

attempts at character assassination have distorted the public perception of what these labels mean and how they are used. The following explanation is presented to clarify the terms and their usage.

Theism address the issue of belief. For any claim about the existence of a god, theists are individuals who accept that this claim is true. One way of stating this is that the theist possesses the positive belief that this god claim is true.

Atheism literally means "without theism". An atheist is someone who does not accept, as true, claims about the existence of a god. This does not necessarily mean that atheists actively believe that no gods exist.

Considering the claims regarding the existence of a god, there are two possible claims:

- God exists
- God does not exist

For either claim, there are two positions one can take with regard to belief:

- belief or acceptance of the claim
- disbelief or rejection of the claim

For claim number 1 (God exists), the theist's position is one of belief, while the atheist's position is one of disbelief.

For claim number 2 (God does not exist), the theist's position is one of disbelief, while atheists can hold either position.

Some atheists actively believe that no god exists while others hold that neither