

Bible Special 06-09-12a

This is Tuesday the 12th of September 2006. We continue tonight our study on the faith systems of the world. Why we have chosen to be Christians.

It is not a blind faith. It is not a mindless faith. It should not be your faith just because it was the faith of your parents or because it was convenient or you just sort of fell into it.

Many Christians are afraid to look around thinking that they might lose their faith or lose the faith of those around them. A faith that will not stand up to scrutiny is not worth having, is it? We believe by faith. We trust in God by faith.

We trust His word by faith. But we do not suspend the function of our intellect and our reason. God gave us minds.

And it is possible to look around intelligently and reasonably in the world and have not only faith but a reasonable faith. That's been the focus of our study is to look at the conclusions that have been drawn by others in the world who have chosen not to believe in God. What are the characteristics of these different faith systems? In the same way that we might look across the ocean at someone born in India and say that person ought not just to be a Hindu because all of their people are Hindus.

We should not be Christians just because everybody we look around at is a Christian. That's not a good reason. Don't be a Christian just because it's convenient or somebody told you to.

Our faith has to be our own. It has to be expressed intelligently. And that's what this study is about.

And I think you will find, as we have already seen over the last many weeks, that we do have an eminently reasonable, intelligent faith. Nothing to be ashamed of in being a Christian. There's so much in the world today that makes us want to hide our faith or tries to create in us a sense of embarrassment.

Or, well, you're primitive and you're ignorant and you're uneducated if you still believe these old fairy tales, etc. Well, this is just nonsense. So, it's a productive study.

I think it has great applicability as we navigate our way through our ever more secular culture in this country. But as we always do when we approach the study of the things of God, let's take a moment at the outset to go to the Lord in prayer and ask His blessing on our study and to help us find those truths that will be meaningful to us as Christians. Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful for another opportunity to spend time in fellowship, to look at the truths of Your Word and compare them to things that are proffered and put forward as truth in the world around us.

We ask Your blessing on us as we study in fellowship together. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

We began last time looking at... Actually, we continued last time. I think we began two times ago looking at secular humanism. What is the nature of secular humanism? This is very popular.

It is based on empiricism. Do you remember what empiricism is? We look for empirical data. We look for facts.

What can science tell me? Now, all of us either are taking or have taken science classes. And it is a favorite tactic of secular humanists to engage Christians in dialogue and then say, well, it's your religion versus my science. I am scientific.

I am empirical and rational. You are Christian. Therefore, you are superstitious, mystical and unscientific.

Now, do not let someone put a discussion on that basis. We are very scientific. We are all over the facts of the universe.

Science is a wonderful thing. The things that we can observe, the things that can be seen through telescopes or microscopes, the things that can be weighed and evaluated in God's creation speak the truth of God. What does it say in Romans 1? What may be known of God is manifest in creation by the things which He has made.

His deity and Godhead are manifest in creation. We should embrace science. It's a wonderful thing when it's done properly, when it does observations.

If you watch National Geographic programs and see them film underwater and show the life cycle of different kinds of plants and animals under there, if you look at jungle animals, if you look at mountain life and all of the other things that they document now, we have wonderful technology for documenting time-lapse photography. You can watch plants go through their entire life cycle in a short amount of time. It's a wonderful thing.

So, A, in looking at secular humanism or empiricism, naturalism, versus Christianity, it is not a debate of religion versus science. Good Christians are good scientists. If you're a good Christian, you will embrace science.

Now, I'll qualify that statement in a minute. But science in terms of observation, testing, forming hypothesis, drawing conclusions, that's great. Physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, paleontology, archaeology, astrophysics, these are wonderful things.

And a lot of the conveniences and luxuries that we have today like computers came about through the activities of science. Don't let anyone call you anti-science. We are pro-science.

However, you can look around in Christianity and you can see where people have taken a good thing and corrupted it and perverted it. There are people on television who are fooling little old ladies out of their social security checks by promising them all kinds of things that are not

biblical and are not a part of Christianity. Send us your money and God will bless you is the essence of a lot of these TV ministries.

Well, this doesn't make Christianity bad. It makes the people who are corrupting and perverting Christianity bad. Right? In the same way, there are people in the scientific community who are perverting and corrupting science.

Science is the collection and the study of facts. It is supposed to draw conclusions and make predictions based on the scientific method. Right? There are certain things about which science can make no claim.

For example, one of the most famous debates in our modern day is the debate between evolution and creationism, which in some circles has been modified to be evolution versus intelligent design. We won't argue that it's God or the God of the Bible. Let's just argue that there is some sort of intelligence behind creation, in particular biological life.

