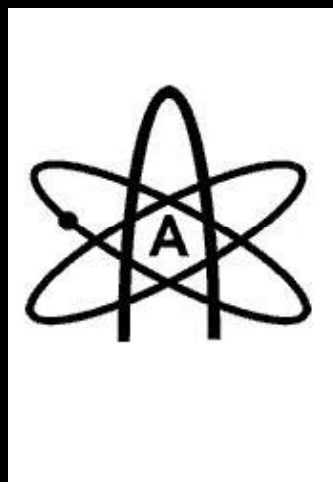


ATHEISM



Introduction

- The word “atheism” comes from the negative “a” which means “no” and “*theos*” which means “god”. Hence, atheism in the most basic terms means “no god”.
- It is the lack of belief in a god and/or the belief that there is no god.

Statistics

- A 2004 BBC poll showed the number of people in the US who don't believe in a God to be about **10%**
- A 2006 study by researchers at the University of Minnesota involving a poll of 2,000 households in the US found atheists to be the most distrusted of minorities.
 - Many of the respondents associated atheism with immorality, including criminal behavior, and extreme materialism.

Types of Atheists

- The 1st is the lack of evidence to affirm God's existence.
- The 2nd is that God existence is contrary to the evidence at hand.
- To simplify, one says there isn't enough evidence to decide and the other says there is evidence contrary to God's existence.

Basic Tenets of Atheism

- There is no God or devil.
- Only the cosmos exists. God did not create man; people created God.
- The universe is eternal. If it is not eternal, then it came into existence “out of nothing and by nothing.”
- A human being is matter in motion with a mortal soul
- No eternal destiny for individual persons,
- Some believe in an earthly paradise to come.
- Man and the universe are materials.
- Evolution is considered a scientific fact.
- Ethics and morals are relative

Atheists' Argument

- A typical argument posed by an atheist to show why God does not exist is as follows:
 - God is supposed to be all good and all powerful.
 - Evil and suffering exist in the world.
 - If God is all good he would not want evil and suffering to exist.
 - If He is all powerful then He is able to remove all evil and suffering.
 - Since evil and suffering exist, God is neither good nor powerful
 - Therefore He does not exist.

Our Response - 1

- In “Mere Christianity”, C.S. Lewis’ writes:
 - “As an atheist, my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust.
 - But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.
 - What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?”



Straight Line = Standard

Our Response - 2

- God made everything perfect
- This includes free-willed creatures.
- Free will is gave rise to evil (Gen. 3:6)
- Therefore, imperfection (evil) can arise from the perfect not directly, but indirectly, through **freedom**
 - God created the **fact** of freedom; man performs the **acts** of freedom.
 - God made evil possible; creatures make it actual

