

GREATER THAN PART 2 - Week 2

Humanism

Discuss – where do people get their world views from - upbringing, schools, other people, life experiences, social media? What do you think are the common views that people have about their lives?

1. Humanism

Most people, at some point, ask themselves the question of what it means to be human. Many people, whether they recognise it or not, agree with secular humanism. There are various forms of humanism, many contain truths that we would all support e.g. human rights and equality. But they all talk about progress as the goal and moving towards an earthly utopia with no need for God. The Humanist Manifesto says:

- No deity will save us, we must save ourselves
- We are responsible for what we are and what we will be.

Q1: What is appealing about this view of life?

Q2: What are some of the drawbacks? Looking at the world, are we really progressing? In what areas are we not progressing? Why?

READ Gen 11:1-9.



Many people hold that the Tower of Babel was a type of ziggurat. These were quite well-known in these times. Many examples are described in ancient writings and the ziggurat at Nanna in Ur (in photo) still stands.

A ziggurat is a type of massive structure built in ancient Mesopotamia. It has the form of a terraced compound of successively receding storeys or levels. At the top there was usually a shrine.

Q3: What attitude were the people displaying when they set out to build the tower?

Q4: What were they trying to achieve?

Q5: Why did God confuse their languages? Was this an act of grace or judgement?

2. Christianity

All of us ask Who am I? Christianity finds the answer in Jesus – both in terms of relationship and also of purpose. It also believes in a future hope – but it is not fulfilled in this world but in the one to come. We all want to be significant but Christians believe that we need God to achieve anything of value.

Pastor Sam noted that one big difference is in our focus – is it on God and others or on self.

Q6: Christians can build towers of Babel also. What attitudes might we have if we are doing so?

Q7: Pastor Sam looked at the Pride/Shame duality. How might living for self lead to pride and then shame?

READ ACTS 2:16-18 and then 1-4

Q8: Contrast the attitude here and the speaking in many languages with Gen 11. How do they differ?

3. Conclusion

Q9: How should we engage with people whose lives reflect humanist values? What witness can we share with them?