

4. Atheism & Morality

Terrie Lambert, 25.11.2022

Youtube Video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9l3tpx_ZaE

[00:00:05.310] - Terrie

Our loving God in heaven. Here we are at the end of another week and we thank you for all Your blessings. We thank you for your watch care over us, for Your loving kindness, for your truth. And as we come together tonight, we ask for Your presence. Bless us as we study things that are relevant to our message, but we also pray for deeper understanding of all those things that have been taught that we would be more solid on them. I pray for your guidance in what is being said, and we leave ourselves in Your care. Thank you, dear God, for this privilege of being part of the end time movement. Help us to take it to heart and mind. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

[00:00:59.750] - Terrie

We are studying atheism at the end of the world. We went to the beginning of the world and we looked at the Tower of Babel. Can anybody tell me the two characteristics of the Tower of Babel that we've taken away so far? We reviewed it last week. Ray.

[00:01:37.550] - Raymond

I'm sorry, I'm not sure if these are the ones that were reviewed last week, but was it self exaltation self promotion, something along those lines?

[00:01:48.520] - Terrie

Okay. Did you watch last week's, Ray?

[00:01:51.030] - Raymond

I didn't get a chance to yet.

[00:01:55.330] - Terrie

It's all right. You're half right, Josephine.

[00:01:59.270] - Terrie

Ow, then I'm half right too. The same things I was going to say, that Raymond said.

[00:02:08.470] - Terrie

Okay, so self exaltation, self promotion. Yes. That they are different, but similar. And then there's something else.

[00:02:22.250] - Marilyn

Self preservation.

[00:02:25.440] - Terrie

Self preservation. Self exaltation. And that includes self promotion. Yes. The horns and the Gadal, the Hubris and self preservation. I'm just about to write the wrong one again. They needed to escape a flood. They needed to escape a global catastrophe that could possibly cause their extinction. And as we looked down the characteristics of the Tower of Babel, we could see that those people ticked all the boxes that we learnt from Daniel 8 and how counterfeit religion closely mimics the truth. You always have to have an original to be counterfeited. And so the Tower of Babel was a counterfeit of God's religion, as explained in Daniel 8, that self exaltation, the need of a deliverer. And we looked at all those things. One of the things we noted with Daniel 8 is that it goes from the daily to the abomination that makes desolate.

[00:04:13.700] - Terrie

And yet it's all the daily. It's paganism spiritualism. It is the spirit of self exaltation and self-preservation that goes right through history, self-promotion included there. It's just that it changes according to the dispensation that it's in. Something that is acceptable at one period of Earth's history then becomes unacceptable. We could use the example of human sacrifices. Human sacrifices were the epitome of pagan worship. But that over time that gets taken away and we see the abomination of desolation has its own form of human sacrifices that is far more civilized and in keeping with its period, its dispensation. If you count 1260 years, the even the persecution ends towards the end of those 1260 years because of changes in society, changes in the cultures. And yet it's it's still there. It's just changing in appearance over time, if that makes sense. It's the daily all the way through. It's just going to look more acceptable as we go through history. The counterfeit always follows the true, and it can come very close. We noted how the papacy legitimized paganism, and it was a continuation, of the daily. It looks more refined, more cultivated by wearing Christian garments.

[00:06:27.510] - Terrie

Self promotion, self exaltation, that's obviously not a good thing. What about self preservation? Any thoughts about self preservation? Isn't it innate in us that we don't want to die or that we want to protect ourselves? Any thoughts about self preservation? Graeme.

[00:07:18.130] - Graeme

Yes, I think we are inbuilt with self preservation, because we have a flight or fight system within us. We have certain things within us that were made that way. But I think that the self preservation that we're referring to here is putting oneself above others. Almost like a hierarchy in social standing, like a patriarchal system where men are at the top and then everybody else is below.

[00:07:59.790] - Terrie

Okay, so a selfpreservation that is determined by making sure you get saved above somebody else?

[00:08:15.050] - Graeme

Yeah, that was my thought. Putting yourself above others in a very selfish way, not just your own personal life being saved that we see in a flight or fight response when we get into an emergency situation.

[00:08:32.430] - Terrie

It kind of reminds me of Daniel, 8, where the two powers tread down, God's host and God's sanctuary. They come on top of them. They have to tread them down in order to make sure that they don't lose anything, that they are on top. It's part of lifting oneself up, is treading down somebody else. Ray?

[00:09:10.400] - Raymond

My first thought was how their self preservation started in the denial of God. They knew that there'd been a flood, but they denied God. It was kind of based in that. God doesn't exist, but we know there was a flood and we want to make sure it doesn't happen again. It was very much about what they could do to save themselves and not about what God could do to save them.

