

Bible Special 06-09-05b

Let's pick up our study now. We're looking at secular humanism, what it says about itself, what the logical conclusions are that can be drawn from it. We've already seen that they claim to believe in free inquiry, where you can pursue your ideas, yet not if your ideas are religious, because we also believe in the separation of church and state.

That's number two. Number three is the ideal of freedom. These are the numbers that are given in the Secular Humanist Manifesto from 1980.

The ideal of freedom. They oppose both secular and non-secular totalitarianism vigorously. As democratic secularists, we consistently defend the ideal of freedom, not only the freedom of conscience and belief from those ecclesiastical, political and economic interests that seek to repress them.

Once again, ecclesiastical, that means the church comes first. What is the big enemy of freedom in the world? Well, the first one is ecclesiastical, then it's political and economic. In their minds, the biggest threat to freedom is the church.

Do you ever hear anybody talking about the Muslims as an ecclesiastical force? Who's the ecclesiastical force? Ecclesiology is the study of the church. So it's a very thinly veiled, they ought to call this the anti-religion manifesto. Et cetera, et cetera.

Number four, ethics based on critical intelligence. Now this is not like critical mass or critical injury. Critical intelligence means intelligence that uses criticism, that uses discernment.

That's what they're getting at. Ethics based on critical intelligence. The moral views, now this is something to pay attention to.

Think about this. Where do we get our ideas of right and wrong? Why is stealing wrong? Why is adultery wrong? Why is murder wrong? Why do we believe it's wrong? God says so. The Bible says so.

We have morals that are drawn from a divine set of standards. God says, thou shalt not, and that makes those things wrong. Now, let's take an instance like adultery.

Most people would believe that taking a life, some people think any taking of life, it doesn't matter if it's a criminal or somebody on the other side of a battle line or whatever, it's always wrong. But let's take something a little bit less clear. How about adultery? Here are two people who are married.

They made promises to each other when they got married. They said, I will be true to you as long as the grass grows and the river flows. Better for worse, rich or poor, sickness or death, it doesn't matter.

You get all your arms ripped off in an accident, you can be horribly disfigured by fire, it doesn't matter, I am with you until death do us part. I promise, I plight thee my truth, is what they used to say, which means I pledge you my truth. I pledge you my sacred honor.

I promise it's you and you alone until we die. Well, then somebody sees some other person. Maybe that person is married also.

And then these two people, even though they've made promises to their spouse, they say, oh, I love you and you give me a sense of excitement I haven't had since I was young and having romantic entanglement or whatever. Alright, so then what happens? There is a mutual consent that takes place, right? And there are people who would say, well, that's okay because these people have agreed. What about an open marriage? There are people who have what they call an open marriage, where the husband says to the wife, you know, I think it's kind of cool if you go mess around with other men.

The woman might say, well, I think it's kind of cool if you go mess around with other, what do I say? The wife says, okay, for the man, mess around with other women. Or other men. I mean, there's all kinds of strange things.

Now, if everybody agrees to have a thing, it's probably not the best time to talk about it, but they have things where couples will get together and swap spouses just for fun. And everybody says it's okay. Now, here's my question.

Suppose you have this situation where everybody says it's okay. You can have my wife and I'll take yours. You can have my husband, I'll take yours, and so on.

Everybody says it's all right. They're all consenting adults. Is it right or is it wrong? A Christian would say it's wrong.

A secular humanist would say, well, it depends. If nobody got hurt and everybody agreed, it's okay. This is the fourth point.

Ethics based on intelligence. You think about it with your critical intelligence, and if intelligence tells you it's all working out fine, then that's your ethic. What's the point? There is no absolute standard.

There is no absolute standard. This is the difference between Christians and secular humanists. We believe there is an absolute standard.

This thing is wrong because God says so. A secular humanist says this thing is okay because I say so. See the difference? Ethics based on critical intelligence.

The moral views of secular humanism have been subjected to criticism by religious fundamentalist theists. You can almost hear them spitting these words. Religious fundamentalist theists.

That's us. We, raise your hand. We can raise hands in our church.

