

The Inescapable God

“... we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter” Isa 28:15

Part 1.4

An Inescapable Goal

The goal of fallen man¹ throughout history is “to be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:5). While man’s place in the cosmos, as a creature, is found in dependence on his Creator, Adam and Eve grasped for equality with God—an autonomous source for interpreting and defining reality. This representative action is the origin of the global humanistic movement: redefining reality through a human-centered philosophy with man as the ultimate authority and source of law—the judge and ‘justifier’, determining the terms of life without reference to God. This primeval human temptation – to be like god – is perpetually a choice between a God-informed reality and an autonomously-informed reality. This means man does not approach the cosmos and life neutrally. He approaches it either in submission to the ultimacy of God as the source of meaning or to the ultimacy of man.

Man, individually and societally, is the logical outworking of his ultimate reference point concerning reality. The secular humanistic impulse in contemporary society, to determine and organise life without reference to God, far from being religiously neutral, is grounded in the worship of man as ultimate. This premise determines in practice that man will either deny God or limit His total sovereignty and jurisdiction over humankind and history, in order to empty the universe of God’s meaning and order, so that man, desiring to be like god, can impose his own. This humanistic goal is systematically outworked to every area of life and culture by casting off the restraints – the law and government of the Sovereign God – that are the impediment to the humanistic ideal of freedom and progress.

This is the inescapable goal underlying modern man and his social agenda.

An Inescapable Irrationality

As heirs of the Enlightenment, our secular society attributes it to a triumph of the human intellect to explain all things in purely naturalistic terms². This commitment to a closed universe of natural law by definition precludes any notion of supernatural intervention in the world. A Kansas State University professor exemplifies this position, stating in the prestigious journal *Nature*, “*Even if* all the data points to an intelligent designer, such a hypothesis is excluded from science because it is not naturalistic.”³ Far from a position of neutrality – able to access the facts and meaning of the world in an unbiased objective fashion – it is the unquestioned pre-commitment to a naturalistic worldview that excludes any evidence or logic that contradicts its approach to reality.

This phenomenon ought not be surprising. As Paul teaches, what can be known about God is ubiquitous, being clearly perceived in the created order (Rom 1:19-20). Why then does man refuse to acknowledge God *even if* all the evidence points that way? Because fallen man is not religiously neutral. Wishing to be his own authority, the human mind and reasoning is at moral enmity with God. Biased in a trajectory away from God, man actively suppresses the clear truth about the world to escape his moral culpability—thus becoming his own judge and ‘justifier’, the determiner of right and wrong. By exchanging true knowledge about the world for a lie, man lives in denial of reality,

¹ ‘Man’ throughout this article is used, not in the sense of male, but as a gender neutral term for the entire race of human beings—both male and female as the image of God as per Genesis 1:27: “God created man [hā·’ā·dām] in his own image ... male [zā·kār] and female [ū·nā·qē·bāh] he created them”.

² Naturalism is the philosophical belief that only natural – as opposed to supernatural – laws and forces operate in the world. It is premised on a closed system of natural law whereby the supernatural, by definition, is ruled out as impossible. Everything is therefore to be explained by purely material properties and causes.

³ S. C. Todd, “A View from Kansas on That Evolution Debate,” *Nature* 401 (September 30, 1999): 423.

constructing false intellectual ‘fortresses’, i.e. worldviews, which are merely ‘fig-leaves’, to hide behind. While “professing to be wise”, in reality man has become a “fool” and “futile in thinking” (Rom 1:19-22). Living in denial of the truth about the world – its clear meaning and rational order – man inescapably ends up in irrationality.