[00:09:46.300] - Terrie

Okay. Thank you. It's something they accomplish on their own, without God. Josephine?

[00:09:57.760] - Josephine

I was thinking about Babel. They wanted self preservation. They built the tower, and today we have atheism. And their aim is self preservation, but in a different way altogether. It's like in a modernized way from the tower Babel. They're not building a tower. They're educating people to try and preserve resources for the future of the population in the mines.

[00:10:50.820] - Terrie

I guess my question is, what's wrong with that? What's wrong with self preservation? Is there something innately wrong with that?

[00:10:59.380] - Josephine

Very selfish. It's a small group of people. It's like distilling the population to a purified group of elite people. I may not be explaining it as well.

[00:11:21.050] - Josephine

No, that's good. Thank you, Josephine. Moli?

[00:11:30.140] - Moli

Because of the experience that I had with the flood. They really wanted to exalt themselves to a point where they don't need any help from God. And they wanted to do everything in their power to preserve not only the planet, but also themselves. It's sort of a rebellion. The ideology behind it.

[00:12:06.840] - Terrie

Okay, so you've linked that to rebellion.

[00:12:09.960] - Moli

Yeah.

[00:12:10.490] - Terrie

Thank you, Moli. Rachel.

[00:12:15.740] - Rachel

I think it can be seen as both. I think it can be the natural response, to look after yourself. But they took it to the extreme of self preservation and maybe in the context of nationalism thinking to preserve your gender or your race. I think that's when it can become extreme and damaging. Just a thought.

[00:12:48.500] - Terrie

Nice thought. When you said that, it reminded me of being on an airplane. And you've got to take the oxygen mask to yourself before you give it to the child. When I say, is there something wrong with it? You would say, it depends.

[00:13:05.980] - Rachel

Yeah, exactly. Depends when you use it.

[00:13:08.930] - Terrie

Yeah. There's a time when you've got to strengthen yourself in order to help others. It really does depend in going on from what you said. Thank you, Rachel. And Lynne?

[00:13:28.500] - Lynne

The thoughts I had, it might be a little bit like freedom, where there's a good and there's a bad. A certain amount of freedom is fine unless it's not governed by something else. A certain amount of self preservation is fine so long as it's governed by something else. And the other thing that I thought of was comparing and contrasting with the Bible. It says, Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life or his friend. God laid down his life. So basically it depends on the principle that's ruling that self preservation. It's not that it has to be wrong of itself, but if it's ruling, then that's a problem.

[00:14:14.160] - Terrie

Yeah. Good. That kind of ties in with what Rachel and what Moli were saying, like rebellion. If you're in rebellion, if anti-God is behind your sentiment, then there's something wrong with that. But when what you've said Lynne reminds me of Gethsemane. Jesus struggled with the temptation to preserve himself. And that was a time when he had to lay down his life for his people. But the previous Passover, he did preserve himself. He didn't go to Jerusalem. He stayed in Galilee. If he had gone to Jerusalem, he would have died a year earlier. That was self preservation, but it was for the greater good. It wasn't a self preservation based on himself. It was for the good of the movement. So, yes, motives, timing, et cetera come into play there. Thank you, Lynne. Very good.

[00:15:29.640] - Terrie

Just as an exercise, these are antonyms. An antonym is what? It's a word that is opposite. What is the opposite of self preservation? The opposite of it is self denial, selflessness unselfishness, altruism, benevolence, philanthropy, generosity, charity, liberality, and the list goes on. Even in just looking at what the dictionary says is the opposite of self preservation, we get an insight into what it is.

[00:16:12.980] - Terrie

This is what it is not. But I like the idea that it will depend on what you are trying to preserve. Are you trying to preserve self? If you are trying to preserve self, then you are selfish. It's what you're trying to preserve. You may need to take that oxygen mask to yourself first so that you can preserve the child sitting next to you. It's not just about self.

[00:16:49.760] - Terrie

Thank you for that. The Tower of Babel, what were they trying to preserve themselves from? A god, Moli said. And the existential risk of another flood. They built a tower to escape from this existential risk. And as we come down to the end of the world, we see that there are many towers being built to escape existential risks. What are the things that people are putting in place to save themselves at the end of the world? First of all, we went through and listed a lot of existential risks. And I just want to talk about that for a minute. When we talked about these existential risks, I'm not talking about the type of things that you would find in a tabloid newspaper, in some sort of sensational magazine.