I am a religious fundamentalist theist. Theist, I believe in God. Fundamentalist, I believe in the fundamentals of the faith.

And yes, it is my religious faith. So, the moral views of secular humanism have been subjected to criticism by religious fundamentalist theists. A secular humanist recognizes the central role of morality in human life.

Indeed, ethics was developed as a branch of human knowledge long before religionists proclaimed their moral systems based upon divine authority. Secular humanist philosophy got there first. We had ethics before religion ever came along, they say.

I would like to see the documentation for this point. You were there before Abraham with ethics and morals? You got a document? You got some proof? Who do they quote? The field of ethics has had a distinguished list of thinkers contributing to its development. Socrates, Democritus, Aristotle, Epicurus, Epictetus, all the way down to the modern day, Spinoza, Erasmus, Hume, Voltaire, Kant, Bentham, Mill, G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell.

By the way, if you want the poster child for atheism, it's Bertrand Russell. They love him. He was witty.

He wrote a lot of stuff. If you want to learn about atheism, just look up Bertrand Russell, or just call him Bert for short. Bert Russell.

He wrote in the first part of the 1900s. John Dewey and others. There is an influential philosophical tradition that maintains that ethics is an autonomous field of inquiry, that ethical judgments can be formulated independent of revealed religion.

I'm a secular humanist, they say, and I have ethics and I have morals, and they're independent of God. They're independent of the Bible. Oh, we've had these just going back to the dawn of time.

Before there ever was religion, before anybody thought up God, we had ethics and morals. Balderdash. Show me somebody that had ethics and morals before Abraham.

Where is your system of morals? You want to talk about the ethics and the morals of the Canaanites? You want to talk about the ethics and the morals of the Greeks? Oh, Socrates. Listen, have you ever studied the stuff that they dug up when they unburied Pompeii and Herculaneum that got buried by Vesuvius? You want to know what kind of ethics and morals those people had? Take a look at the paintings that were on the wall. Well, not you young ones.

The paintings and stuff that were on the walls of those places are pornographic, because they had no ethics and they had no morals. It's one of the reasons I think God probably decided to bury them under lava. Well, ethics is an autonomous field of inquiry.

Ethical judgments can be formulated independently of revealed religion. Human beings can cultivate practical reason and wisdom, and by its application, achieve lives of virtue and excellence. Now, here's the point.

If you haven't listened to anything else tonight, think about this. What are we talking about? What are the two words? What's our philosophy we're looking at tonight? Secular humanism. What does it believe? It's humanism.

It's all about humans. What do they believe about humans? People are inherently good. People can be good.

We don't need revealed religion. We have ethics and morals that we come up with independently of God. I have a great system of thought, and I don't need God.

Now, who was the first creature to think up this idea? I will be like the Most High. I will ascend above the stars. I will be like the Most High.

I would like to have a society and a civilization apart from God. I don't need the standards that God provides. Remember that? The five I wills from Satan? Ethical judgments.

This is what they say. It's in the heart of their manifesto. Ethical judgments can be formulated independently of revealed religion.

We don't need revelation. What's revealed religion? It's the Bible. And the Koran.

It's the Bible. When they say ecclesiastical, they're talking about the church. And when they say revealed religion, they're talking about the Bible.

Human beings can cultivate practical reason and wisdom. Human beings can cultivate if you just use your critical intelligence for your ethics. That's point number four.

Ethics based on critical intelligence. We are smart enough to be good. Our goodness just depends on being smart.

So now, if you have a society that's got crime in it, what's the solution? What's the solution to crime if you're a secular humanist? And your ethics and your morality are based on intelligence and reason. What's the solution for crime? Why have you got criminals? They need to go to school. They're uneducated.

Educate people and they won't be criminals. They're victims of ignorance. If they just had the knowledge, if they had critical intelligence, teach them facts, teach them to think, teach them reason, and they'll be ethical and moral.

Because man is inherently good. If he acts like a criminal and if he's a bad guy, it's because society has let him down. Society has not cultivated his reason.

