

In every society in history, man has worshiped a god, although rarely the God of heaven.

Exo 3:13 Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" (14) And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not Allah – they differ in many ways – the love of children, the prohibition against lying, the value of women.

The god of the Mormons is not the God of the Bible, but a hodge-podge of Bible and Mormon teaching – their god has a physical body like yours (*D&C 132:22*)., you can become a god (*MD, 321*).

Exo 6:2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD ; (3) and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.

“The idea that launched a thousand civilizations.” Ara Norenzayan in New Scientist.

For sociologists, “two of the deepest puzzles of human civilization: how did human societies scale up from small, mobile groups of hunter-gatherers to large, sedentary societies? And how did organized religions spread to colonize most minds in the world?”

Norenzayan – “Up until about 12,000 years ago all humans lived in relatively small bands. Today, virtually everyone lives in vast, cooperative groups of mostly unrelated strangers. How did this happen?”

“In evolutionary biology cooperation is usually explained by one of two forms of altruism: cooperation among kin and reciprocal altruism - you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. But cooperation among strangers is not easily explained by either.”

Gen 6:1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, (2) that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. (3) Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." (4) The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

What Norenzayan is saying is there really is no way to tell whether a stranger will give back something of equal value. Our relatives know how much they can expect from us before we will quit helping them.

A stranger may not know the rules of the game and “play fair.”

Rom 5:7 For one will hardly die for
a righteous man; though perhaps
for the good man someone would
dare even to die.

An example from the Pilgrims on the Mayflower. At first they held all things in common and they were starving to death. People were cheating and others were resentful. In 1623, Governor Bradford changed the law and each family was given land to till and was allowed to retain what they grew. The colony prospered from that time on.

Norenzayan notes, “As group size increases, both forms of altruism break down. With ever-greater chances of encountering strangers, opportunities for cooperation among kin decline. Reciprocal altruism - without extra safeguards such as institutions for punishing freeloaders - also rapidly stops paying off.”

What made societies form as the descendants of Adam and Eve roamed the earth?

Norenzayan concludes that man
developed religion

“A growing view is that religious beliefs
and rituals arose as an evolutionary by-
product of ordinary cognitive
functions. Once that happened, the
stage was set for rapid cultural
evolution that eventually led to large
societies with ‘Big Gods’.”

“Some early cultural variants of religion presumably promoted prosocial behaviors such as cooperation, trust and self-sacrifice while encouraging displays of religious devotion, such as fasts, food taboos, extravagant rituals and other ‘hard-to-fake’ behaviors which reliably transmitted believers' sincere faith, and signaled their intention to cooperate. Religion thus forged anonymous strangers into moral communities tied together with sacred bonds under a common supernatural jurisdiction.”

A real question is why do religions
fail?

Why do churches fail?

“almost all religious movements fail. In one analysis of the stability of 200 utopian communes, both religious and secular, in 19th century America, ... found a striking pattern. The average lifespan of the religious communes was a mere 25 years. In 80 years, 9 out of 10 had disbanded. Secular communes, most of which were socialist, fared even worse: they lasted for an average of 6.4 years and 9 out of 10 disappeared in less than 20 years.”

Why do religions fail?

Why do churches fail?

Why do civilizations fail?

Concerning churches and religion

Ps 127.1 Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.

2Cor 2:17 For we are not like so many others, hucksters who peddle the word of God for profit

Jer 5:31 The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?

2Pe 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. (2) And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; (3) and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

Why do civilizations fail?

Norenzayan says, "Religion, with its belief in watchful gods and extravagant rituals and practices, has been a social glue for most of human history. But recently some societies have succeeded in sustaining cooperation with secular institutions such as courts, police and mechanisms for enforcing contracts. In some parts of the world, especially Scandinavia, these institutions have precipitated religion's decline by usurping its community-building functions. These societies with atheist majorities - some of the most cooperative, peaceful and prosperous in the world - have climbed religion's ladder and then kicked it away."

And what do the Nordic countries have in place of religion?

Iceland 66% of children born to unmarried mothers.

In Sweden 55%; high rates of STD's, chlamydia 17%, strongly associated with number of lifetime partners, early age at first intercourse and smoking initiation, early age at drinking initiation, and use of contraceptives.

Intoxication in last 30 days Sweden 41%;
Denmark 58%; US 21%

Compare that with Gal 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, (20) idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, (21) envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Psa 14:1... The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. (2) The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God.

But where do these countries get the money to sustain their lifestyle?

I would suggest they have stolen it from their children or the rest of the world. They have debt ranging from \$91,487 to \$397,541 per person.

What has Christianity done for the world?

In coming weeks we will look at the effect of Christianity on abortion, the status of women, morality, and systems of government.

But at the present, you can look at what Christianity offers in comparison to the “societies [that] have succeeded in sustaining cooperation with secular institutions such as courts, police and mechanisms for enforcing contracts” and it should make you wonder why anyone would want to do away with Christianity if they are interested in the preservation of society?

Clearly, the population of atheistic countries have failed to look at what God commands in the Bible and have instead looked at what the denominations that once held their attention have failed to do.

France found Catholicism wanting.

Norway and Sweden found Lutheranism wanting.

The UK found the Church of England (Anglican or Episcopal) church wanting!

Mat 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

1Ti 4:8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

If you would enjoy God's "promise for the present life and also for the life to come."

Will you obey Him now?

Mar 16:16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.