[00:18:01.460] - Terrie

These are what scientists, engineers, philosophers, politicians seriously consider are risks to humanity. So much so that much money and time is being funneled in to understand these existential risks and what they can do to prevent them. This is called the center for the Study of Existential Risks that's run out of Cambridge. We are dedicated to the study and mitigation of risks that could lead to human extinction or civilization collapse. And even if we go down and meet our team. If we were to go to the team, you'll see many, many learned people on this team. We bring together some of the best minds from academia, technology and policy to collaborate on our shared challenges. Notice that threefold union, academia, technology, policy. Policy is politics. The co founders. Notice there's Jaan Tallin. Jaan Tallin is a billionaire. He made his money from Skype. And all these philosophers, research assistants, etc. I'll just go down to

the bottom. Alumni. The Management Board. The Scientific Advisory Board. Nick Bostrom is one that we will be looking at? Who else is there? Peter Singer. Another one we will be looking at.

[00:20:24.260] - Terrie

This one is the one from Oxford. And this is the future of humanity institute. Future of Humanity institute joins Deepmind OpenAI, Facebook, Amazon and others in the partnership on AI. FHI is a multidisciplinary research institute at the University of Oxford. Academics at FHI bring the tools of mathematics, philosophy and social scientists to bear on big picture questions about humanity and its prospects. The institute is led by founding director Professor Nick Bostrom. Again, that name will come up a few times. And I should have looked up. This is Oxford and Cambridge we've looked at, but there's one in America and I meant to bring that up and forgot. That'll do for now. We're not looking at tabloid fears. We're looking at what looks very real to a lot of learned people. One of the towers that they've built to deal with it is called Longtermism. We looked at Longtermism, I'll just write existential risks. And longtermism is one of the philosophies that we've been looking at? Longtermism is the philosophical idea that the long-term future of humanity is way more important than the present and that those alive today should make sacrifices for the good of all the generations to come.

[00:22:38.740] - Terrie

The key argument of longtermists is that our planet will remain habitable for a few billion years, which means that most people who'll ever be alive are yet to be born. What we did is we looked at some graphs to show some of their predictions of how many people in their probability and their calculations would be alive in the future. Given that the life of a mammal is around average 100,000 years, and we've only had around 300,000 years, we should have a good length of time left. The difference between us and other animals is that we have technology, we've developed, we should be able to far exceed that time limit of an ordinary mammal. A conservative estimate is to assume that our planet will be populated by at least a billion people for at least a billion years. That's a billion billion human life years. With today's typical lifespan of a hundred years, that would be about ten to the 16 human lives. I'll just draw this backwards. That's about how many people there could be alive in the future, which far outweighs the amount of people that have lived in the past and are living at the present.

[00:24:42.540] - Terrie

That's the potential, unless there's an existential risk. If we go extinct. The first and foremost priority of longtermists is to minimize existential risks. This includes events that could lead to human extinction... We listed them all: asteroids, nuclear war, rogue artificial intelligence. And what longtermists believe is that right now we're at a pivotal point in Earth's history. We're on a hinge that if we don't step in and do something now, if we don't become extinct, we would certainly put humanity way back in the Dark Ages and we would possibly never reach our full potential and go extinct far earlier. We are in a pivotal moment in human history, someone wrote. We live during the hinge of history. The world's long run fate depends in part on the choices we make in our lifetimes. Society has not yet settled down into a stable state and we are able to influence which stable state we end up. It's up to us. There are all these think tanks, organizations, and they are influencing politics, they are getting a lot of money. Billionaires are funding

them to come up with these answers to existential risks so that we can do a lot of good by saving the greatest amount of people, that haven't been born yet.

[00:26:42.900] - Terrie

We're talking about atheists. Talking about atheists self preservation. Are atheists moral? Can an atheist be moral? What does it mean to be moral? Any thoughts? What is it to be moral, a moral person? Where do we get our morality from? Ray.

[00:27:51.480] - Raymond

We get our equality from prophecy. I guess, I would define morality as the values and principles that you choose to live by.

[00:28:12.420] - Terrie

Okay. Can you name them?

[00:28:17.380] - Raymond

The Ten Commandments obviously forms like really a core part of our morals.

[00:28:26.760] - Terrie

Yes.

[00:28:27.350] - Raymond

Which you can narrow further down to the two.

[00:28:33.240] - Terrie

Yes. Morality is just knowing what's right or wrong. The Ten Commandments tell us what's right or wrong. You can do this, you can't do that. Prophecy helps us to put those Ten Commandments in their right time. This is where we learn about policy in principle. We understand the Ten Commandments today a little different than what Moses did and what Paul did, but the principle is the same, the policy changes. That's where prophecy helps us. Lynne.

[00:29:16.360] - Lynne

I was thinking of your first comment about can atheist be moral? I was thinking in terms of a lot of people go by the rule that says, do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Which is the Golden Rule, even though that comes from the Bible anyway. A lot of people live by that rule or claim to. So basically anyone can be moral, but not everybody can be righteous. And there's a difference between being moral and righteous.