Society has not plowed knowledge into the fertile field of his imagination. This is secular humanism. Why do you think the NEA, National Education Association, why do you think the National Association of Science Teachers and Educators, I forget the exact name of their NSE, National Society of, National something of Science Educators, whatever it is, the evolution crowd that oppose intelligent design.

Why are they so big on a pure form of evolution and a pure form of science training in the classroom, unbesmirched, undiminished, unpolluted, unsullied by any sort of mention of religion, any mention of creationism, heaven forbid, any mention of God in the classroom, except as a quaint anachronism. Why? We want to get this pure form of secular humanism piped into the brains of students because this will bring about the new world order. This will bring about the great society where everybody is educated and everybody will have, point number four, ethics based on critical intelligence.

Human beings can cultivate practical reason and wisdom and by applying it, achieve lives of virtue and excellence. We can do it ourselves. Philosophers have emphasized the need to cultivate an appreciation for the requirements of social justice and an individual's obligation and responsibility toward others.

Thus, secularists deny that morality needs to be deduced from religious belief or that anyone who doesn't espouse religious doctrine is immoral. We can have morals and we don't need religion to do it, that's what they're saying. Well, I could expatiate on that for some time, but we'll move on.

Point five, moral education. Now this is really, point four and point five ought to be one point, but they love it so much they put it in two points. Moral education.

We believe that moral development should be cultivated in children and young adults. We do not believe that any particular sect, i.e. we don't believe the Christians, can claim important values as their exclusive property. Hence it is the duty of public education to deal with these values.

It is not the duty of parents to teach children. It is the duty of public education to deal with the inculcation of values. We'll do it in the school.

Accordingly, we support moral education in the schools that is designed to develop an appreciation for moral virtues, intelligence, and the building of character. We also support a school that never mentions God, doesn't allow the Ten Commandments, takes down any pictures of Jesus in the hallway, etc. Right? That's what they say.

We do not think it is moral to baptize infants, to confirm adolescents, or to impose a religious creed on young people before they are able to consent. Although children should learn about the history of religious moral practices, these young minds should not be indoctrinated in a faith before they are mature enough to evaluate the merits for themselves. As though

childhood indoctrination forever commits you to a faith.

This is just nuts. There's lots of people who go to church as a child, they grow up and they say, boo on church, and they never go back. They grow up in a Christian home and say, I don't believe in God and I'm an atheist, goodbye.

And there are lots of people who grew up in horrible circumstances and come to faith in God. That is not determinative, but oh, they're bound and determined. And left to themselves, these secular humanists would pass laws preventing religious education by parents for their children.

Why? Young minds should not be indoctrinated in a faith before they are mature enough to evaluate the merits for themselves. Put them in public school, let us teach them science from grade 1 through grade 12, and when they're old enough, then they can make a religious decision. Point six.

Point five was moral education. We want to do the moral education in the schools, public schools. It should be noted, secular humanism is not so much a specific morality as it is a method for the explanation and discovery of rational moral principles.

That's all part of point five. Point six. Point six is religious skepticism.

It's a formal tenet of secular humanism. We are skeptical of religion. As secular humanists, we are skeptical about supernatural claims.

We recognize the importance of religious experience, that experience that redirects and gives meaning to the lives of human beings. We deny, however, that such experiences have anything to do with the supernatural. If you have a mystical experience, well, that's great, but it doesn't mean there's anything supernatural.

It just means you had a chemical imbalance, or you ate a funny mushroom, or you had some kind of an oxygen deprivation in your brain or something. Mild epilepsy. They believe that a lot of epileptics seem to have religious experiences.

There are people who try to tell you that the Apostle Paul was an epileptic, and what happened to him on the road to Damascus was a seizure. Such experiences have nothing to do with the supernatural. We are doubtful of traditional views of God and divinity.

Symbolic and mythological interpretations of religion often serve as rationalizations for a sophisticated minority, leaving the bulk of mankind to flounder in theological confusion. Religion just makes people flounder. That's all it's good for.

We consider the universe to be a dynamic scene of natural forces that are most effectively understood by scientific inquiry. I am Christopher Columbus. Show me what I can see.

