

What About ... Secular Faith

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It occurs to me that the secular view of faith is very different from biblical faith. Please understand—I'm not talking about the object of faith. Of course, that's different. But I mean the faith itself. The dictionary is no help here. It says faith is trust or confidence in someone or something, like belief in a theory. But the difference between biblical and secular faith is how one goes about getting that confidence or trust. In the Bible, faith is a reasonable choice supported by observations. In secular society, faith is a departure from reason applied to observations. And the secularists see Christianity according to their definition of faith.



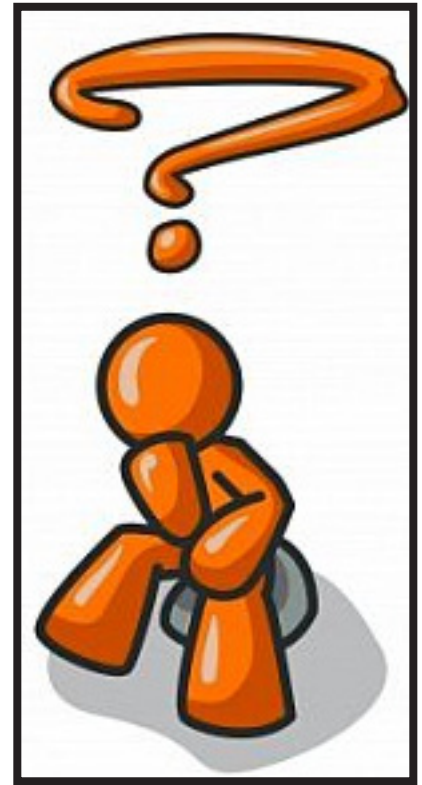
To the secularist, faith in Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, the tooth fairy, and God are all the same—a departure from reason applied to observations in the real world. It is all seen as healthy, because they see faith as an aspect of creative imagination, or “thinking outside the box.” So, for example, Steven Spielberg said it was healthy for children to see the “Star Wars” movies because it taught them about faith (from my memory, not a direct quote). So the secularists think it is healthy to lie to your kids about Santa Claus and the tooth fairy, etc.



Because, it allows children to practice having faith (imagination-based trust in someone or something, by departing from reason applied to the real world). The secular view of religious faith is the same. Near as I can tell, all religions, except biblical Christianity and some forms of Judaism, are based on this (secular) kind of faith.

Hebrews 11:1 says: *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.* So biblical faith is connected to assurance and conviction, not imagination which departs from reality. Paul told Timothy to *have nothing to do with worldly fables* (1 Timothy 4:7) like, say, Santa Claus, the tooth fairy, Joseph Smith or Mohammed getting words from an “angel” whom nobody else ever saw or heard. Paul is telling Timothy to have nothing to do with faith that is not based in reason applied to real observations in the real world. The same number of people witnessed “the angel Gabriel” revealing the Koran to Mohammed, and the “angel Moroni” revealing the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith, as witnessed Santa Claus going from chimney-to-chimney.

Peter also talked about this. He said: *For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to*



you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty (2 Peter 1:16). Peter did not ask the church to believe in magic, hocus pocus, fairies, or private revelations. He said what the apostles told them was based on real observations in the real world, confirmed publicly, not imagination which departed from reality in a make-believe world. The Apostle John described their time with Jesus as *what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life* (1 John 1:1). Again, not a fairy tale, not an imaginative departure from reality, but what could be seen and touched in the real world.

Peter's illustration of this is the Mount of Transfiguration, where God the Father said: *This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased* (1 Peter 1:17-19). This was clearly a supernatural, miraculous event. But Peter said it really happened. It's not a story he made up. It was a miracle that happened in the real world. So the real world is not restricted to the natural world.

When God breaks through with supernatural events, that's just as real as natural events, and it will be witnessed by real people, making reasonable conclusions, based on real observations in the real world.