It is far too sophisticated. It is far too complex. It is far too intricate to have come about by accident.

There is no known scientific principle of chemistry or physics that can account for the assembling, diversification and complexification of biological life. I don't care what you do. I don't care what model you try to use.

You cannot take simple components and randomly mix and match and tumble them in the dryer for millions of years and get them to assemble complex systems. It's not observed anywhere in nature, nowhere in physics, nowhere in chemistry, nowhere in biology. The only thing that they observe is the things that are already constructed, like the complete human genome, the complete fruit fly genome, the complete genetic structure and makeup and engineered machines within the cells of living things can be manipulated.

They can be dissected. You can mix and match little parts. This is the difference between going out to the desert, unfolding a chair, getting out your glass of lemonade and sitting down and waiting for microprocessors to form out of the silica-based sand out there.

How long do you think you'd have to sit there until a Pentium III chip formed out of the sand? Hey, the wind blows the sand around, the heat from the sun, it's got energy input from the outside. Just sit there, sip on your lemonade, see how long it takes for a Pentium III chip to pop out or any other kind of a chip, anything that does anything beyond blowing around, eroding. But, suppose we had the equivalent of a computer junkyard.

Suppose there was, say, my garage full of a couple dozen computers. Suppose I take the video card out of one and the motherboard out of another and the RAM out of another and the hard drive out of another and the power supply out of another and the keyboard from another and the monitor from another and the mouse from yet another, and I start mixing and matching those parts, can I get different kinds of computers? Can I get slow ones and fast ones and ones

with lots of memory and ones with little memory and ones that can run some programs and not run others? Some that are maybe only capable of monochrome displays or CGA, the old primitive 16-color graphics and others that are capable of a lot more. I can mix and match existing parts and I can say, look, see how these computers modify? Look what happens when you splice in different parts, you get different results.

Well, this just goes back to the beginning of time when I was sitting out in the desert and those sand particles came together into chips and circuit boards and over millions of years it became a computer. Well, as I said, there is no principle of science, there is no principle of physics or chemistry that can explain the DNA molecule. There is no principle of observation for explaining where species came from.

When scientists, when archaeologists, paleontologists, they go back and they look in the fossil record, they go back to a certain point of time just before the Cambrian period there is a thing called the Pre-Cambrian Explosion. Have you ever heard of that? The Pre-Cambrian Explosion. That term exists because the world over, when they identify the different strata of rocks, and yes fossils exist, and yes life on this planet is very old, but there are primitive, primitive life forms, the remnants of them, in the fossil strata, up to a certain point, just before the Cambrian period.

Then suddenly, out of nowhere, as if by magic, every modern type of animal appears in the fossil record. Now they like to talk about, oh here was the little tiny rat that became an Eohippus, that became a thing that became a horse, and here is the little ring-tailed monkey that became this, that, and the other, and finally man. It isn't supported in the fossil record.

There are very primitive life forms, then suddenly you have the Pre-Cambrian Explosion, and all of the major groups of species that we have in the world today appear, all of them, appear at once in the fossil record. Science can't explain it. They say, well just because we can't explain it doesn't mean that there wasn't a natural explanation for it.

Now this brings me to my next subject. All of this, we're talking about secular humanism, we're talking about empiricism, we're talking about the science-based view of life, but this is the next topic. God of the gaps.

If you haven't heard this before, you will one of these days. As secular humanism, as naturalism and empiricism has become popular, because if you think about it, modern science is really only about 200 years old, 200 to 300 years. Before that you just have the foundations being laid and the very beginning things.

But science as we know it today, modern science, is really a product of the 19th and 20th centuries. Okay? As science began to look around and began to find how things work, how does reproduction take place, how do cells undergo mitosis, what are the organelles, what are the different parts of animal cells and plant cells, as we got microscopic studies underway and began to dissect and figure out how things work, explanations began to form. And where

previously there had been maybe a mystical explanation, I mean, there have been centuries where people didn't really understand where babies come from, there have been centuries where people didn't understand why crop rotation was important or why you could graft a branch of something into another type of tree, for example, and gain benefits.

Remember Gregor Mendel and his experiments with peas? I mean, that was groundbreaking work. For thousands of years people had been growing vegetables and hadn't understood the principles of heredity. And science has begun to figure these things out.

So, here's what the secular humanist says. Well, see, you could believe in God when we were all ignorant and we didn't have any science. But now, see, science explains where the universe came from.

Science says there was a Big Bang. You used to think that God suspended the Earth in heaven, but now we know that it's all gravity and Newtonian forces and so on. So, God isn't needed to explain creation of the universe anymore.

