



A P O L O G E T I C S

205

Week 5

Other Worldviews

A P O L O G E T I C S

Other Worldviews

Ecclesiastes 3:19-20 For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return.

Psalms 14:1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.

Atheism

Atheism is the view that God does not exist. It is the denial that there is a God.

"Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without (Atheos) God in the world."

- Ephesians 2:12

Atheos (Greek) - (without God, denying the gods, godless)

New Atheism is more influential now. It has become more popular in last 15 years. New atheism is a movement that redefines atheism to mean more that "we just don't have enough evidence for God".

- Names: Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, the late Christopher Hitchens
- Need to rid the world of religion
- Faith is silly and leads away from truth. Faith is inferior
- Only empirical evidence and what can be verified scientifically. Scientism -only science can explain ultimate reality

"Faith can be very very dangerous, and deliberately to implant it into the vulnerable mind of an innocent child is a grievous wrong." - Richard Dawkins (The God delusion)

The Absurdity of life without God

- Enlightenment brought despair through trying to rid world of God
- Friedrich Nietzsche - "God is dead". The removal of God will usher in nihilism (the philosophy that all of reality is meaningless).

Human Predicament

- Francis Shaeffer - "human predicament" that life without God is absurd. "If God is dead, then man is too"
- Jean Paul Sarte (French philosopher) - existence is nauseating
- Albert Camus (French philosopher) - life is absurd
- Dr LD Rue at conference in 1991 - we should build our lives on a "noble lie". In order for man to survive we need to make up meaning

No Ultimate Value Without God

- Fyodor Dostoyevsky (Russian novelist) - if there is no immortality then all things are permitted
- No moral obligations
- In the end it's impossible to condemn war and genocide
- Good and bad do not exist
- Survival of the fittest, natural selection
- Adolf Hitler - "why can't humans be as cruel as nature?"
- Start ascribing personal attributes to nature. Nature becomes Nature, Mother earth, "She" refers to nature - She caused this to happen through. Nature has mind of its own

No Ultimate Purpose Without God

- King Solomon - if there is no God our lives are just as important as animals
- Jean Paul Sarte - man can live "as if" there is meaning in life. Sarte chose Marxism
- If God does not exist, then life is objectively meaningless

The Practical Impossibility of Atheism

- Bertrand Russell (British philosopher) - "we must build our lives on the firm foundation of unyielding despair"
- Francis Schaeffer - Analogy of two story house. First level is devoid of any values or meaning (where atheists start). The second level is meaning, values and purpose (where God is). Atheists make leaps to the upper level while denying God
- Atheists will call holocaust or genocide evil and will try to use evil as evidence against God when in fact lends credence to the existence of God
- Moral Argument reworded:
 1. If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist.
 2. Evil Exists
 3. Therefore, objective moral values exist (some things are evil)
 4. Therefore, God Exists
- God and evil together are not logically inconsistent. **DONT FALL FOR THAT ARGUMENT AGAINST GOD**

The Success of Biblical Christianity

- God does exist and man's life does not end at the grave
- Provides the two conditions necessary for a meaningful, valuable, and purposeful life - God and immortality
- Pascal - "We have nothing to lose and eternity to gain"

Jehovah Witness - Jesus or Casper the Ghost?

Jehovah Witnesses believe that Jesus was raised in spirit form and God took his body away. So when Jesus (according to Jehovah Witnesses) appeared to disciples and others he just put on a material body when in front of them. Kind of like wearing suits when he encountered them.

- Paul preached the bodily resurrection
 - 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 , Philippians 3:21 , Romans 8:11 , Col. 2:9, Acts 13:34-37
- Peter preached bodily resurrection
 - Acts 2:25-27 , Acts 10:39-41
- The gospels present the bodily resurrection
 - Matt. 28:9 , Matt. 28:13 , Mark 16:6, Luke 24:5-6, John 20:1-15, John 21:19-30
 - Luke 24:36-43 - “a spirit does not have flesh and bones...”
 - John 2:18-22 - “destroy this temple and in three days..”
 - John 20:24-28 - Thomas the doubter - “My Lord and my God!!”
 - no first century Christian writer presents a contrary view to a bodily resurrection
- 1 Corinthians 15 does Paul contrast the natural physical body with a spiritual resurrection body?
 - 1 Corinthians 15:42-46 -

So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural (*Psuchikos*) body; it is raised a spiritual (*Pneumatikos*) body. If there is a natural (*Psuchikos*) body (*Soma*) , there is also a spiritual (*Pneumatikos*) body. Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.

