

# Christian Ethics: Salt and Light for the King

## ***Worship No Other Gods: Atheism / Secular Materialism***

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What is Atheism?

What is Secular Materialism?

What is religion? Is this a religion?



### **History of Atheism / Secular Humanism**

- Eastern religions ~ 600 BC
- Capital crime in the west (Socrates)
- Enlightenment (Rousseau, Voltaire, Locke) / rise of toleration – for public peace and good government
  - French Revolution and de-Christianization of French society
- Darwin's alternative (1859)
  - Nietzsche (death of God), Marx (opium of the people)
  - State Atheism
    - Albania (“The state recognizes no religion, and supports atheistic propaganda in order to implant a scientific materialistic world outlook in people.”)
- New Atheists (Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Christopher Hitchens)
  - Religion shouldn't be tolerated but held to the standard of reason

Basic questions:	Atheism Answer
<b>Who / what is deity?</b>	The natural universe is all that exists. There is no such thing as a spiritual / supernatural realm or supernatural beings, including deities. The existence of God is hypothetical, and the evidence does not support the hypothesis.
<b>Where did we come from?</b>	<b>Abiogenesis:</b> inorganic materials interacted physically to create the building blocks of a single cell organism. <b>Evolution:</b> Random variation with natural selection of advantages

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	over a long period of time.
<b>What is the nature of man?</b>	<p>Most people behave morally most of the time, regardless of their religious perspective.</p> <p>Human beings are deliberating, social beings who have evolved over time, capable of empathizing with others and reasoning about fairness, justice, and how societies work.</p>
<b>What is the source of belief and wisdom?</b>	<p><b>Human reason</b> can and should guide our ethics.</p> <p>Consider reciprocity (golden rule) and universalizability.</p>
<b>What is our purpose and how should people live?</b>	<p>Find your own meaning and purpose.</p> <p>Determine your values and live them out. Take responsibility for yourself and others, and be accountable for your actions. Work to make the world a better place.</p>
<b>What is the source of our problems?</b>	<p>Emotional needs and religious dogmatism. Holding on to outdated and undesirable ideas.</p> <p>We are all born atheists.</p>
<b>What are solutions to our problems? Change?</b>	<p>Social and educational reform literacy, critical thinking, tolerance, and informed engagement in civic life. Embrace doubt. Accept mortality.</p>
<b>Where is life headed?</b>	<p>This is our one and only life, and it will eventually come to an end in death.</p>
<b>Where can we belong?</b>	<p>Community without a church of individuals with shared ideals.</p>

## Cultural Engagement and Evangelism

Freedom of religion / First Amendment (*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . .*)

- Dissent in England
- Freedom of religion in the colonies – What takes precedence, the government, or religious faith?
- Great awakening – duties to God extend outside the walls of the church
- How does this apply to atheists?

Where do you see atheism making inroads in our culture today?

What would you talk about with an Atheist?