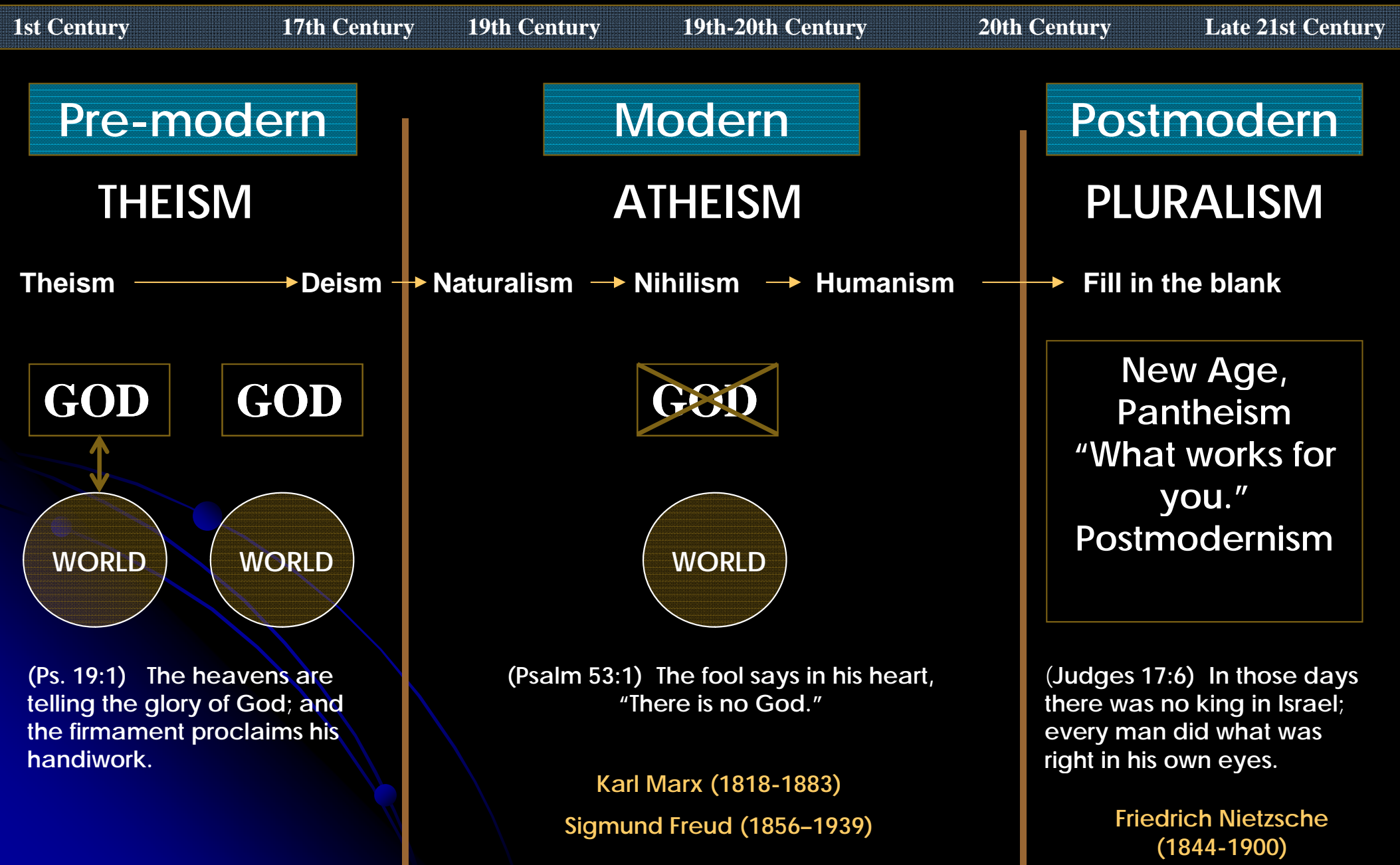
Atheism & Agnosticism

- Agnostic is derived from two Greek words: a = no; gnosis = knowledge.
- Variations of agnosticism.
 - "I do not know if there is a God."
 - "Man cannot know if there is a God."
 - "I do not want to know if there is a God."
- Agnosticism is equivalent to ignorance. Acts 17:23
 - "unknown god" –
 - "I even found an altar with this inscription: to the unknown god. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you"

Atheism & Pantheism

- Unlike pantheists who deny the reality of evil, atheists strongly affirm it.
- In fact, while pantheists affirm the reality of God and deny the reality of evil, atheists, on the other hand, affirm the reality of evil and deny the reality of God.
- They believe theists are inconsistent in trying to hold to both realities.

Historical Perspective



Atheism as a form of idolatry

- “The conflict between the theist and the atheist is as to whether God shall be called God or shall have some other name.”
- If man denies God, he inevitably constructs physical or mental "gods."
 - Jer. 2:28 - "gods which you made for yourself"
 - Gal. 4:8 - "those which by nature are not gods"

The false gods of atheism.

- **Humanism** - Man is the measure of things, the highest being; his own god. Gen. 3:5 - "you shall be like God." **Man is god.**
- **Naturalism** - The natural order is the only order. **Nature is god.**
- **Materialism** - acquisition of material goods is the ultimate goal. **Money is god.**
- **Intellectualism** - By logic and rational thought, man can figure everything out. **Reason is god.**

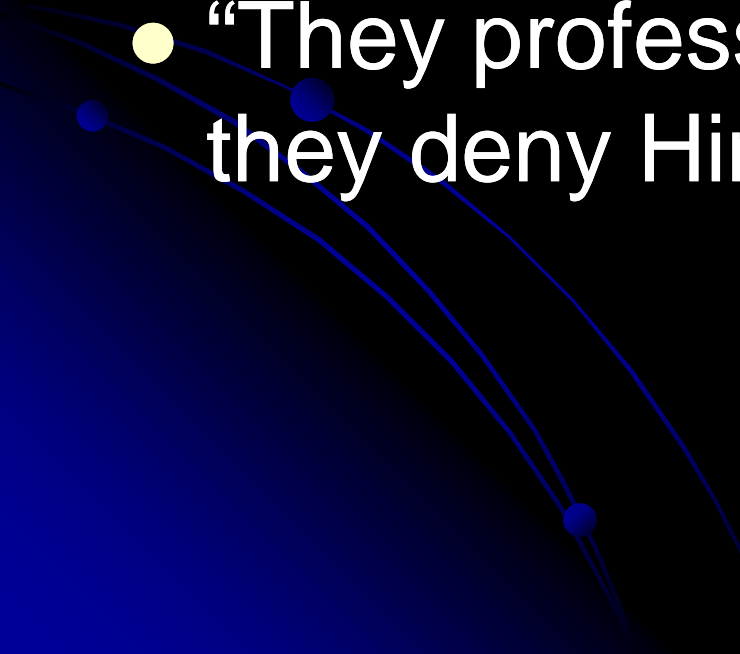
The false gods of atheism

- **Relativism** - There is no absolute. Everything is relative. **Personal viewpoint is god.**
- **Socialism** - The good of the whole is the highest good. **Society is god.**
- **Pluralism** - It doesn't matter what you believe or do. Tolerate everything. **Diversity is god.**
- **Hedonism** - Sensual pleasure is the highest good. If it feels good, it is good. "Eat, drink and be merry." **Pleasure is god.**


The Fool Has Said . . . (Ps.14:1)

- “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Ps. 14:1; 53:1).
- The meaning of this verse is not that atheists are lacking in intelligence, but that the denial of God is evidenced by behavior.
- The foolishness of atheism, then, is ultimately turning away from the true and living God and following a false, constructed one of our own choosing.

Practical Atheism

- They live a lifestyle as if God does not exist.
 - God is irrelevant to their lives.
 - They do not communicate with God nor do they seek His direction.
 - “They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him” (Titus 1:16)
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Our Responsibility

- Be firmly rooted in Biblical truth.
 - Sharpen your critical thinking and reasoning.
 - Understand the arguments for/against atheism
 - Understand the arguments for/against theism.
 - Pray!
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Quotes on Atheism

- Atheists express their rage against God although in their view He does not exist. --C. S. Lewis
- The worst moment for the atheist is when he is really thankful, and has nobody to thank.--Dante Gabriel Rossetti
- A creature revolting against a creator is revolting against the source of his own powers--including even his power to revolt...It is like the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower. --C.S. Lewis

Quotes on Atheism

- To sustain the belief that there is no God, atheism has to demonstrate infinite knowledge, which is equivalent to saying, "I have infinite knowledge that there is no being in existence with infinite knowledge" --Ravi Zacharias
- The turning point in our lives is when we stop seeking the God we want and start seeking the God who is. --- Patrick Morley
- I believe in God as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else. --C. S. Lewis