

Heaven and Hell 1

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[0 : 00] Well, it is true that you will look in vain over this passage to find any reference to heaven or to hell, which is the subject matter that we are going to undertake today by way of introduction.

And even though you do not find heaven or hell in the passage just read, you do find the wisdom of man versus the wisdom of God, because it is the wisdom of man that leads him to question the reality of heaven and hell, and it is the revelation of God that solidifies it and gives us reason to believe in it.

So I must admit that I have erred in that I told you that today we would begin a series on considering the seemingly outrageous statements made by our Lord Jesus Christ that can be explained only by a dispensational understanding of the scriptures.

And I fully intend to engage that subject, but it will be after this. And I told you that before. I came across a note that had been written, and it got buried in my filing system on my desk, where someone put a suggestion in the offering box that they would really appreciate a treatment of the subjects of heaven and hell.

And I thought, you know, I really feel some obligation to do that. After all, I can't ask people to make suggestions or to contribute things like that if I'm not going to follow up on it and comply with their wishes to the best of my ability.

[1 : 37] And besides, the subjects of heaven and hell are pretty much in the forefront today, at least in the minds of a number of people, those of the atheist persuasion that we'll be looking at a little bit later and talking about.

So eventually we'll get to the subject matter of the outrageous sayings of Jesus. But for now, I want to give you some introductory remarks concerning the subject that we will be engaging for the next few weeks, that of heaven and hell.

And if someone asks you in the not-too-distant future, when was the last time you ever heard a sermon on hell? You'll be able to tell them. Actually, it hasn't been all that long ago.

But it isn't a very popular subject. It is more popular with the atheist element today than it is among the Christian element, and for reasons that I will divulge a little bit later.

So I'm going to stay anchored right to the pulpit today, and I have several propositions or considerations that I would like to run by you and at least get on the table and have you thinking about these as a backdrop for the studies that are going to come.

[2 : 53] There will probably be one or two on the subject of heaven and probably three or four on the subject of hell. And if anyone should say, well, why are you going to speak on hell more than you are on heaven?

The answer is because Jesus spoke more about hell than he did about heaven. And while heaven is a place to be gained and hell is a place to be shunned, it is very, very important that people understand the nature and the reality of hell and to take advantage of what has been made available to us through that old rugged cross to prevent people from entering into that terrible place. So, today there will be an assortment of ideas and propositions that I want you to consider, and we'll just try to lay some groundwork by getting these things on the table before we actually begin the study of heaven next week.

Heaven and hell, why do they matter? Two things, at least, are presupposed, and without these two things, heaven and hell don't matter.

Not a bit. And those two things consist of, number one, Genesis 1.1, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. If that is not true, then heaven and hell really don't matter because they are one of the several consequences that come from God having created heaven and earth.

[4 : 41] But if he didn't, then of course there is no consequence. There is no heaven. There is no hell. Everything that is, was, or ever will be hangs on the reality and the validity of Genesis 1.1.

In many respects, we might say it is the most important verse in all of the Bible because everything that follows hangs upon the reality of that statement.

And secondly, in our being, in our humanity, we possess a component that is different from our physicality.

It is our spiritual self. And it is the reality and the existence of this spiritual self that makes it very important as to whether or not there is a heaven and there is a hell.

Because we know what happens regarding our physical self. When we die, we are buried or cremated or buried at sea or whatever.

[5 : 59] And this physical body pretty much comes to naught by being reduced to the ashes from which it originally came. And if we are not a component of material and immaterial, then we are only material.

And this is precisely what many believe. You are your body and that's all you are. And when your body comes to an end, that's the end of you.

Because you do not, according to those who would disagree with us, you do not have an immaterial self. You are only matter.

And that's all you are. So when you die, you die like any animal dies. And that's the end of you. There is no heaven. There is no hell.

There is no anything because there isn't anything to go there anyway. The body just goes to the ground. And that is the conventional wisdom among many in our culture to this day.

[7 : 06] Christ, in many ways, gave the lie to that. And one of the chiefest ways he did that, I think, was in an expression that he used when he was combating Satan in the wilderness temptation.