God isn't needed to explain the stars and planets and planet Earth in particular anymore. Now we understand biological life and we studied the fossil record and we have this theory that one thing evolved into another based on Darwin. So, we don't need God to explain the origin of biological life.

And so, your God is only available in the gaps. Yes, we can't explain the Precambrian explosion, so you can come in and say, well, God did it. And so, now God doesn't exist in creation.

He doesn't exist in biological life. He is just there to explain how all the species came. And as soon as we find a scientific explanation for the Precambrian explosion, that gap will go away.

And pretty soon, science is going to fill all the gaps and your God, who lives in the gaps, will be gone. Does this make sense? Do you understand what I'm saying? Do you understand the argument? In other words, if science can describe a thing, if science can look and see how it works, then that gets God out of the picture. Remember the first thing I told you tonight is don't let someone frame the discussion in terms of you are religious and mystical, I am fact-based and scientific.

Christians, smart Christians, are fact-based and scientific also. And we can freely engage the world in discussion on scientific grounds. And someone will say, oh, but intelligent design got beaten in the courts.

Listen, you should not be an intelligent design person. You should be a Bible-thumping, card-carrying creationist. Why water down creationism into intelligent design? I don't just say there is some kind of intelligence behind creation.

I say there is divine intelligence, a single divine intelligence, the God of the Bible. And I don't back down from that position for anyone. And I know as much science as any layman who is not

a professional scientist for a living.

I keep myself well-informed. I taught high school science. I am well-versed and well-read.

I have an engineering degree and I know as much science as the next guy. And I am here to tell you that there is nothing incompatible with genuine science and genuine Christianity. Now, we will talk about, gee, is the earth only 6,000 years old directly.

But, here is the point. Don't let someone... There is a principle in warfare, and I am not saying all conversation is warfare, although sometimes it seems like it. But a good general knows how important it is when you are going to engage an opponent to select your ground.

What ground are you going to fight on? This is why General Lee got defeated at Gettysburg. Because of details I won't go into, he didn't get the right ground. He could have, and he should have, but he didn't.

And they wound up having to charge uphill. You remember Pickett's Charge? Well, they wound up having to charge uphill on bad ground. General Lee should not have fought that battle on that ground because it wasn't the right ground to fight that battle.

Well, in the same way, don't engage in discussion with unbelievers or secular humanists on ground of their choosing. Don't let them frame the discussion in a way that is inherently false. You and I are not superstitious, mystical, ignorant, uninformed, unscientific people.

Certainly should not be. If you are a good Christian, you ought to know as much about God's creation and the way it works as the next person. Watch some science programs.

Subscribe to a scientific magazine. Scientific American is a great magazine. There are several others.

But keep yourself informed. Be aware. Keep up.

What's the latest in archaeology? What's the latest in biology? What's the latest in astrophysics? By the way, I'll tell you something about astrophysics here in just a minute. But that's the first thing. Don't let someone misdefine the ground.

Secondly, don't let someone start talking about your God of the gaps. Now think about this. I don't want to lose you.

If I go out here, several of you all came tonight in cars, and your cars are parked out there on the curb, and that car came cruising up to a stop, and the doors opened, and you all piled out. Now, if I brought an Australian Aborigine that had never seen civilization and set him in that same little folding chair with that same glass of lemonade out in my front yard, and he watched you drive up in those cars, he would say, How is that thing moving? There's no animal pulling it. There's no man tugging it along.

It's rolling along. I don't understand it. Now, I could take him out there.

I could say, Come here, Kwongu. Let me show you something. And so I go out there, and I pop the hood of my car.

I wouldn't pop your hood. I pop the hood on my car, and I say, Look at this. This is an internal combustion engine.

It has gasoline, and air mixed, and pistons move, and crankshafts turn, and differentials engage, and transmissions are active, and first thing you know, these rubber tires in the back are turning, and it propels itself along. In your simple Aborigine terms, it builds a fire inside, and the heat from that fire makes this thing go. And he says, Oh, I see.

Well, in that case, the car made itself. I don't have to think about the Ford Motor Company, or the Chrysler Company, or Chevy, or Dodge, or Harley Davidson, or whoever it is that might have made a vehicle out there, because you've explained to me how this thing propels itself. Therefore, that's all I need to know.

I no longer have a need to figure out where it came from, or what kind of intelligence put this wonderful system together. Do you see my point? Just because science explains a thing, that doesn't fill the gap and squeeze God out. Look at the Human Genome Project.

