

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Are You A Practical Deist?

(Jerry Fite)

Beginning as early as the sixteenth century, Deism was a word denoting a particular mind set on how to view the world we live in. Emphasizing reason and denouncing superstition continues to be at the core of such philosophy. What began in Europe found place in the heart of many in the eighteenth century's Age of Enlightenment. Many of the early founding fathers of this country were Deists. Thomas Jefferson may have been an Episcopalian, but his thinking was in line with Deism. One might have faith, but it was limited to what one observed in natural law, governed by reason. Thomas Paine, a Deist said, “In Deism, reason and belief are happily united.”

Deism is the belief that God is the Creator, and governs His creation through the natural laws set in place from the beginning. God wound up the universe like a clock and set it ticking. Deism then takes a twisted turn from what we read in the Bible. The thought is, since the time God set things in motion, He has not intervened. Deism rejects the idea of God's miraculous intervention as well as His providential working in the world today to change the course of events.

Claiming to be a believer in God, do you really believe God will answer your specific prayer and meet your individual need? Do you believe God continues to work today in His creation? Jesus said, “*My Father worketh even until now, and I work*” (John 5:17). Jesus had just healed a lame man, who for 38 years had been unable to walk. Jesus is saying behind His healing work was the Father. He was intervening in the affairs of man and changing its course for an individual. Jesus teaches us that God will provide life's physical necessities, if we seek His righteousness and kingdom (Matthew 6:31-33). Jesus teaches us to “pray” that God will “*give us our daily bread*” (Matthew 6:11). Do we really believe that if we meet these given conditions God will sustain our needs in time? Or, do the natural laws God set in motion at the beginning of time offer man's sustenance regardless if a man is seeking, praying or not? Some professing Christians are practical Deists in that they do not believe in God's special and providential care for his people. Like Deists they live as if God is transcendent, but never immanent

One of the reasons Deists reject the God of the Bible is that

it reveals a God who is “cruel”. One example often given is what God did to some young boys who mocked God's prophet Elijah by saying, “*Go up thou baldhead; go up thou baldhead*” (2 Kings 2:23). In connection with Elijah condemning their action in the name of Jehovah, two she-bears came out of the woods and “*tore up*” forty two young lads. Deists see this as cruelty toward children and trying to scare them into some kind of submission. They certainly would not read such Bible stories to their children. Do we who profess to believe in God hide certain stories from our children thinking they create harmful images of a cruel God? Are we practical deists? Or, do we gladly share such Biblical accounts with our Children knowing they manifest a Holy God who demands reference for Him and His appointed messengers?

Deists reject religion. They say, “*God gives us Reason, not Religion.*” Religion has brought great evil into man's existence from the Insurrection at the hand of the Christian religion to the brutality of Muslim uprisings. Are you ashamed of religion like a Deist, or do you unashamedly manifest “*a pure and undefiled religion*” before man (Jms. 1:27)?