If you are the Son of God, you are hungry, why don't you just command these stones to be bread? You could do that. And Jesus answered by saying, man shall not live by bread alone.

And in that statement, I think he was definitely referring to the idea that man is more than his body. Consequently, his need is greater than that which can be satisfied by physical food.

If man were flesh only, physical food would be all he needs. But he went on to say, we are not to live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

That is spiritual content that has to do with truth that is related to us by revelation from God. And this truth that God relates, we receive and absorb not in our physical body, but in our spiritual self.

[8 : 31] Some call that the soul. I prefer to think of it in terms as the human spirit. But it is the immaterial, non-physical, depository that exists in the human spirit.

And that's where we receive spiritual information. That's where we grow spiritually. I do not know exactly how this is incorporated into the mind and the heart, biblical terms also, but it is intricately intertwined in ways that we do not really appreciate, fully appreciate, and in ways that we are not really able to dissect.

We are an amazing complexity of entities that God has fashioned and put together.

I dare say I don't think a one of us begins to realize how incredibly wonderful we really are in the way we are made and put together.

The scriptures reveal our personhood to consist of materiality and immateriality. Everything about our being is one or the other.

[9 : 50] Neither is both, but the both are conjoined by a bridge that we cannot identify. There is a connecting link between our body and our spirit, but we cannot yet discover what that link or what that bridge is.

There is a connecting link between our physical brain and our non-physical mind, but as yet we are unable to discover it.

I think the scriptures make it quite clear that our mind, which is marvelous beyond words, is not our brain. The brain and the mind wonderfully work together and utilize each other, but one is material and the other is non-material.

One secretes chemicals, enzymes, all kinds of marvelous things that the brain does, but the immaterial part of us, our spirit or our mind, nobody has ever seen.

It is where we house ideas, imagination, personality, preferences, tastes, desires, dreams, all the rest of it.

[11 : 21] It's just utterly, utterly amazing. In our physicality, that is, in our body, we are very much destructible.

We call this destruction death. In our spirituality and our immateriality, we are not destructible. This is the permanence and the perpetuity of the human spirit or the human soul. And at the point of destruction of the body, that indestructible part of our being, the spirit, vacates the body, absence itself from the body, and in the case of a believer, is present with him.

Physical death, our spirit is separated from the body. Heaven is a prepared place where our separated body and spirit are rejoined.

The existence and the concept of heaven and life hereafter appears to be lodged in the human heart.

[12 : 39] What is more, this seems to be the case from time immemorial, including the ancient Egyptians with their views of the afterlife, the mummification of the body, the attempts to preserve it for the next life, etc.

The ancient Norsemen with their view of Valhalla, nature's, our native Americans here in this country, and their concept of the happy hunting ground before the pilgrims ever landed on Plymouth Rock, and the biblical heaven and paradise that we find in scriptures.

There is the ancient Islamic concept of the afterlife with an emphasis upon earthly pleasures enhanced. The Christian view of life after death actually is a truth that originated in the Old Testament, and it is reinforced frequently by Christ in the Gospels, by Paul in the Epistles, as well as other biblical writers.

scholars. And if one were to examine each and every religion, the major ones and the minor ones, and even those hardly known, one thread of commonality would surely emerge from all of them. They all embrace the concept of some kind of life after this life. life. It seems to be an integral part of our psyche and our emotional makeup that while death is real, it is not final.

[14 : 25] Something lies beyond. And if it is true that it is planted within the bosom of us all, that idea of an afterlife, how did it become so planted?

Who or what put it there? But, there are some, those of the atheist persuasion, which by the way is growing in number, that deny such a concept exists in their bosom.

They may say, you have the hope and the concept of heaven in your bosom, but it isn't in mine, because I am facing reality.

fantasy. You are dealing with fantasy, and that is precisely the way they approach it. They further insist that they are the ones who honestly face the issue of their mortality by realizing that the end of this physical life is the end of everything.

