

ACTS 3057 Lecture 7-9 - Atheism

What is Atheism?

- The doctrine or belief that God does not exist, or that there is no god
- Etymology
 - a = no / lack of / without
 - theos = god
- Two Types of Atheist
 - Passive Atheist: I don't have enough evidence for God's existence
 - These are easier to talk to, point to the right path, satisfy with answers, etc.
 - Aggressive Atheist: I have enough evidence for God's non-existence
 - This evidence is the existence of evil
 - These are more difficult because they hold on to the problem of evil and suffering
- Agnostic
 - Etymology
 - a = no / lack of / without
 - gnosis = knowledge
 - Agnosticism means "Inability to know whether God exists or not"
 - Passive Agnostic: I don't know if God exists or not
 - Aggressive Agnostic: No one knows if God exists or not
- Worldview
 - **Origin:** Big Bang Theory
 - **Life:** One day we will be able to create life from inanimate material
 - **Purpose:** Life came into being without purpose. We impose our own purposes on the universe.
 - **Human Nature:** Humans evolved according to the inexplicable purpose of their ancestor species
 - Creed of Atheism (by George): I believe that there is no God and there is no devil. I believe that there is nothing supernatural. I believe that miracles do not occur. I believe that there is no such thing as sin. I believe that the universe is made of matter and man is also material. I believe that Darwinian Evolution explains my origin. I believe that morals and values are relative to the person or the situation. I believe that there is no life after death.
- When did Atheism Begin?

- Beginning of Creation
- Genesis 3:1 - "Has God indeed said?" - from the beginning, Satan tried to plant this doubt, and until today he does.
- Questions that Atheists cannot give coherent, convincing answers to
 - Where did the Universe come from?
 - Where did human life come from?
 - Is there a designer behind the universe's design?
 - Who determines what is right or wrong?
 - Why am I here? What's the purpose of life?
 - Where do I go when I die?
 - Do you trust your mind?
 - Do you have free will?
 - Do you have a soul?
 - Do you have absolute perfect knowledge
- An affirmative existential proposition can be proved. But a negative existential proposition cannot be proved.
 - Negative existential proposition requires omniscience to prove
 - Atheists realize this predicament and say with Richard Dawkins that God "probably" does not exist
 - It's not about probability or improbability, but it's about evidence
- Inconsistencies, Incoherencies, Flaws of Atheism
 - "Only material things exist... except for the laws of logic that I use in my immaterial mind that came up with this conclusion"
 - "Everything has a physical cause... except my own thoughts and theories"
- Do you trust your mind?
 - "The mind is an illusion created by the brain, just as God is an illusion created by humankind" - Richard Dawkins
 - If the mind is an illusion, why should you trust it?
 - "With me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?" - Charles Darwin
 - "If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motion of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true... and hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms." - CS Lewis (Miracles)
 - "If minds are wholly dependent on brains, and brains on biochemistry, and biochemistry on the meaningless flux of the atoms, I cannot understand how the thought of those minds should have any more significance than the sound of the wind in the trees." - CS Lewis (Weight of Glory)

- "The astonishing hypothesis is that 'You,' your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules." - Francis Crick (DNA Double Helix)
- Do you have free will?
 - Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, Bill Maher - Life is Deterministic
 - Their philosophy is that no one has free will, but by arriving at the conclusion that God does not exist, it is through Free Will
 - Syllogism:
 - **Premise 1:** Nature must obey its laws at all times
 - **Premise 2:** A choice made by ME would indicate free will
 - **Premise 3:** My brain, which makes my choices, is part of nature
 - **Conclusion:** My choices are determined by natural laws
 - "It is hard to imagine how free will can operate if our behavior is determined by physical law. So it seems that we are no more than biological machines and that free will is just an illusion." - Stephen Hawking
 - It would be impossible to hold someone accountable or judge someone for something... no one could be found guilty if they don't have free will
 - Whenever you make a truth claim about the world, you're defying determinism
 - AT LEAST they're consistently inconsistent - they are consistent with their atheistic worldview which is inconsistent.
- I am a body, I do not have a soul
 - Naturalism - everything exists in the physical world. I am made up of chemistry, physics and biology
 - "In a world where there is only biology, chemistry and physics, how can you expect there to be a mind?"
 - Christopher Hitchens - when he was sick and ill, he went to the hospital the doctors would tell him "Your body is doing this or that" and he said "quit saying my body! I don't have a body! I am a body!!"
 - I appreciate that you are consistent with your worldview, BUT is it reasonable?
 - Approximately every 7 years, the cells that make up your body have all died and been replaced... are you a different person than 7 years ago?
 - If you're looking forward to a vacation in 5 months, will it be a different person who is going on that holiday?
 - Literally, from moment to moment, you are not the same body that you were. Are you now a different person? It's an unreasonable way to live
 - What about Love? What about thoughts? What about morality?
- There is no evil... except when I use the problem of evil to deny God's existence
 - In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no other good. Nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music." - Richard Dawkins (River out of Eden)

- How do you know?
 - "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully." - Richard Dawkins
 - This is inconsistent with his first quote... if you say that DNA doesn't know, then who says that these things are unpleasant?
 - What is the value of your life?
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