- 1 Corinthians 2:14-15
 - The natural [*Psuchikos*] person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual [*Pneumatikos*] person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.
 - Paul here is referring to the unsaved man who is led by sinful nature and Christian who is led by the Spirit.
 - Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 is saying of our future bodies that are sown with the sinful appetites and then raised holy with spiritual appetites
 - Believers shall rise glorified and no longer with sin, fully purified and complete.
 - The Greek word *Psuchikos* is not known to be used by an NT writer or inter testament author to refer to something as being material.
 - If Paul meant to contrast physical body with immaterial one he had a better Greek word to use (1 Cor. 9:3-10 and Rom. 15:27)
 - 1 Cor. 9:11 - If we sowed spiritual [*Pneumatikos*] things in you, is it too much if we reap material [*Sarkikos*] things from you?
 - Phil. 3:21 Christ will transform our bodies. Romans 8:11 Holy Spirit will give life to our mortal bodies
- Greek words of interest:
 - *Psuchikos* - natural, worldly-minded, sensuous nature subject to appetite and passion
 - *Pneumatikos* - relating to the human spirit, spiritual, the rational soul
 - *Soma* - the body of men or animals, dead body or corpse, body

- *Pneuma* - breath, spirit, wind
- Sarkikos - fleshly, material, physical. Comes from the root word sarx which means “flesh” that covers the bones and is permeated with blood
- What about Paul’s statement that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God? (1 Cor. 15:50)
 - It was a common Jewish expression referring to man as a mortal being and each of the seven references means this
 - Flesh and blood do not refer to a physical body but rather to its current “mortal” form. When resurrected we will be immortal beings

Mormonism

Orthodox Christianity and the creeds of Christianity affirm the doctrine of ex nihilo which is the doctrine that God created all things from nothing. The universe including all matter was created from nothing. This goes back to week #2 with the Kalam cosmological argument:

1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause
2. The universe began to exist
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause

“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.” - Hebrews 11:3

In Mormonism, the view of creation is much different. They teach that matter has co-existed eternally with God and denying the orthodox teaching of ex nihilo. Mormon scholars say that the doctrine of ex nihilo is a later addition by the church that is heavily influenced by Greek philosophy. This is not a new type of accusation that the Mormon church has made against Christianity.

Mormon scholar Lowell Bennion in his article “A Mormon view of life” says that intelligence and elements have always existed. Human beings have always existed in what is known as the Intelligence. God is powerful, but works with materials that have already existed to shape the world.

Mormon leader Orson Pratt who was one of the original Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of LDS church taught that all material in the earth are eternal and there is no Scripture to support ex nihilo .

Biblical Arguments for creatio ex nihilo

Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 - “only one true God creator of everything invisible and visible, spiritual and corporeal and created from nothing”

- God does not only sustain everything, but he brought everything into being that did not exist before. God is distinct and separate from everything else.
- Augustine - since God alone is Being he willed into existence what formerly did not exist. God is not merely a shaper of material things.
- Mormon scholars will use the etymology (study of the origin of words) to try and show that the word for creation does not mean “creation out of nothing”
- James Barr - etymology of a word is not a statement about the words meaning, but about its history

Some Crucial Verses

- Romans 4:7, Hebrews 11:3 , Isaiah 40:21 , 1 Cor. 8:6 - Eph. 3:9, Col. 1:16, Rev. 4:11 , Heb. 1:10-12

Theological Arguments for creatio ex nihilo

- LDS argue that ex nihilo is a later church invention
- LDS scholar Hugh Nibley - not until «doctors of the church» we get doctrine

Many extra Biblical early texts supported ex nihilo

- 2 macabees 7:28 (Written in Alexandria, Egypt around 124 BC)
- Qumran Community Scroll (The rule of the community)(manual of discipline)
 - 1 QS XI.11
 - 1QH IX.20-31
- Shepherd of Hermas (1:6) (translated by JB Lightfoot). Written as early as 90AD .
- Jewish pseudepigraphal bppl Joseph and Aseneth (dated as early as 2nd century BC)
- Second Enoch 25:1 (written late 1st century)
- Odes of Solomon 16:18-19 (100AD) (collection of religious poems attributed to Solomon)
- Second Baruch (early 2nd century)From The Apocrypha and Pseudeipgrapha of the Old Testament by R. H. Charles, vol. II , Oxford Press
- Apostolic Constitutions (written as early as mid-second century AD)

Scientific Arguments for creatio ex nihilo

1. The Expansion of the universe

- Edwin Hubble discovered in 1929 the isotropic expansion of universe based on Einsteins General theory of relativity
- The standard Big Bang model states that universe could not have existed eternally, but started at some finite time ago
- Keith Norman - “a serious challenge to the Mormon version of creation”

2. Thermodynamic Properties of the universe

- 2nd law - processes taking place in closed system always tend towards equilibrium
- Why have we not reached “Heat Death” yet if the universe always existed?
- Thermodynamics implies the universe had a beginning

The Alternatives

David Bailey a Mormon NASA scientist:

- Big bang model now generally accepted as correct description of origin of the universe
- Since Mormon concept of God as an extended, material object then Big Bang cosmology would show that God himself came into being ex nihilo
- Maybe humanoid deities??
- Mormon theology - “God does not transcend the laws of nature?”
- Erich Paul - “The authorized Mormon position is that the laws of nature and the laws of God are identical so that there is no room for the supernatural

Resources:

William Lane Craig's critique of Mormon doctrine of creation

Lowell Bennion "Mormon view of life"

Keith Norman article from BYU

Hugh Nibley article "treasures in the heavens: some early christian insights into the organizing of worlds"

2 macabees

Qumran Community Scroll

Shepard of Hermas translated by Lightfoot

Joseph and Aseneth (Jewish literature)

Second Enoch

Odes of Solomon

Second Baruch

Apostolic Constitutions

Keith Norman (LDS scholar) "Mormon cosmology can it survive the Big Bang?"

David Bailey (LDS NASA scientist) "Scientific foundations of Mormon Theology"

William Lane Craig "On Guard"