They adamantly insist that this present life is all the life there is or ever will be. Believers in life after death say they are simply people unwilling or afraid to face the truth that nothing exists after this life.

[15 : 56] So, they conveniently construct an elaborate and utopian kind of place called heaven where their life on earth can be resumed and continued under ideal circumstances never to die again.

That is the atheist position regarding our views of the afterlife and of heaven. And they would tell us your problem is you are an emotional psychological wimp.

you just cannot face the reality of your own mortality and that death ends absolutely everything. There is nothing after that.

And we of the atheist persuasion are those of a brave new world who are willing to face the reality of our eventual demise which will be permanent.

You people are looking for your pie in the sky when you die by and by. And you comfort yourself with that. The idea of being separated from a loved one never to see them again is just too much for you to handle.

[17 : 13] So in your imagination you construct this rescue plan whereby you will be able to see them again and it will be a grand and happy reunion and you'll all be together and heaven and it will be just one big happy family.

And you psych yourself out in believing that. And they really believe that. And you know, honesty I think will compel us all to admit that we have had our doubts from time to time, haven't we?

Is there really a God? God, is there really a heaven? Is there really a hell? Or do I believe those things simply because I was brought up to believe those things?

Or to believe the alternative is just unacceptable? So I comfort myself at least with allowing myself to think that this is the case.

is there anyone who suspects that we as mere weak mortal human beings that we are not capable of concocting such a scheme?

[18 : 38] Of course we are. Of course we're capable of it. Doesn't mean we have, but we are capable of it. out of our pain we construct that concept of heaven and a grand reunion.

And all the while the atheist is just laughing up his sleeve because he is convinced that there isn't a shred of truth to it and he is the only one who is actually facing reality.

But, is the atheistic estimation accurate as to what's really happening here? While he would insist of course that it is, he comprises but a probable 2 to 4 percent of the population.

The 96 to 98 percent of the population who would disagree with the atheist they are not automatically right because they constitute the vast majority.

So, in answer to the question, could so many people be wrong? The answer is, yes. So many people could be wrong because truth is not determined by the numbers of people who hold it.

[20 : 04] We know historically that there have been several occasions when the majority side of an issue was clearly wrong. While we do not know, for instance, how many people populated the earth in Noah's day, had someone taken a poll asking people to express their opinion about the future of the earth and whether it would be totally inundated by a great flood, Noah, of course, would have been dramatically outvoted.

So much for the wisdom of the majority. And this is why we had read this morning the scripture portion from 1 Corinthians chapter 1 chapter 1.

Because in it we find man's wisdom that is set against God's wisdom. God's wisdom is given to us by way of revelation.

He has revealed himself in nature, which we call natural revelation. He has revealed himself inscripturated in the word of God, which we refer to as the Bible, and he has revealed himself through incarnation in the person of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So we have these revelations to offset man's wisdom, and we ought to be honest enough to admit that while man's wisdom has been able to accomplish a great many significant things, it has also failed him many ways and many times over the years.

[21 : 49] To give you a little word study here, the word theos in the Greek is the word from which we get the word of course, theology.

And this simply means the theology is the study of and the theos refers to God, and theology is nothing more than the study of God.

And when you take a position that there is a God, you are a theist.

a theist is simply someone who believes that there is a God. It doesn't make any difference if you are a Muslim, a Christian, a Jew, or whatever.

As long as you believe that there is a supreme being, you are theistic. You believe that there is a God. And this, of course, is related to the word theism.

[23 : 08] And in the Greek language, there is the use of what is called, I didn't mean to give you a grammar lesson this morning in Greek, but it fits so well, so you need to know this.

There is a little thing called the alpha prefix. And the alpha prefix is nothing more than a letter that is placed in front of the word that completely reverses the meaning of the word.

It negates that which follows. So you put the alpha prefix before theist, and of course you get atheist. Or the alpha prefix before theism, and you get atheism, which of course believes that there is no supreme being, and there is no higher power, there is no God, etc.

For the most part, atheism has never been really taken all that seriously. There was a great deal of hubbub in the 1800s that was stirred up by Robert Ingersoll, who by all accounts was certainly an above average intelligent individual.

