

FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN FAITH

Is There a God... And If So, What Is the Evidence?

by Jeffrey Breshears

In 1963 Bob Dylan wrote and recorded perhaps the defining song of the decade – and American social and cultural history ever since – with his folk/protest classic, “The Times, They Are A-Changin’.” If you’re unfamiliar with the song or otherwise need to refresh your recollection of the lyrics, I encourage you to go back and give it a listen. The song was eerily and ominously prophetic – at least in retrospect for those who value the Christian influences of the past that made America the most free, prosperous and privileged nation in all of history. But those influences have seriously eroded – and in some cases totally disintegrated – over the past sixty years. We are reminded of this reality every day when we access the news. Not only have basic propriety, decency and civility broken down, but the very rule of law itself.

Informed Christians understand that there are four major component parts of an insidious ideology that is systematically corrupting and destroying our nation and its cultural institutions. Driven by the political agenda of cultural Marxists and their liberal allies (“useful idiots,” as Lenin called them), this four-headed Hydra is (literally) hell-bent on **secularizing**, **socializing**, **sexualizing** and **racializing** every aspect of our society and culture.

In keeping with the theme of Revelation 6, one might call these forces the “Four Horsemen of the American Apocalypse,” of which the driving force is the first: secularism. The word “secular” is usually understood as simply “non-religious” or devoid of spiritual meaning. But when

the suffix *ism* is added, the word takes on a far more alarming connotation as in “anti-religious” or “anti-God.”

According to public opinion polls over the past twenty years, belief in God in general and the Christian faith in particular has declined markedly, especially among younger Americans (who in general are the most privileged, over-indulged and coddled generation in human history). Now, we all understand that public opinion surveys are fraught with complicating factors based on the exact wording and the subtle psychological inferences inherent in the question, but the general trend is nonetheless undeniable. More than at any previous time in our past, Americans are far more interested in,

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The Areopagus Calendar

Areopagus Seminars

**FOUNDATIONS FOR
CHRISTIAN FAITH
THE GOD WHO IS:
The Classical and Modern
Arguments for the Existence
of God**

— WEDNESDAYS —

AUG. 16th to NOV. 1st

Johnson Ferry Baptist Church

6:30 - 8:00 PM / Room 105

An in-depth study of the evidential and rational arguments for belief in God

Major Topics

1. Preface: The Origins of Monotheistic Religion
 - Did “religion” evolve from ancient pagan superstitions, or was there an original monotheism that devolved into polytheism, animism, spiritism and nature-worship?
 - Anthropology and the case for original monotheism.
 - The strange story of Melchizedek.
 - Monotheistic themes in Socratic and Platonic philosophy.
2. The God Who Is: Classical and Modern Arguments for the Existence of God
 - Are the findings of modern science compatible with biblical faith?
 - A critique of the “New Atheism.”
 - God Is: The evidential and rational arguments for God based on facts, reason, and modern science
 - Why won’t skeptics believe?
 - Some common objections... and some reasoned responses.

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and committed to, egoistic pursuits such as materialism, hedonism and careerism than in cultivating a deep and personal relationship with God through faith and commitment to Jesus Christ.

Secularism is the root of all other evils. It is an explicitly self-centered and anti-God orientation. Yet the trends indicate that it has never before been so prevalent and socially-acceptable. The question is, "Why?" – and the answer undoubtedly is, "Because Christians too often think, talk and live like their non-Christian neighbors and associates. Furthermore, most Christians are ill-equipped to effectively share their faith and defend the defining truth-claims of the Christian faith. In other words: most have no real understanding of basic Christian apologetics.

Our Areopagus seminar this fall is **"Foundations for Christian Faith: The Rational and Evidential Reasons for Belief in God."** For those who doubt the existence of God or regard themselves too busy to think about such matters, consider how the novelist John Updike described the post-mortem fate of humankind:

"Without warning, David was visited by an exact vision of death: A long hole in the ground, no wider than your body, down which you were drawn while the white faces recede. You try to reach them but your arms are pinned. Shovels pour dirt in your face. There you will be forever, in an upright position, blind and silent, and in time no one will remember you, and you will never be called. As strata of rock shift, your fingers elongate, and your teeth are distended sideways in a great underground grimace indistinguishable from a strip of chalk. And the earth tumbles on, and the sun expires, an unaltering darkness

reigns where once there were stars." ["Pigeon Feathers." Cited in James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, Fifth Edition, 66.]

Such is the imagined fate of those who reject God and His plan for their lives both in this present realm of reality and beyond. If there is no God, human life is absurd, and any thought that our lives have any meaning and purpose is nothing but a sick joke. This is the optimal issue in life, as the 17th century Christian philosopher Blaise Pascal observed. Speaking of the spiritual condition of non-believers, he noted:

"The state of death is eternal... [and] how absurd it is for people to go through life without regard for their final destiny.... From all this I conclude that I ought to spend every day of my life seeking to know my fate. I might perhaps be able to find a solution to my doubts; but I cannot be bothered to do so, nor will I take one step towards its discovery. And after treating with contempt those who are concerned about such matters, I will go without foresight... and let myself drift toward death, uncertain of the eternity of my future state." [*Pensees*, 1670.]

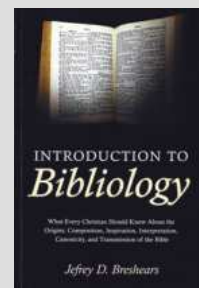
Thirty years after he wrote "The Times, They Are A-Changin'," Bob Dylan wrote another song entitled "Everything Is Broken." There is, of course, a direct relationship between these two themes. With the death of belief in God comes the death of all meaning and purpose – not only for individuals but for entire civilizations. Addressing the horrors that befell Russia under Communism, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn cited a common comment he often heard by many elderly people at the time: "Men have forgotten God; that's why all of this has happened."

The Areopagus Calendar

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLIOLOGY: What Every Christian Should Know About the Origins, Composition, Inspiration, Interpretation, Canonization, and Transmission of the Bible Thru the Centuries

— MONDAYS —
SEPT. 11th to OCT. 30th
Mt. Bethel Church
6:30 - 8:00 PM / Fellowship Hall
Dr. Jeffrey Breshears

Based on the book by Jeffrey Breshears, this course is an in-depth survey that helps Christians understand where the Bible came from, how it was composed, and why Christians have traditionally believed it to be historically-reliable and doctrinally and morally authoritative.



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A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA Part 4: From 1876 to 1932

— SUNDAYS —
11:30 AM
Johnson Ferry Baptist Church
Room 277

Part 4 in our ongoing series on American Christian history that covers the most important movements, people, issues and events from 1876 to 1932 in evangelical Christianity and other faiths.