

# A BIBLICAL VIEW OF CREATION: PRACTICAL ATHEISM AND THE ATHEIST WITHIN

Genesis 1:1; 2:16,17; 3:9-19

**INTRODUCTION:** There are three central elements to any worldview:

1. **Creation:** *Where did we come from, and who are we?* This is addressed in Gen.1-2.
2. **Fall:** *What has gone wrong with the world?* This is addressed in Genesis 3.
3. **Redemption:** *What can be done to fix the world?* The answer to this begins in Genesis 3:15 and is developed throughout the rest of the Old Testament.

## I. LOOKING AT THE WORLD WITH “BIBLICAL EYES” (Romans 12:2)

**SAY THE COLOR YOU *SEE*, NOT THE COLOR YOU READ:**

red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, yellow, red, orange, green, pink, gold, silver, blue, purple, yellow, red, gray, orange, green, pink, black, gold, silver, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, white, gray, purple, yellow, red, orange, green, pink, gold, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, yellow, red, orange, green, pink, gold, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, yellow, red.

## II. PRACTICAL ATHEISM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND ON TELEVISION

- A. The belief that we evolved through the process of chance + time + matter leaves God outside of the process of creation. God becomes irrelevant to the world we *live* in.
- B. Naturalistic evolution (microbe → man) is incompatible with a biblical worldview of CREATION, FALL, and REDEMPTION.

## III. PRACTICAL ATHEISM AND PSYCHIATRIC PROBLEMS

- A. “Psychiatric disorders are *always* spiritual problems and *sometimes* physical.”
- B. Many people, including Christians, have swallowed the serpent’s lie that what is wrong with the world is imbalances in the brain instead of a world cursed because of sin. If sin had not entered into the world, there would be no diseases, disorders, or death. Sin is the root problem for our suffering.
- C. A person’s sinful behavior cannot be excused with “the brain made me do it.”  
Practical atheism can be heard in statements like:
  1. “Oh, he has depression, therefore he neglects his children.”
  2. “Oh, she has bulimia, that’s why she weighs 65 pounds”
  3. “Oh, my kid has ADD, that is why he’s hitting your son over the head with the baseball bat.”
- D. The Christian worldview is different. Our response should be:
  1. “Yes, he may have depression, but neglecting his children will only make things worse. Doing the wrong thing will not make a person feel better.”
  2. “Yes, I see that your daughter has bulimia. Why does she have bulimia? Is her bulimia self-induced? Does she have a biblical view of beauty or is her standard what perverse and adulterous men want or does she look at other women and compare herself to them in an unhealthy manner?”
  3. “Yes, your son may have ADD, but that does not excuse his sinful behavior of using my son’s head for a baseball. Your son needs to be disciplined and he must take responsibility for his sinful behavior.”

#### **IV. PRACTICAL ATHEISM AND PHYSICAL PROBLEMS**

- A. The Christian worldview believes that God is active in the world we live in. Sin *may* be the immediate cause for our physical problems. There are two extremes we must avoid:
  - 1. The mistake of Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar who assumed that Job was suffering because he was a sinner.
  - 2. Prevalent in our society is the extreme that says there is no sin and therefore suffering is never a consequence of sin.
- B. The Bible offers a radical middle ground between the extremes of Job's friends and our society. The Bible says that *some* suffering is a direct consequence of our sin (cf. Exodus 15:26).
  - 1. Members of the church at Corinth were weak, sick or dead because they did not judge the body of Jesus Christ rightly in their observance of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor.11:27-30).
  - 2. "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5:14-16)
  - 3. God actively disciplines His children (Hebrews 12:5-11).

#### **V. PRACTICAL ATHEISM AND GOD'S JUDGMENT OF A NATION**

- A. Is it possible that God used the wicked acts perpetrated on 9/11 as an instrument of judgment against our nation?
- B. God sometimes brings calamity upon a nation as a judgment for sin.
  - 1. When David sinfully numbered his fighting men, God judged Israel by sending pestilence and some 70,000 men died (2 Samuel 24).
  - 2. The compassionate, and merciful God granted Nineveh repentance and they were spared God's judgment. Years later however, Nineveh repented of her repentance and God brought judgment upon the city (Nahum).
  - 3. "When disaster comes to a city, has not the LORD caused it" (Amos 3:6b; cf. Lam.3:37-40)?
  - 4. Isaiah speaks about God's judgment on Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Babylon, Edom, Arabia, and Tyre (Isaiah 14-23).
  - 5. God drove Canaan out when their iniquity was complete (Gen.15:16; Lev.18:24-28).
- C. But practical atheism has so permeated our thinking that we seldom, if ever, think or allow for any connection between calamity and our sin.
- D. On March 30, 1863, President Lincoln proclaimed and appointed a national fast day because of the War Between the States. This proclamation asked "insomuch as we know that, by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment, inflicted upon us, for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole People?"

## **QUESTIONS FOR SABBATH DISCUSSION & MEDITATION:**

*Take what you have learned this morning and make it into a prayer for yourself, your family, the church and/or your nation. Remember that prayer consists in Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (Feel free to use the outline for praying).*

*What is a worldview? What was the point of the above illustration, "Say the color you see, and not the color you read"?*

*What are the three central elements of a worldview?*

*Why is the most crucial element of any worldview its belief about God? Does God believe in atheists? Why?*

*What is practical atheism? Do you know any practical atheists? Make a list of "practical atheists" that you personally know. Write a few questions to show their unbelief and will lead in to you presenting a biblical worldview.*

*In what ways do you live as a practical atheist?*

*Why are psychiatric problems (depression, panic disorder, attention deficit disorder, anorexia, bulimia, etc.) **always** spiritual problems and **sometimes** physical?*

*What is wrong with "blame it on the brain theology"?*

*How is our practical atheism lived out when we suffer physical problems? How does the Bible take the middle ground between the error of Job's friends and our society's view?*

*Is it possible that God used the wicked acts perpetrated on 9/11 as an instrument of judgment against our nation? What would you have said on 9/12/2001?*

*What might account for the difference between Lincoln's national fast day because of the War Between the States and our nation's reaction to 9/11/2001? In other words, what accounts for the vast difference in response between 1863 and 2001?*

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Prepared by Pastor Aaron Goerner (11/25/2001). See Dt.33:8-10; Ezra 7:10; Malachi 2:7; Acts 17:11; Col.1:28,29; 1 Tim.4:12-16. Questions/Comments? Website: [ChristChurchReformed.com](http://ChristChurchReformed.com); Email: [christchurch@christchurchreformed.com](mailto:christchurch@christchurchreformed.com)