Show me what I can hear. Show me what I can touch. Don't talk to me about radio and television.

That doesn't exist because I can't measure it. I can't confirm it with my senses. We find that traditional views of the existence of God either are meaningless, have not yet been demonstrated to be true, or are tyrannically exploitative.

People just use God belief to be tyrants and exploit people. That's all it's good for. Now, have these things happened in history? Has the Catholic Church tyrannically exploited people? Sure.

And how many other people have tyrannically exploited? Like the Communists and the Marxists and the Leninists and going back to the dawn of time. Whoever gets in power, whether it's Catholic power or lots of other kinds of power, people are going to exploit it because people are people. This is not a proof against religion.

It's a proof that men will be men and that human nature is fallen and that the tenets of secular humanism fail. The more they point the finger at religion and say, look how religion has failed, hey, that's people. That's a natural process.

Those are the people that evolved. And if it's been going on for thousands of years, what does that tell you about survival of the fittest? Evidently, that's a pretty fitness-equipping feature because religion has been burgeoning for thousands of years, according to them. Well, secular humanists reject the idea that God has intervened miraculously in history, reject the idea that God has revealed himself to a chosen few.

They reject the idea that God can save or redeem sinners. Totally reject that idea. They believe that men and women are free and responsible for their own destiny and that they cannot look toward some transcendent being for salvation.

We reject the divinity of Jesus, the divine mission of Moses, Mohammed, and other latter-day prophets and saints of the various sects and denominations. We do not accept as true the literal interpretation of the Old and New Testaments, the Koran, or other allegedly sacred religious documents, however important they may be as literature. Religions are a pervasive sociological phenomena.

Religious myths have long persisted in human history. In spite of the fact that human beings have found religions to be uplifting and a source of solace, we do not find their theological claims to be true, etc., etc. This is one of the longest points they've got because now they're on their hobby horse.

Boo on religion. We must therefore conclude that the ethical life can be lived without the illusions of immortality or reincarnation. Human beings can develop the self-confidence necessary to ameliorate the human condition and to lead meaningful, productive lives.

Don't need God for that. Point seven. Reason.

We view with concern the current attack by non-secularists. What's a non-secularist? Well, it's the opposite of a non-theist, isn't it? That's you and me. We are non-secularists.

We view with concern the current attack by non-secularists on reason and science. Now, this is just nuts. To say that as a creationist, or even as an intelligent design advocate, which is a watered-down, sort of weak-kneed stance taken by creationists who are not willing to stand up for creationism.

I personally am not much on intelligent design, although I think you can defend it as an option, scientifically. If you don't want to believe in God, fine, but you ought to at least look into the possibility that there is some sort of intelligence behind these sophisticated systems and programming inherent in biological life. If you don't want to believe in God, fine, but don't throw out the baby with the bathwater and say, well, there could not possibly be any intelligence, and then say it all just happened when there is not a single scientific law, there is not a principle of physics, there is no operation of chemistry that can explain how these sophisticated, vastly complex systems came into being.

There is no scientific explanation whatsoever. So at least leave that option open. This is what the intelligent design fallback position is.

But look at what they say. We view with concern the current attack by non-secularists on reason and science. It is not unreasonable to find a watch in the sand and say, I wonder who built this.

Do you think if they sent a spaceship to Neptune or Uranus or Mars or one of the planets and found a vast network of streets and buildings and plumbing and factories and machinery and transportation devices and rail cars and stuff scattered all over the planet, would they come in there and say, hmm, I wonder how this evolved. Let's see if we can find the natural forces that caused all these sophisticated machines and industrial complex to appear out of the mud of this planet. They would immediately say, where are the creatures that built these things, right? But when they look into the cell, when they look into the DNA programming, which is vastly complex, you cannot believe the sophistication of these things.

It takes them, I was looking at a film of a guy who was trying to figure out one gene on a *Drosophila*, a fruit fly. There's a gene that decides whether the body is going to have little stripes on it or not. So they were trying to figure out, how does this gene work? And so they mapped it.