I suppose you would put him in the genius category. Now, I know it's very difficult for people to think in terms of anyone being a genius who does not believe in the existence of God, especially when the psalmist has made it so clear that the fool has said in his heart that there is no God, so how can someone be both a genius and an atheist?

[24 : 46] Well, I think it's very easy if you understand the meaning and the derivation of the words. There is such a thing as human genius. There are people who have absolutely no use, no interest in any supreme being at all, and they may even go so far as to be an evangelist for atheism.

And that individual can be, in terms of intellect and IQ and human wisdom, can be very, very intelligent. There are a lot of brilliant atheists out there.

Matter of fact, I do not recall ever having met what we would call just an ordinary type country bumpkin who embraces atheism.

Because one of the characteristics of atheism is you have to be able to really think. Now, I know this sounds contradictory, especially when we call the atheists, or the psalmist calls an atheist a fool. But I am telling you that insofar as intellectuality is concerned, there are a lot of atheists who are very, very intelligent. And that's what makes them so formidable.

[26 : 08] Richard Dawkins, an Englishman, has recently written a best-selling book in the New York Times publishing list of best-sellers called *The God Delusion*.

And in that book, he presents the case that God is simply a delusion. There is no God. And those who think that there is, they are simply deluded.

And I am trying to do a favor for my fellow man by writing this book and cluing man in that he is worshiping and serving a delusion.

there is no God. And that's the title of his book, *The God Delusion*. Christopher Hitchens, another Englishman, has authored a book. It, too, made the great best-seller list for the New York Times, and it is called *God is Not Great*.

And it is designed, of course, to be a play on the words of Islam, God is great, and Allahu Akbar, that these people usually shout when they're about to detonate a bomb that they are carrying or murder someone or cut off someone's head.

[27 : 25] They do that while they are screaming, Allahu Akbar, God is great. And Christopher Hitchens has authored a book called *God is Not Great*, and it, of course, is designed to be an answer to that.

Interesting thing about Christopher Hitchens, and by the way, I don't know why all of these men are surfacing in England. England seems to have a bumper crop of atheists, but Christopher Hitchens, whom I've seen interviewed a number of times, is what I was just saying a moment ago, a very intelligent man.

He is no dummy. And of recent date, he has come down with an incurable case of cancer. He has esophageal cancer, and the doctors have said it is, eventually, it is going to take his life, and that there is nothing that can be done about it.

And Christopher Hitchens has a brother who is a devout, fully committed Christian, so it must be very exercising for his brother to know that his brother is soon to die of terminal cancer, and he has no interest in spiritual things at all.

an atheist, you know, some of them at least, do have a sense of humor. I was amused. I must admit, I had to chuckle at something that Christopher Hitchens said when he was being interviewed, and the interviewer asked him, do you suppose there is any possibility that given this death sentence that is hanging over you with this esophageal cancer, that in your later moments, you may change your mind about your position of atheism, and that you might embrace the God whom you deny.

[29 : 19] And Hitchens says, well, I do not expect to do so, but in the event that I do, you will know that the cancer has gone to my brain.

Well, someone in a position like that still has a sense of humor, so, and then there is Sam Harris, he too, you're right, another bestseller, these books by atheists have been selling like hotcakes, and he has written a book called *The Letter to a Christian Nation*, wherein he decries and contends for the end of faith.

And then there is Daniel Dennett, whom I do not know and have not read anything about him, but he is listed among the prominent atheists. But I've saved the best for last, and that is Sir Anthony Flew, F-L-E-W.

If you do not know about this man, he was probably like the Bertrand Russell of his day, and Bertrand Russell was a philosopher, mathematician, very brilliant man, possibly one of the most intelligent Americans who ever lived, after the manner of men, man, but he was a full-blown atheist as well.

He was the one who said when interviewed, if God should ask you why you didn't believe in him, what would you tell him? And he said, I would tell him you didn't give me enough evidence.