[00:29:54.660] - Terrie

When they do unto others as they'd like done unto them, we would say they're keeping the Ten Commandments even though they don't recognize it.

[00:30:04.840] - Lynne

To a point that's true. The other thing I was going to say was the fact that if you've got all these atheists who are trying to say, well, we should sacrifice ourselves for the greater good of those who are coming, because there's so many more coming. There's an altruistic factor to that. You could say there's an unselfishness about that, potentially. So, albeit on the wrong foundation, that in itself does have a sense of altruism about it. It's an interesting thing.

[00:30:42.180] - Terrie

Yes. It has the potential, depending on what they're sacrificing. Are they sacrificing themselves? What exactly are they sacrificing for the great good?

[00:30:57.320] - Lynne

Yeah, absolutely. Like I say, it has an altruistic sound to it or an altruistic tone to it, let's say. But really, if you dig deeper, there may be other factors involved and it may even come down to the individual, because maybe some people do have very altruistic motives, whereas others may have far from altruistic motives. They might have benefiting themselves motives somehow. Anyway, it's just an interesting thing to think about.

[00:31:36.500] - Terrie

Thank you, Lynne. It reminds me of the Tower of Babel. That what might have started out as thinking that we're going to benefit everybody, eventually crumbled. As you said, they're looking to do what is right, but they didn't want to follow the law. They wanted to reject God's law. They're looking to do what is right without the law. By their fruits, you'll know them. We see how that ended. Moli?

[00:32:28.660] - Moli

I thought that morals are built into everyone. But to leave the law out, it depends on the motives and the intention everyone has. Sometimes a lot of people, they do it only because in a very hypocritical way, they do it like the Pharisees, they do good works only because someone is there to look at it. But when it comes to the Good Samaritan story, when there was no one seeing, he went very quickly on the side and left. So really, morals comes down to the intention and the motive behind. But I believe that everyone knows what's good and what's bad.

[00:33:21.060] - Terrie

Okay, that's a good point. When you compare the Pharisees to the Samaritan. Which one knew what to do what was right and how did they know that? Because the pharisees knew the law and yet they didn't do what was right. It's just interesting what the mind will do in order to justify itself. When you think of the pharisees, they were preserving themselves, preserving their time, preserving their reputation and at the

expense of somebody else. And we saw true altruism in the Good Samaritan. Thank you, Moli. Let me share something with you. This is some science news. They did a survey. Atheists and believers both have moral compasses. Like you said, Moli, they know what is right or wrong. But there are key differences. Belief in God associated with stronger endorsement of moral values that promote group cohesion. Okay, so that's the difference. We'll just read the beginning and then we'll read the end. A new study suggests that while atheists and the theists share moral values related to protecting vulnerable individuals, atheists are less likely to endorse values that promote group cohesion and more inclined to judge the morality of actions based on their consequences.

[00:35:03.770] - Terrie

Thomas Ståhl of the University of Illinois at Chicago presents these findings in this journal. This is a 2021 journal and we'll just go down to his conclusions here. Ståhl adds, "the most general take home message from these studies is that people who do not believe in God do have a moral compass. In fact, they share many of the same moral concerns that religious believers have, such as concerns about fairness and about protecting vulnerable individuals from harm. However, disbelievers are less inclined than believers to endorse moral values that serve group cohesion, such as having respect for authorities in group loyalty and sanctity. Sanctity is the understanding that something is very important and valuable. Think of it as holy. We talk about the sanctity of life, that it is vital, valuable and holy. It is possible that the negative stereotype of atheists as immoral may stem in part from the fact that they are less inclined than religious people to view respect for authority in group loyalty and sanctity as relevant for morality. And they are more likely to make moral judgments about harm on a consequentialist, case by case basis." Okay, so let's have a think about this.

[00:36:36.890] - Terrie

Does anything come to mind when it says "they are less inclined than believers to endorse moral values that serve group cohesion"? If we go back to where we start from Genesis 11, what ultimately happened to that tower? When something is cohesive, what does that mean? Rachel.

[00:38:05.820] - Chris

Sorry. It's me, Chris. Cohesion has to do with sticking together. And t conclusion of Babel is separation.

[00:38:20.240] - Terrie

Yeah, it all fell apart, didn't it? In the end, they couldn't keep it together. They had a common purpose, but there was nothing really to keep them together. And that's one of the key differences between atheists and religious people. There's something in their morality that gathers them that they don't fall apart. Did you want to add anything more to that, Chris?

[00:39:01.130] - Chris

I think atheistic morality is more ecocentric than exocentric. Anything is okay as long as you don't harm somebody else, whereas morality is more concerned about others more than you.

[00:39:27.090] - Terrie

You can really see self preservation there. It's the looking after self. We don't want to look after the group. This, this movement on the plain where Babel. I can't remember. Say it again.

