



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: Atheism

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ATHEISTS AND MIRACLES

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

When atheist Madalyn Murray O’Hair was murdered in 1995, the comfortable five-bedroom home she was living in fell to her associate Oren Tyson, director of a non-profit group sponsoring atheism. But when the taxes were not paid, the authorities confiscated the house and set Tyson’s belongings out on the street in cardboard boxes. Of course he was indignant. In response, he fashioned a sign from one of the cardboard boxes which defiantly read, “Homeless Atheist, Nam Veteran, Will Wait for a Miracle.”

After I read that news note, I started thinking of the logical contradiction in the statement: an atheist waiting for a miracle. Whoa! Possibly it’s a matter of definition, but atheists don’t believe in miracles unless they consider a miracle to be simply a stroke of luck. Miracles involve the supernatural, the suspension of normal laws by a higher one. Atheists and miracles are contradictory.

Someone once said that there are two kinds of atheists: ordinary atheists and ornery atheists. I have no doubt that there are those who philosophically are atheists, but I am also convinced that most of the people who describe themselves as atheists are really lifestyle atheists. They live the kind of lives which are a lot more comfortable with no accountability, no recognition of the moral and spiritual laws of the Almighty.

Such was a young man I once encountered who described himself as an atheist. As we began to dialogue about creation and the laws of cause and effect, he finally admitted, “Well, I can’t live the kind of life I want to live and believe in God.”

But refusing to acknowledge His existence doesn’t make Him go away any more than denying that the sun exists when there are a few cloudy days. It’s much like the logic of a manual for the operation of a small, single aircraft. Under the section, “What to do if there is engine failure,” the manual said, “When you are within 400 feet of the ground, turn on your landing lights. If you don’t like what you see, turn them off again.”

I suspect that “turning off the lights” is what a lot of lifestyle atheists are doing today, but ignoring God, living as though there is no accountability or no personal responsibility to others whom we may hurt, neither eliminates His presence nor avoids ultimate accountability.

I suspect that many who describe themselves as atheists will do an about face when they are confronted with the grim realities of living in a broken world. I know one who did that. You see, he was co-pilot with a friend of mine when their commercial jet hit rough weather and suddenly dropped several thousand feet. On the way down, Don Jacob, the pilot, heard the co-pilot (the one who claimed to be an atheist cry out, “God help us!” Don said nothing but when the plane stabilized, he said, “Hey, I heard you ask God for His help; I thought you were an atheist.” Somewhat chagrined, the co-pilot said, “Atheism is OK for good weather, but not when you’re in a storm.”

If you really want to know more about God, read the original source book, the Bible, starting with the Gospel of John. C. S. Lewis’s book *Mere Christianity*, and Josh McDowell’s book *What the Bible is All About* can give you further insights. Long ago, God gave a promise. He said, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). It’s still true. Atheists too often look for God like a thief looks for a policeman, but God is still there. He’s as close as the cry of the sincere heart who says, “Lord, show me yourself.” It’s attitude that makes the difference.

Resource reading: John 1.