This is the crisis of modern man. His naturalistic worldview reduces his own claims to nonsense. If the universe is an impersonal mindless product of chance, then there is no rational order or purpose inherent in the world or in man—who is redefined as a meaningless mutation fortuitously materialising through blind cosmic forces. Postmodern philosopher Richard Rorty recognises the logical implications of Darwinian naturalism, explaining that all man’s most esteemed beliefs and moral convictions arise by random variation in the brain and “are as much products of chance as are tectonic plates and mutated viruses.”⁴

Darwin likewise saw the absurd implications of his own theory for human rationality. He reflects,

With me, the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man’s mind, which have been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of *any value or at all trustworthy*.⁵

This exposes the *reductio ad absurdum*⁶ of naturalistic man. If ideas and convictions in the brain do not correspond to the world objectively, but are randomly determined by chemistry and chance for survival for the purpose of survival, then there is no reason why one ought to accept the hypothesis of Darwinian naturalism to have *any value or be at all trustworthy* in the first place. An Oxford professor of mathematics and philosopher of science, John Lennox, humorously illustrates this fatal flaw as Darwinian naturalism “shooting itself in the *head*.”

Not only is naturalism a self-refuting theory, it doesn’t cohere to the experience of everyday life. If the universe is impersonal and mechanistic, then humans, as a product of this, are not genuine personal agents with the capacity to choose, think and act intentionally. Nor do they inherently possess any more value or meaning than a mutated virus. Man is merely a collection of molecules functioning by deterministic natural laws. This means human behavior is not the result of making conscience decisions; it is programmed entirely by involuntary processes in the brain. This, of course, leaves no room for free will and its corollary moral responsibility. Evolutionary biologist, William Provine, evangelizing university students, emboldens the continuation of the Darwinian revolution until it is fully realized that it means, “There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will”.⁷ In a naturalistic universe, where there is no transcendent moral good and evil, humans are biological machines bound by no law greater than survival. Moreover, death is extinction indiscriminately taking all people – the just and the unjust – into oblivion. If there is no absolute moral Being to whom mankind is accountable then those who perpetrate atrocities in this life and those who seek to do good all meet the same bleak fate, rendering our sense of right and wrong a mocking illusion and, as law professor Jerome Hall concludes, “justice is a mirage”.⁸

If naturalism were true, far from mankind attaining freedom, it becomes a victim enslaved by an indifferent universe of conflicting forces in the struggle for survival, annihilating moral absolutes and responsibility. Thus even leading cognitive scientists who espouse naturalistic determinism openly confess that they cannot accept it as a workable theory to live by.⁹ In everyday life man is faced with the reality of personal agency, making moral decisions that have real consequences. One materialist, while affirming that Darwinian naturalism means that human consciousness and the sense of free will are only illusions, admits, despite this, that no one “can help acting like at some level really feeling

⁴ Richard Rorty, “Untruth and Consequences,” a review of *Killing Time* by Paul Feyerabend, in *The New Republic*, July 31, 1995, 32-36.

⁵ In Francis Darwin, ed., *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, vol 1 (New York: D. Appleton, 1898), 285.

⁶ Latin for “reduction to absurdity”; a logically fallacious argument because it inevitably leads to a ridiculous, absurd, or impractical conclusion.

⁷ A debate between William Provine and Phillip Johnson at Stanford University, “Darwinism: Science or Naturalistic Philosophy?” April 30, 1994. Transcript available here: <http://arn.org/docs/orpages/or161/161main.htm>

⁸ Nancy Pearcey, *Finding Truth: 5 Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism and Other God Substitutes*, (CO: David C Cook, 2015), 148.

⁹ Pearcey, *Finding Truth*, 149.

that he or she is free.” Instead humans seem “constitutionally incapable of experiencing ourselves and [others] ... as robots”.¹⁰ In practice, naturalism, and its consequent determinism, is a worldview that doesn’t cohere with human experience and cannot be lived out—it has an *inescapable conflict* with reality as God has made it.

Thus while our contemporary society believes that it has conveniently emptied the universe of God and his law, seemingly escaping any ultimate responsibility for how we live our lives, contemporary man, repeating history, has merely “made lies ... [a] refuge, and in falsehood ... taken shelter” (Isa 28:15). Contrary to the irrationality of naturalism’s impersonal universe of chance, where man is poised to impose his own arbitrary order onto the chaos, God’s reality – his meaning and order – imposes itself unceasingly and inescapably on human experience.

Man is without excuse.

¹⁰ Pearcey, *Finding Truth*, 150-151.