[30 : 45] And that was his answer. But Sir Anthony Flew is now in his 80s, and for many, many years, I mean for probably the past three or four decades, Anthony Flew, who had been knighted by

the queen, was considered the poster boy of modern atheism.

And it was just within the last four or five years that Anthony Flew renounced his atheism, saying, I have weighed and re-weighed and re-weighed the evidence, and the idea of atheism simply cannot be supported by the facts.

So I have become a theist. I believe there is a God. Now, don't misunderstand, that doesn't mean that he has become a Christian, or he has embraced Christ.

As far as I know, he hasn't done anything like that. He hasn't gone out and joined a church, but he simply says the whole concept of atheism cannot be supported, and I have to deny it.

Well, of course, this sent a chill down the spine of all the other atheists who looked up to this man as their patron saint. And, for those who will not believe, because they do not want to believe, they can always manufacture nature and escape clause.

[32 : 26] And, you can guess what it is for Anthony Flew. Well, yes, he's denounced his atheism, and he has embraced the idea of there being a God.

And, you know why, don't you? It's because he's in his advanced years now, he's a little tottery, and he isn't thinking as clearly as he used to be thinking, and he has gone over to the other side because of advancing age, taking a toll on his brain, etc.

So, anyway, why is it that Great Britain is spawning this spate of atheists? Now, think about this.

Great Britain, for centuries, was considered the leading nation among English-speaking peoples.

And, of course, we here in the United States would compete for that title now, but for several hundred years before the United Nations or before the United States was founded or even when we became a founding nation, it was still Great Britain who led the way in so many areas having to do with anything English, whether it was literature or politics or government or whatever.

[33 : 48] It was Great Britain who led the way throughout the world, at least among English-speaking nations. And Germany, think about this, Germany may not have succeeded in destroying Great Britain in World War I or in World War II.

And they tried both times, only to have another English-speaking nation come to the rescue of Great Britain in both cases, good old Uncle Sam.

So, while Germany did not succeed in World War I or World War II, it has greatly contributed to England's spiritual and moral decline with devastating consequences.

German higher criticism. What's that, you say? German higher criticism was a philosophy of religion that surfaced in the universities and seminaries in Germany in the late 1800s.

And this, too, was propagated by very intelligent people who took the scriptures and decided that the Bible and the portions of the Bible, none of which were written by those whom we always thought to have written them.

[35 : 19] In other words, Moses didn't write the Pentateuch, Isaiah didn't write Isaiah, John didn't write, all of which calls into question the authorship or the human penmanship of all of these books, virtually all of them.

they developed the Graf-Wellhausen theory, the JEDP, that Genesis was to be sliced up by these several different contributors, bottom line being we don't know who wrote what, therefore the authority of all of it is suspect.

Because when you don't know the origin of something, the only logical consequence is to question its validity or its authority. so they did.

And this is where the liberal or the modernist position came in, started in Germany, and it leached over into England, and from England it was transported to the United States, and it got here during the nineteen teens and twenties, and the old problem of liberalism, modernism, began to surface.

Here in the United States, and more and more churches and whole denominations were going over into the modernist camp, which denied the authority of scripture, denied the substitutionary death of Christ, denied the deity of Christ, denied the biblical bodily resurrection, and on and on and on it goes.

[37 : 01] And if you look at Great Britain today, this nation, which once was the catalyst for sending forth missionaries all over the world, particularly to Africa and South America, has itself become a mission field.

and the church that we attended when we were in London with Frank and Harleen Anderson several years ago, was Metropolitan Tabernacle, was the church that had been originally founded by and pastured by Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

It was not a disappointing attendance there. It was reasonable, and it was a very good message, and it was a wonderful morning that I will always remember. But for churches in the main throughout Great Britain, they are in enormous decline.

There are these absolutely stunning, beautiful cathedrals that could seat a couple of thousand people. There may be 50 people there on a Sunday morning, almost all of whom are the gray heads.

Very few young people. In France, it's even worse, but that's due largely to the difficulties among the Roman Catholics and what has happened there in France.