And it's got about eight or nine little component parts. And they're like little interrelated, interactive things. This protein manufactures this protein, which in turn triggers this protein to go back and turn off the manufacturer of the first protein.

And there's little feedback loops. Well, they got it all mapped out. They got it all figured out exactly how this gene works.

It took them 3,000 man years. They call them person years because of course, you know, that's patriarchal to say man years. I'm going to say man years.

If one guy had been working on it, go where no man has gone before. If one guy had done all

the work, the experimentation to document the function of this one little tiny fruit fly gene, that's got like eight or nine parts to do the experiments and document the interaction of these proteins. One guy, it would take him 3,000 years.

But they had 3,000 people working for one year. You see what I mean, man years. Just to document that.

That's just to figure out how it works. They can't reproduce it. They can't build it.

They have no idea how the little component parts work or what the levels of the proteins are. How much of this protein do you have to have to shut this other protein off to stop making this intermediate protein? How much of this do you have to have? What are the initial conditions that are necessary before you get the final condition of a stripe or no stripe? They don't have any of that information. Just to figure out the rudimentary model of this took them 3,000 man years.

Well, here's my conclusion. See, they're going about this all wrong. They're studying it.

They're using intelligence to try to figure out how genes work. But according to the scientific understanding of how this all goes, what they should do is stop. Quit doing the experiments.

Quit studying it. Quit looking in the microscope. Quit studying the fruit fly and just sit there and wait for the knowledge to evolve.

Just wait for it to come to you because that's how nature works. Nature thought all this stuff just blindly by chance and it all just happened. So if you want to understand how it works, just sit back and wait and it will evolve in your mind.

You don't need any intelligent study. They can't even figure out how it works much less design it, much less explain how it arose. But yet, we contend that rational methods, inquiry, logic, and evidence for developing knowledge and testing claims for truth, that's how we have to go.

Don't be postulating any intelligent agency. That's reason. Reason is the empirical foundation for secular humanism.

Number eight is science and technology. We believe the scientific method, though imperfect, is still the most reliable way of understanding the world. Hey, nobody argues with that.

I love science. I qualify as a scientist in about three different fields. I'm a text-critical scientist.

I am an artillery scientist. I've got a certificate that hangs on my wall that says I'm a gentleman and scientist of this worthy order. And I'm a computer scientist.

And I would stack my knowledge of certain aspects of computers and networks against pretty much anybody. But here's the point. They like to caricature religion as mystical and spooky and irrational.

You can fully support and be interested in all different aspects of science. It's how do you interpret the observations. Are you going to interpret them according to the philosophy of secular humanism? I can look at that gene study.

It was fascinating. It's a beautiful thing. The guy was talking about how robust these genetic networks are.

How great they are and how they can deal with all kinds of different starting conditions and all kinds of intrusions and perturbations, they call them, where you perturb it. You mess things up. And it still steadies out into one of two or three possible outcomes.

It either makes a stripe or it doesn't make a stripe. And it's very robust. Why? Because God designed it that way.

It's a beautiful tribute to God's genius. Well, we're both looking at the same gene. This guy says, oh, looky there.

It's undesigned, non-intelligent, robust network. And I'm saying it's an intelligently designed, beautiful manifestation of God's power and majesty. It's the revelation of God in nature.

We're looking at the very same evidence. I'm not anti-rational. I'm not anti-science.

I think the science is great. It's fascinating. Well, science and technology.

Boo on the church. Hooray for science. That's it.

And then, of course, point nine, evolution. Point ten is education. You can imagine what those are about.

Well, this is secular humanism. We can do it all with our brain. We don't need God and we don't need revealed religion.

We can have ethics. We can have morals. We can advance our understanding.

And this is a half-truth. It's like Satan in the garden. What was Satan's lie to Eve? If you eat the fruit, you'll be like God having knowledge.

Knowledge is what God doesn't want you to have. Well, we're going to have to leave off. I'll give you the conclusions and the outworking of this next week, but let's close here in prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the revealed religion we find in your word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to make it real to us. We pray that our lives will reflect your glory as we live in the midst of a secular humanist society.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.