

Identity: Deism

Deism Foundation:

Deism: A Revolution in Religion, A Revolution in You by Bob Johnson

- Deism is the future: pg.13
- It is a self-described man made religion based upon reason and visible design. Pg 161
- Revealed religions are dangerous pg. 16 2
- Deism is a form of agnosticism pg. 19
- Thomas Paine: Miracles do not happen pg. 24
- Bad things happen in deism for the greater good. Natural selection is not individual focused. Pg. 80
- Man can be good: humanism is closely linked to deism pg. 81

Worldview:

- God cannot be known apart from nature.
- Question everything.
- Man is fallible so people cannot be trusted to relay God's revelation.
- If there is an afterlife, it cannot be known now.

Scriptural Wordview compared to the Deist Worldview:

- Psalm 98 The Lord has revealed his salvation.
- Deuteronomy 29:29 God does not reveal everything to us.
- Matthew 11:25-30 The Father reveals what needs to be known.
- 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 The Spirit is working in those that receive, rather than reject, the revelation from God's Word.

We start to look at identities that do not start with being new in Jesus so we better understand those around us and have avenues for conversation. Some of these worldviews don't have scripture, per se, for a foundation, but they do have people who write about the fundamental ideas. For deism we looked at a book written by Bob Johnson who is the founder of the World Union of Deists for the foundation.

Johnson says that Deism is the future because it is a man made religion based upon reason and the visible design of nature. It has been on the rise since the beginning of the enlightenment era. It's primary belief is that God created everything then stepped away. Sort of like a watchmaker who winds up a watch and the watch runs on its own. Therefore God is not involved in the world and God certainly doesn't communicate with the world. Deism sees any evil in the world as being man made, so if people would stop doing bad things the world would be better. When it comes to nature however, what people might see as bad things happening are actually for the greater good of nature. Deism is closely connected to the theory of Darwinian macro-evolution. There are other ideas as well in Deism but for the most part they flow out those few foundational beliefs

The worldview of a Deist then, consist of a view important points: First, God is not involved in the world. Second, God can not be known apart from nature and so any religion that says God speaks to people is a lie. Third, if there is an afterlife it cannot be known, so don't worry about it. Fourth, humans are the point and center of the world.

We have some shared ground with Deists in that we believe God created everything and that the problems of the world are human made. Also, that nature reveals God's existence. We differ significantly though in our belief as to what God reveals beyond nature. For this we looked at Psalm 98 which says that the Lord has revealed his salvation to the world. Then in Matthew 11:25-30 it says that the Father reveals what needs to be known. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 it says that the Spirit is working in those that receive God's revelation of salvation and that lack of the Spirit is why others reject that revelation.

Practically then, we need to understand that there is no convincing a Deist to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. However, we can illustrate how we share ground on humans being responsible for evil, and for that reason, believing that humans can just choose and will be able to good gives a false hope. Instead, our only hope is Jesus, which allows you to make known who Jesus is, and the Spirit works through the proclamation of who Jesus is, and maybe it will work in their hearts and minds too.