[38 : 29] So, Great Britain then, of course, seems to be about ten years ahead of the United States, and we are following suit.

I don't know if you are aware of it or not, but we are in great difficulty here in this country, in so far as church attendance is concerned. We do have the mega churches where there are several thousand that attend on a given Sunday, and in most all of those cases, you will find a full-blown activity-centered kind of thing that has a great deal to offer by way of music and drama and sports and young people, and it just goes on and on and on and on, and I do not decry these churches. I am grateful for every one of them if they are proclaiming the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the salvation of sin. I say more power to them and I wish them well, but we also know that there are many churches that still have their doors open only because they offer a variety of entertainment, and the message is for people to feel good, and this kind of thing permeates our society as well.

So England's churches as well as America's churches have been in decline here in the United States, even here in our own particular community. We see churches that cannot any longer support themselves, that are collecting with other churches to simply survive.

They are consolidating, and some are even closing their doors. It's sad to say there are churches in our area that have been open for almost a hundred years that can no longer support themselves because the attendance has fallen off to that extent.

[40 : 24] So the gospel has fallen upon hard times and faces increasing hostility, particularly in public venues, and the media does whatever it can to fuel the fire.

Political correctness, religious diversity, and moral relativism all heavily contribute to a virtual disdaining of the orthodox faith.

And contributing to the increased interest in atheism and actually spurring it on is what appears to be non-intervention on the part of deity, when, according to most so-called reasonable people, God should have intervened, but he didn't.

This gives comfort to the atheist. This strengthens their position. Where was God when the twin towers fell?

Where was God when the earthquake hit Haiti? Where was God with the New Orleans disaster?

[41 : 42] And now, where was God for those poor, poor Japanese people? If there were such a God as you Christians describe and claim to worship, seems to me the very least he could do would be prevent those kind of disasters.

You know what these are called? Especially in insurance policies, you know what they are called, don't you? They are called acts of God. Well, what kind of a God would allow that?

What kind of God who could prevent earthquakes and tsunamis and floods but chooses not to intervene, just withdraws himself and lets it happen?

Do you really want anything to do with a deity like that? And these are their arguments. These natural disasters, frankly, do not make God look very good.

And when the very existence of God is called into serious question as it is with the calamities aforementioned, then everything else pertaining to this God is also called into question, including not only his existence, but subjects of heaven and hell, which we intend to address.

[43 : 20] Because if there is no God, there most certainly is no heaven and no hell. there has been an unwise Christian backlash to all of this, and it has been sad.

It's permeated our culture for perhaps the last 70 or 80 years, and I call it Christian anti-intellectualism.

because almost all of these people, almost all of these people who propound the idea that there is no God and rant and rail against God from Bob Ingersoll in the 1800s to Bertrand Russell to the atheist that we've mentioned here, virtually all of them offer the same arguments, put forth the same

plan, and all of them are to a person extra intelligent.

Please don't look upon these people as stupid or ignorant. They are very intelligent. Their intelligence is devoid of the knowledge that God has given, and that makes them not only intelligent, it also makes them dangerous.

And they are very persuasive and very articulate. If you've ever seen them interviewed on television, they are very well spoken. So the Christian response to these men and their intelligence is anti-intellectualism.

[45 : 05] And that is an entirely wrong response. Because what these people portray is the idea that their beliefs, their position of atheism, and all of its attendant things, is based solely on reason, and logic, and science.

And they are persuaded they have all of this on their side. What do you Christians have on your side? nothing but an unfounded faith.

That's all you have. And this is the backbone of the evolutionary position. And that is, evolution is science.

Religion and Christianity is just faith. That's all. That is a monstrous lie.

But it has been bought wholesale. The Christian response then is to decry and deny intellectualism.

[46 : 19] To put no stock in human learning or human education because it only leads to a denial of God. That is not true.

But that is exactly what many Christians have purported. And they have even disdained the idea of young men going to seminary to be trained. Because when you come out of seminary you'll be a preacher that doesn't believe anything and you won't be worth two cents and you will have lost your faith because that's what education does for you.

