

# Thoughts on the value of religion

Michael Shermer, a renowned skeptic says:

- 1) **mythmaking** to explain apparently inexplicable phenomena in the world
- 2) **redemption** (forgiveness in this life) and resurrection (immortality in the next life)
- 3) **morality** (reinforcement of pro-social behavior and punishment of anti-social behavior)
- 4) **sociality** (encouragement of within-group amity and between-group enmity)

1) mythmaking to explain apparently inexplicable phenomena in the world.

1<sup>st</sup> on his list would be the inexplicable phenomena of the origin of life and the universe.

The Norse, Greek, Roman, Indian or American Indian myths were and are just that. Uninspired (man made up) explanations of things they didn't understand.

Examples of such inexplicable phenomena are the celestial spheres of the moon, planets, and sun being held by Atlas as a punishment in a war among the Gods.

We know this is a poor attempt to rationalize the position of the earth and planets, but it illustrates a common problem in defending “religion” in general.

Job 26:7 "He stretches out the north over empty space, and hangs the earth on nothing.

Here, in the oldest book of the Bible is a scientifically correct observation. This passage displays a wisdom not seen in the myths of men. Nor do we find any absurdities in the Bible which are equivalent to those about Atlas, Prometheus or Hercules.

When Hiawatha of the Iroquois (16<sup>th</sup> century) said that plants had spirits and were beautiful women clothed in vines, he spoke of a religion that was equivalent to the idol worshipers Isaiah wrote about.

Isa 44:14 Surely he cuts cedars for himself, and takes a cypress or an oak, and raises it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a fir, and the rain makes it grow. 15 Then it becomes something for a man to burn, so he takes one of them and warms himself; he also makes a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it; he makes it a graven image, and falls down before it.

Neither Shermer nor any other scientist can tell you why the world came into existence.

(But many scientists will make up stories about it – oscillating universe until 1960's)

Neither Shermer nor any other scientist can tell you why you are here. (But many scientists will make up stories about it – “a fortuitous circumstance – no data because it can't be replicated)

If you are here as a random accident, you have no purpose.

If someone tries to give you purpose by saying that you are going to propagate the species, the question would be why you would try to do such a thing?

Biologists love to speak of the number of species that are disappearing from the earth – for what reason. Many species have disappeared already – can you tell the difference in the world now and then?



Our purpose – given by God!

The end result – redemption!

Ecc1 12:11 The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd. 12 But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body. 13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

This surely explains our purpose – to serve God.

Without God there is no purpose in life nor reason for progress, kindness or love – no definition of good or evil except as you may see it.

55 wives like the Mormon leader Brigham Young require celibacy and hide Sex Abuse by priests as Archbishop Vigano calls on Pope to resign as he was “blatantly lying to the whole world” (6/10/19)

When Mohamed said Allah required that the unbelievers be fought till death unless they pay the tax – is it wrong?

The Qur'an states: “not to make friendship with Jews and Christians” (5:51), “kill the disbelievers wherever we find them” (2:191), “murder them and treat them harshly” (9:123), “fight and slay the Pagans, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem”

Why was it wrong for Hitler to try to establish the  
“master race”?

The Germans passed laws to make everything he  
did “legal”.

There is a vast distance between Christianity and Hinduism. Indian Prime Minister Modi said: “We worship Lord Ganesha. There must have been some plastic surgeon at that time who got an elephant’s head on the body of a human being and began the practice of plastic surgery.” (10/18/14)



Jesus counsels peace with all  
men.

Rom 12:18 If possible, so far as  
it depends on you, be at peace  
with all men.

Shermer, and other skeptics like him, is not aware of or doesn't want to admit the differences in the religions of the world.

When people do not have the Bible, they make up their own rules for right and wrong – and those rules depend on the time and government of those ruling.



Shermer says a main purpose of religion is 4) sociality (encouragement of within-group amity and between-group enmity)

Shermer, like most atheists, believes that religion is the cause of hatred – my group vs. your group.

He fails to distinguish between Christianity and the religions of the world (not Roman Catholicism, Islam, Hinduism, etc).

The history of Catholicism and Protestantism over who would rule the earthly kingdom they established has been the cause of war and massacres (in August-September of 1572, 70,000 Protestants were killed in France).

Looking at the history of those who say they follow the Bible and do not places Shermer at a serious disadvantage.

Without knowing more about the Bible, it is no wonder that Shermer finds religions to promote “between-group enmity”.

John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not  
against flesh and blood, but  
against the rulers, against the  
powers, against the world forces  
of this darkness, against the  
spiritual forces of wickedness in  
the heavenly places.

Truly, it is difficult for the uninformed to see that all religion is not established to “between-group enmity”. Christianity does not seek to establish sociality consisting only of “encouragement of within-group amity”.

Mat 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

2 Cor 5:18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2Co 5:11 Therefore knowing the fear of the  
Lord, we persuade men,

2 Cor 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for  
Christ, as though God were entreating through  
us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be  
reconciled to God.



Where do you stand today?

For God, morality, civility,  
kindness, truthfulness?

Against God, morality,  
truthfulness?

Acts 22:16 'And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.'