at all**. With that out of the way, I must say that the religious aspect and themes of the game is one of the things that really got me interested in it, I actually love the fact that someone used contents from it to make a game, it has always annoyed me how some people feel insulted with the slightiest inclusion of something about religion in all sorts of media, even if its in no way making fun of it.

If you set aside all the Catholic/chistian steriotypes and ignorant assumptions about it, people will notice The Bible is actually a very interesting piece of literature to read. The same way Greek mythology is used a lot in media and videogames because it has a lot of fun content to work with, the Catholic religion does too (and Ed has proven this), the problem is how stupidly sensible some people are.

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[–] **[deleted]** **0 points** 1 year ago

The game isn't anti-religious. Where did you get that idea?

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