No, it does not. That is what man's education can do and often has done. But that is not the true understanding nor application of knowledge.

The answer is not anti-intellectualism. The answer is a rigorous, a robust pursuance of the intellect against the backdrop of divine revelation.

We need to stump for a sanctified intellectualism. It is God who has given us these marvelous brains with the ability to process information, to reach conclusions, to think logically.

[47 : 42] And we ought not to decry that nor deny it at all. We need to embrace it. We need to educate our young people with all of the education that we can give them.

But it is always against the backdrop that the supreme educator has revealed himself in his word. And you know, you look back to the great scientists of the 1700s and 1800s and almost to a person. They were devout believers in Jesus Christ. And they were thoroughly committed to the scientific method. And that coupled with their belief in Jesus Christ did not present to them a contradiction at all.

It was just an automatic thing. It was like a hand in a glove. So, we share these things with you to simply provide somewhat of a backdrop, I trust, to the subject that will be upcoming.

And next week we will engage in the first installment, the subject of heaven. Your question, Bob? I don't have a question, but in the earlier part of the service this morning, you mentioned the paper article from the bulletin board.

[48 : 53] look on the bulletin board and see it for yourself.

Isaac, congratulations. All I can say is it must be in your genes. Yes, Jim?

Historically, there's been a link between atheism and socialism. Oh, yeah. Are these modern guys that you were talking about this morning, are they free market folks or are they linked to the socialist side?

I'm sorry, what was your question again? These modern atheists that you talked about are they the free market or are they more socialist? Oh, emphatically socialistic.

Emphatically socialistic. And some even more so. Some even communistic. And the difference between socialism and communism is socialism pursues its agenda via legislation.

[50 : 06] Communism pursues its agenda via revolution. Sometimes at the point of a gun. As was the case with the Russian revolution in 1917.

And virtually everywhere that communism has taken over a country, it has done so under the force of arms. When World War II started coming to a close, Russia began moving and gobbling up all of those nations there in the Balkans, etc.

It wasn't terribly long time ago, just in our lifetime, that those nations regained their independence, still under a great deal of Soviet influence. And you know, and I'm going on my time, but let me just make this one point, if I may, before I let you go.

One of the criticisms that is consistently lodged against Christians, and Christianity in particular, is that so many wars have been fought because of religion and religious differences.

and the Inquisition under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church in the 1100s and 1200s, great bloodletting, no doubt about it, was all in the name of religion.

[51 : 35] And I would be the first to admit that there are a great many terrible, terrible things that have been done in the name of religion that God had nothing to do with.

It was just man in his arrogance and stupidity and quest for power, etc. But let me say this as clearly as I know how.

While there have been a lot of lives taken in the name of religion, they do not even come close to the number of lives that have been lost as a result of irreligion.

And I'm talking primarily about the atheistic influence, the very backbone of communism is there is no God.

You cannot implement communism where you allow room for a deity. That's one of the first tenets of the communist manifesto is that there is no God.

[52 : 35] And if you look at these nations that have operated on that thesis, you will find a bloodletting there that makes lives lost under religious principles pale by comparison.

Joseph Stalin, this is not a matter of opinion, it is a matter of historical record. Joseph Stalin was personally responsible for the death of 50 million of his own countrymen through the policies he enacted with communism.

50 million. the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia, the killing fields, millions of people were put to death, all on the back of atheistic communism.

It is far, far more guilty of far more bloodshed than what was ever perpetrated under the name of Christianity. So may we stand please. Father, we recognize that there is so very, very much that needs to be said and could be said in addition to what has been covered here, but we simply ask that you may be pleased to lodge these truths in hearts and minds to serve as a backdrop for that which is coming and to give us an appreciation of how you have acted and not acted down through the ages.

We bless you for the revelation you have given us because apart from it we would be as lost as are all these others of whom we have been speaking. But because you have enlightened us through your word and given us a volition that enables us to accept it and believe it, we have a hope beyond this grave that the world knows nothing of and how grateful we are for it.

[54 : 22] In Christ's name, Amen.