

Other Religions: Deism and the Prosperity Gospel

1. Deism – “Divine watchmaker”
 - a. Defined in opposition to Christianity. Not uniform in belief. Developed by enlightenment thinkers with veil of rationality.
 - b. Gained popularity in 1600s as a way of avoiding eternal punishment in Christianity.
 - c. Formally not held by many today. Informally most people are functionally deistic.
 - d. Held by many founding fathers of USA.
 - e. Main beliefs
 - i. A supreme being makes the world at lets it run without interference – rejects Trinity.
 - ii. Worship – primarily pursuit of virtue in life.
 - iii. Morality – being virtuous makes us agreeable to God. Morality is innate.
 - iv. Repentance – grief atones for sin.
 - v. Immorality – some yes and some no.
 - f. Responding to deists
 - i. The God of deism is not worthy of worship: sin does not matter.
 - ii. Reason is not an ultimate way to know.
 - iii. Deism is constructed by first doubting Scripture and then taking parts that are desired
 - iv. God (John 1:1, 1 Cor 1:3, Eph 4:30), Worship (Lev 10:1-2, 1 Cor 11:17), Morality (Ex 20, Rom 7:7-12, James 1:13-15), Repentance (Luke 23:39-43), Immortality (Rev 20:12-15)
2. Prosperity Gospel
 - a. Basic definition is a gospel focused on this life. By following mystical procedures one attains health, wealth, and prosperity in this life.
 - b. Largely a modern day phenomenon but has historical analogs
 - c. A point of stumbling for real Christians
 - d. Major beliefs
 - i. Jesus purchased healing and prosperity in this life – Is 53:5, John 10:10
 - ii. Covenant with Abraham secured material blessings for all trusting in Jesus.
 - iii. “Give me your money”
 - iv. “Name it and claim it”
 - e. Responding the Prosperity Gospel
 - i. Eternal consequences in focus – Eccl 2:9-11, 12:1-8
 - ii. God’s promises are for eternity – Heb 11:32-40
 - iii. Significance of sin – Gen 3:17-19
 - iv. The gain of godliness – 1 Tim 6:3-10

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Outline:

- Apologetic Framework
 - Introduction
 - Biblical apologetics
 - Structure of apologetic discussion
- Particular Defenses
 - Miracles
 - Resurrection/historicity of the gospels
 - OT Civil laws
 - Rationality of the Trinity/Christ having 2 natures/existence of angels
 - Problem of Evil
 - Big Bang (or similar) & Creation
 - Evolution & Man
 - Authenticity of Scripture/Different methods of apologetics
- Understanding Other Religions
 - Jehovah's witnesses
 - Mormonism
 - Islam
 - Christian Science
 - Legalism and Antinomianism
 - **Deism and Prosperity Gospel**
 - Buddhism and Hinduism
 - New Age