[00:39:54.550] - Moli

Plain of Shinar.

[00:39:57.210] - Terrie

Thank you. Yes. Raymond, did you want to add something to that?

[00:40:10.000] - Raymond

No, I couldn't have said anything better.

[00:40:16.240] - Terrie

Is that what you were going to say, Josephine?

[00:40:35.340] - Josephine

Sorry, I've forgotten what I was going to say, maybe I'll remember it sometime later.

[00:40:41.980] - Terrie

Moli?

[00:40:44.400] - Moli

I thought that they had self preservation until God cut them off, when he started to change their language. They sort of exploded and didn't listen to authorities and everybody was on their own.

[00:41:10.520] - Terrie

They could work together for a while, but there was nothing lasting. Thank you. Okay, we go back to this. It says they are more likely to make moral judgments about harm on a consequentialist case by case basis. What is the basis of their morality? And there is a philosophy called consequentialism. And consequentialism is kind of an umbrella. But the one that we want to particularly look at today, which is a consequentialist philosophy, is called utilitarianism. Utilitarianism. This is the philosophy that is behind longtermism. Utilitarianism. What does that mean? What does it mean to have utility? Something has utility. You can see the word utility in it.

[00:43:09.190] - Terrie

Graeme.

[00:43:11.590] - Graeme

Is it useful?

[00:43:14.230] - Terrie

Yeah, useful. Think of a pickup truck. What is a pickup truck? It is a vehicle that has a variety of uses. In the northern hemisphere, Santa Claus has reindeer and a sleigh. In the southern hemisphere, he has six white boomers and rusty old pickup truck. Pickup trucks here are the quintessential vehicle for serving any purpose. When you have a utility, you have purpose. It is the state of being useful, profitable or beneficial. If you think of utilities, utilities like gas, water, electricity, communication, they're essential services and goods that serve great purpose and need. They're deemed essential. A utility is functional rather than attractive. It's able to perform several functions, which is definition of a pickup truck. Utilitarianism, what's utilitarianism? "Utilitarianism is generally held to be the view that the morally right action is the action that produces the most good. There are many ways to spell out this general claim. One thing to note is that the theory is a form of consequentialism." It's what's consequential. What creates a consequence? Is that consequence good or is the consequence harmful? "The right action is understood entirely in terms of consequences produced." What it says is, an atheist will look at the consequences. That is what will determine what is right and wrong?

[00:45:38.070] - Terrie

What will give the right amount of good? Utilitarianism was a product of the 18th century. Two philosophers, Bentham and Mills, developed this in the Enlightenment time, this philosophy of utilitarianism. But we want to look at the modern day prophet of utilitarianism. And we're going to come down to the 1970s. I'll write 1971. Let me give you further definition before we go on. "Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that determines right from wrong by focusing on outcomes. It holds that the most ethical choice is the one that will produce the greatest good for the greatest number. However, we cannot predict the future. It's difficult to know with certainty whether the consequences of our actions will be good or bad." And that's one of the limitations of utilitarianism. There are different types of utilitarianism. They tended to arise to try and fill up the holes of the one that went before. There's act utilitarianism, rule of utilitarianism, preference utilitarianism, and each one came along to try and fix what was wrong with the one that was previous. Because you can get into a real muddle with utilitarianism. They do these thought experiments. You're on a railroad track and the tracks split and on one side you've got one person that's tied to a track, on the other side you've got five people tied to a track.

[00:47:41.870] - Terrie

The train is coming and you're at the switch. Which way you're going to let that train go? And there's all different varying stories on this same theme. Do you let the train kill the one person to save the five? And a consequentialist, a utilitarian would say, yes, we do the greatest good and the greatest good is to save the five. But that's not always practical because what if that one person has the cure for cancer and you've just saved twelve drug lords? It's not practical. They can't tell the future. You really don't know what the longterm consequences are going to be. They try and figure out how to determine what is right or wrong. It's so much easier being a Christian. And even then, it's not just the law, it is prophecy as well. We have been continually learning what is right and wrong because we thought we understood what was

right. You know how that story goes. This is utilitarianism. If we want to get to the root of where longtermism has come from. Starts back in the 18th century. But Epicurus was a consequentialist and he was a Greek philosopher.

[00:49:19.120] - Terrie

But I want to take you back to 1971, and introduce you to a man called Peter Singer. Peter Singer is an Australian. He studied at Monash and he studied law, history and philosophy. And then he decided he would major in philosophy and he got his degree at Monash and he got a scholarship to Oxford. And he went to Oxford and he got his bachelor a degree of philosophy in Oxford. You get a degree of philosophy. There's only a few universities in the world that you get that. It is a very, very prestigious degree when you get your degree of philosophy. He got a degree of in philosophy at Oxford. When I say 1971, what immediately comes to mind? What history are we talking about? Go ahead.