I was reading an article earlier today. I'm fascinated by genetics and how complex and wonderful the system is. When you look at a human being, look at yourself, look at the complexity of our intertwined, interactive, interconnected systems, our nervous system, our digestive system, our lymphatic system, our endocrine system, our immune system, our circulatory system, respiration, all of this, just so that God can put a brain in there that will be the interface for our human soul, so that we can observe and operate in this world.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made, the Bible says. And that is scientifically proven to be true. We are fearfully and wonderfully made.

And the more you study the complexities and how amazingly, it is orders of magnitude beyond anything that man has ever conceived. I told you the other night, it took them 3,000 man years just to figure out how one small part of one gene in a fruit fly works, and they say it just happened. Well, the fact that you study genetics, the fact that you study the fossil record, this reveals how God did things in great detail.

It doesn't show that they happened without God. So, my whole point is, there is no God of the gaps. This is another false definition of the discussion.

It's a favorite technique of secular humanists to say, well, we've explained the origin of the universe. No, you haven't. I'm going to find something for you here.

They've been studying the universe, and what they can't figure out is, when they look at the

galaxies, and they look at the rotation of the galaxies, they rotate at a constant speed. In other words, the outside of the galaxy rotates just as fast as the inside. Now, you may not think that's significant, but it is.

Because, basically, each galaxy is kind of like a sphere. It's kind of like a basketball. It doesn't matter if it's one of these spiral galaxies like ours, or any other kind.

The outside makes a revolution in one period at the same time as the inside. So, the inside is not spinning faster, the outside is not spinning slower, it's all moving together. Now, they can figure out how many stars, how much matter is in that galaxy.

Matter has mass. Mass produces gravity, right? Gravity holds the galaxy together. Now, when you spin a thing, and you have centrifugal force, right? That gravity is what keeps everything from flying out into space, and it's no longer a galaxy.

Well, it takes a certain amount of gravity to hold that much matter in a spherical configuration. Okay? You still with me? I didn't lose you yet. Remember, we're scientific creationists.

It takes a certain amount of gravity, which requires a certain amount of matter. Well, guess what? There's not enough matter in the galaxies to create the gravity to hold them together. By orders of magnitude, it's not like they're missing a couple of stars.

It's huge. So, galactic rotation is one of the ways that science has figured out, you know what? There is missing matter in the universe, all over the place. And they've been trying to solve this puzzle for a long time, and they couldn't figure it out.

And they have finally, through observation of things like dim stars that act as a gravity lens, so that you can see even more distant stars. They sort of like magnify the light behind, and it's a function of gravity. And they say, wow, look at the gravity of this little dim star.

Where's that gravity coming from? And what they have figured out is that there is something called dark matter. There's matter in the universe that doesn't act like or look like and is not detectable like what we call baryonic matter. Matter that's got a nucleus in its atom made out of protons and neutrons.

Protons and neutrons in the nucleus, those are called baryons. Not like baryon, your dead pet. This is B-A-R-Y, baryon.

Baryons are nuclear matter in atoms, okay? There's not enough matter like you and I see and can measure. There is only, of all of the matter in the universe, the matter that you and I can see, like the stars and galaxies, you know how much of a percentage it actually is? 5%. 5% of the actual matter in the universe is regular matter.

25% is dark matter. They've never detected a single particle of dark matter. They just know it has to be there because of gravity, because of the way it acts.

What's the other 70% of what's going on in the universe? Dark energy. It is a force that permeates the entire universe. 70% of the universe is dark energy.

25% of the universe is dark matter. So, we're empiricists, we're secular humanists, we're scientific, what I see is all I believe guys. So, how much of the universe do we understand? 5%.

Because you can't detect dark energy and you can't detect dark matter. You know it's there. Now, if I had to guess, where do you think the angels live? Where do you think the angels might be made out of? Where do you think God's heaven might be? Probably in that 95% of the universe that science can't do anything other than predict.

So, secular humanism, empiricism, we're going to make all of our determinations about whether there is intelligence behind the universe, intelligence behind creation, based on 5% of the universe. Now, of all of the matter that's in the expanding galaxies that we can observe with the Hubble and all of that, how much can we actually get at from planet Earth? Of that 5% of all of the matter, of all the stars and galaxies in the entire known universe, how much can a scientist get at with his microscope and his telescope? About 0.00000000001. So, do you want to base your whole outlook on life and your whole understanding of the cosmos based on that? Well, personally, I find it somewhat insufficient. But we're going to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to look at what this means. What does it mean, if you're a secular humanist, about life in general? What is the meaning of life? That's what we'll see when we come back.