[00:50:37.400] - Graeme

Second wave feminism.

[00:50:39.740] - Terrie

Yes, second wave feminism. Second wave feminism has been around for a few years. And if you remember last week Brenden was talking about how it got marginalized. And there are many reasons that got marginalized in this history. And this is one of them. Peter Singer, unknown to him, he is going to start what was known as a moral revolution. He's going to put out a paper. It's called "Famine Affluence and Morality". Famine, Affluence and Morality. And it's going to have a profound influence on students and on these educational establishments for decades. He wrote it in 1971, it got printed in 1972. Let me read the very beginning of it. He says, as I write this in November 1971, people are dying in East Bengal from lack of food, shelter and medical care. The suffering and death that are occurring there now are not inevitable, not unavoidable in any fatalistic sense of the term. Constant poverty, a cyclone and a civil war have turned at least 9 million people into destitute refugees. Nevertheless, it is not beyond the capacity of the richer nations to give enough assistance to reduce any further suffering to a very small proportion.

[00:52:44.720] - Terrie

The decisions and actions of human beings can prevent this kind of suffering. Unfortunately, human beings have not made the necessary decisions at the individual level people have, with very few exceptions, not responded to the situation in any significant way. Generally speaking, people have not given large sums to relief funds. They have not written to their parliamentary representatives demanding increased government assistance. They have not demonstrated in the streets, held symbolic fast or done anything else directed toward providing the refugees with the means to satisfy their essential needs. And then he'll go on to explain how little the government had done. The British government hadn't put some pounds into it, but not near enough. We were talking about East Bengal. Bengal was a territory between India. Well, it ended up being divided. So East Bengal was a province of Pakistan, west Bengal, India took and then in 1971, East Bengal became Bangladesh. They became independent. And that's Bangladesh. There's a lot going on. Like you said, cyclone, civil war, it's a mess. Millions are dying and the government isn't doing anything.

[00:54:27.190] - Terrie

And so he wrote this essay, and in this essay, he argues that people were morally obligated to maximize their impact through charity and focus on causes that offered the greatest quality of life improvements, such as those aimed at reducing poverty and mortality in the global south. What he did is he told a story, and this story has got repeated over and over again. You're walking along a path in a park and there's a pond and there's a child that is drowning in the pond. Do you go into the pond even though you might ruin your shoes, even though you might dirty your clothes? You don't think twice. You go and you save the child. But what if that child isn't in that pond right there? What if that child is thousands of miles away on the other side of the world, do you have any less obligation in helping that child? Even though there's a distance? Distance doesn't make a difference. This is what he's saying here. Distance shouldn't affect our charitable help. This is going to develop. I think you can see that when we come down to longtermism, it's going to be distance of time, not distance in kilometers or miles.

[00:55:57.560] - Terrie

This is going to develop from a distance factor into time. What if the child was not directly in front of you? What if instead of drowning, the child was in mortal danger due to lack of food, water or medical treatment? And what if instead of jumping into the water, the only way you can save the child's life is to donate to charity? And he says, the uncontroversial appearance of the principal just stated is deceptive. If it were acted upon even in its qualified form, our lives, our society and our world would be fundamentally changed. For the principal takes, firstly, no account of proximity or distance. It makes no moral difference whether the person I can help is a neighbor's child ten yards from me or a Bengali whose name I shall never know 10,000 miles away. Secondly, the principal makes no distinction between cases in which I am the only person who could possibly do anything and cases in which I am just one among millions in the same position. If you were standing on the edge of the pond and there were other people with you and they weren't jumping in, then you could say, well, it's okay that I don't jump in because they're not jumping in.

[00:57:26.990] - Terrie

No, it doesn't work like that either. That's not moral either. You have that moral obligation. This paper in 1971, it goes viral, whatever viral looks like in 1971. And it's it's going to affect a lot of these Oxford philosophers at first, and then it travels around the world. Just before we're going to continue this timeline next week, but I'd like to talk to you a bit more about Peter Singer. There's another revolution that is going to happen because his writings in this time period, that is also going to marginalize second wave feminism. He writes in 1975, he's going to write a book called Animal Liberation. He's at Oxford. He goes and gets his lunch. He's with a friend. The friend finds out that there's minced meat in the spaghetti bolognese. He decides to have a salad. And then Singer asks him, why aren't you having the spaghetti bolognese? And he gets a lesson in factory farming and the terrible abuse of animals. And he looks into it and goes home to his wife and says, I don't think we can morally eat meat anymore.

[00:59:27.780] - Terrie

And he writes this paper called Animal Liberation. This paper is going to go on to inspire in 1979, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, PETA. They all refer to Peter Singer's work as the foundation of the animal liberation movement. We'll just share this and have a little chat. This is from the PETA website. This is actually 2015 because it is the 40th anniversary of Animal Liberation. They have this write up on Peter Singer's book and how it started PETA. Let's read a little bit from Peter Singer's work.

[01:00:44.200] - Terrie

Animal Liberation may sound more like a parody. You got to think it's 1975, this is a new term back then. We're used to it, but this is very new. Animal Liberation may sound more like a parody of other liberation movements than a serious objective. The idea of the rights of animals actually was once used to parody the case for women's rights. When Mary Wollstonecraft published her Vindication of the Rights of Women in 1792, her views were widely regarded as absurd and before long an anonymous publication appeared entitled A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes.

[01:01:26.830] - Terrie

The author of this satirical work, now known to have been Thomas Taylor, a distinguished Cambridge philosopher tried to refute Mary Wollstonecraft's arguments by showing that they could be carried one stage further. If the argument for equality was sound when applied to women, why should it not be applied to dogs, cats, horses? This is Peter Singer talking. When we say that all human beings, whatever their race, creed or sex, are equal, what is it that we are asserting? Like it or not, we must face the fact that humans come in different shapes and sizes. They come with different moral capacities, different intellectual abilities, different amounts of benevolent feeling and sensitivity to the needs of others, different abilities to communicate effectively, and different capacities to experience pleasure and pain. In short, if the demand for equality were based on the actual equality of all human beings, we would have to stop demanding equality. The existence of individual variations that cut across the lines of race or sex, however, provides us with no defense at all against a more sophisticated opponent of equality. One who proposes that, say, the interests of all those with IQ scores below 100 be given less consideration than the interests of those with ratings over 100.

[01:03:01.260] - Terrie

Perhaps those scoring below the mark would in this society be made the slaves of those scoring higher. Would a hierarchical society of this sort really be so much better than one based on the race or sex? I think not. But if we tie the moral principle of equality to the factual equality of the different races or sexes, taken as a whole, our opposition to racism and sexism does not provide us with any basis for objecting to this kind of egalitarianism or equality. One more paragraph. Fortunately, there is no need to pin the case for equality to one particular outcome of a scientific investigation. There is no logically compelling reason for assuming that a factual difference in ability between two people, justifies any difference in the amount of consideration we give to their needs and interests. The principle of the equality of human beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality among humans. It is a prescription of how we should treat human beings.

[01:04:20.030] - Terrie

What is he actually saying? Let's think about that. What he is going to go on to say is racism, we discriminate people on the basis of different races, sexism, we discriminate people on the basis of different sex. But he also says there is speciesism. We're atheists, we're all animals, we're all of the same species and we shouldn't discriminate against another species. He is going to consider race, sex, species on the same level. If we go back to our document, the principle of equality of human beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality among humans. It is a prescription of how we should treat human beings. So does anybody catch what he's been saying in these three paragraphs? Somebody like to sum it up and put it in their own words. What's he comparing? Graeme.

[01:06:17.570] - Graeme

Is he saying equal but separate? His words are very difficult for me to understand. I don't have the IQ to be able to get around that.

[01:06:31.690] - Terrie

Qualifications. Don't qualify your statements. Yes, you do. What we're looking at is some of the dumbest smart people in the world. I shouldn't call them dumb, but just because they've got degrees doesn't mean.... Any other thoughts? What did you say, Graeme?

[01:07:17.130] - Graeme

I was wondering if it was saying equal but separate.

[01:07:22.650] - Terrie

I think what he's saying is they're not equal. We just got to treat each other as if we were equal. When we say that all human beings, whatever their race, credit or sex, are equal, what is it that we are asserting? He says, like it or not, we're not equal. We all come in different sizes, we've all got different capabilities, we're all got different intellects, different emotions. We are not equal, but we have to treat each other as if we are equal. The principle of equality of human beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality. It's not actual. It is a prescription of how we should treat human beings. We treat each other as if we are equal. Brodie.

[01:08:44.120] - Brodie

It's amazing to me that his conclusion seems to be that if you were going to say that the genders are equal, then you might as well say that animals and humans are equal. It seems to sum up his opinion on the differences between the genders.

[01:09:09.000] - Terrie

And he is going to say that we are equal with animals. This is Animal Liberation. This is the philosophy behind the organization such as Petteer and others. Speciesism is a form of discrimination of one species to another species. They will use the example of gorillas and oysters are both animals and we put ourselves on top of them both. We control both of them. Yet we're most more aligned with gorillas than we

are with an oyster. Why would we lump gorillas and oysters together? They're not equal, but we should treat them like they are. He didn't invent this term, there was another philosopher who actually mentioned this term. But Peter Singer popularized it. He wrote this paper, Animal Liberation, he wrote about speciesism and he claimed that it is analogous. It is the same as racism and sexism and other forms of irrational discrimination and prejudice. Behind utilitarianism is the understanding that we really aren't equal. We just need to be nice to each other. We should treat each other as if we are, even though we're not really. Moli?

[01:11:16.200] - Moli

My understanding is that he said that we are not equal, but through our actions, it affect everyone equally. And the same with the animals. He sort of makes us equal with animals. In the same way that by the action and choice of one person it effects different persons, and how the animals being affected by an action of another animal. But we're not the same. We're not equal with them.

[01:12:04.360] - Terrie

Okay. We would reject his reasoning. At the same time, how do we treat animals as Christians? Do we treat them as our equal?

[01:12:33.760] - Terrie

No. Our relationship is that they are God's creation, therefore we are stewards. A utilitarian approach is you have to do the greatest good for the animal kingdom as well as for human beings. And that sounds really good, but we will see that it's based on a wrong foundation of what equality is. It's based on speciesism. We still believe in looking after animals, but we don't put animals before human beings. We understand where they are in God's creation. But if you're an atheist, what's the difference between a human being and an animal? We are animals. So it would make sense. There were people that stood up against speciesism, because they read his paper and said, you're comparing apples and oranges here. It's wrong methodology. But it's wrong methodology based on an understanding that keeps God out of the equation.

[01:14:25.940] - Moli

I just wanted to add that God says that we have to have dominions over all species.

[01:14:36.060] - Terrie

And that's discrimination.

[01:14:41.100] - Moli

No, we are different. We're supposed to look after them.

[01:14:48.060] - Terrie

When I said it's discrimination, I'm talking like an atheist, like somebody that is against speciesism. To have dominion over something, means to come up over that. Just to keep this in mind, because this is all happening, this is all distracting, this is all marginalizing second wave feminism. And these thoughts are going to continue into our history. Ray, you had something to add?

[01:15:26.140] - Raymond

I just had a question. Where does this all fit with the vespers studies we did with Elder Tess on for example From Darwin to Dawkins, talking about how social darwinists didn't agree with welfare programs and things like that? And early evolutionist were in favor of eugenics because they saw it as speeding up the process of evolution and natural selection. What sort of take people with that philosophy have on speciesism? Is that part of why they're against it?

[01:16:11.960] - Terrie

This was referred to as a moral revolution. Peter Singer is going to take utilitarian philosophy and apply it to charitable work, to altruism. How are we going to treat people in need? Also, how are we going to treat animals? We've looked at this, because what he's done with speciesism is compared it to racism and sexism. You can understand why they might be promoting gender equality, but behind all that, they don't actually believe that we are equal. We just need to be nice to each other. We should treat each other as if we're equal. We should treat animals like we're equal. That means we shouldn't subject them to pain that we wouldn't be prepared to take. A lot of good came out of this as far as factory farming etc. Well, some bad things happened also, because they were quite radical activists. Some of them were blowing up places. The activism was terrorism more than activism. We're looking at the philosophy. Yes, it's Darwinism, because we're all evolved from common ancestor. It's just some of us have evolved more than others and we are not to discriminate on those that happened, because we're all equal.

[01:18:03.260] - Terrie

I don't know if that answers your question. Ray?

[01:18:07.580] - Raymond

Yeah, I think so. That's where we get people like Sea Shepherd and things.

[01:18:16.320] - Terrie

Yeah. And you will find that the Atheism there causes just as much trouble. When we think of what it was like when we studied New Atheism and the Trinity and the Four Horsemen, all the problems that existed there as far as their understanding of feminism, you're going to find in these movements as well. Even though they are altruistic in their mind, they're using utilitarianism philosophy, and it gets them into knots, which we'll see as we go forward. If we could just sum up. What he has begun to say is that morally, we are obligated to for the people that are distanced from them as much as we're obligated for those that are near. And this is what longtermists are going to use eventually too, as it evolves. We might have to stop it there for time. Josephine, if you could keep your question for next week. We'll review and keep going.

We're working on the history of where the roots of longtermism began. On that note. Brodie would you close in prayer for us this evening?

[01:19:55.040] - Brodie

Dear God in heaven. Thank you, Lord, for this opportunity to consider and study the world around us, with the perspective that You've given us through Your messages. And I ask, Lord, that you would prepare us, give us a firm foundation for our feet so that we know what position to take on these issues as they are increasingly before us. Lord, I pray that as we enter this Sabbath that you would be with each one of Your people, that we would be blessed. And strengthen each other. Thank you for all you have done for us this week. And we ask in Jesus name. Amen.