

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

John 19:31-42

Lesson #65

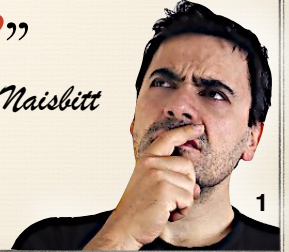
The dignity of humanity

03/19/2017

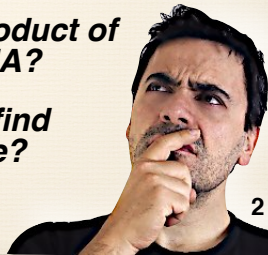
“The many issues facing the 21st century-terrorism, modern technology, climate change, etc, raise one fundamental question,

**what does it mean to be human?”**

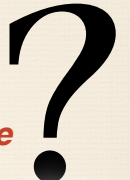
*John Naisbitt*



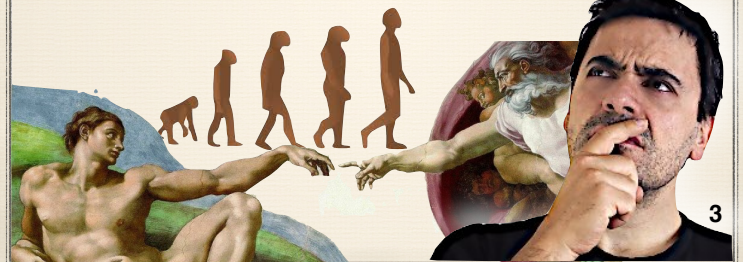
- **Sexual ethics** - Are we just sophisticated animals?
- **Social responsibility** - To what extent are we our brother's keeper?
- **Environmental stewardship** - How much control do we have over our planet?
- **Freedom** - Are we the product of our environment and DNA?
- **Meaning** - Where do we find reason to live and let live?



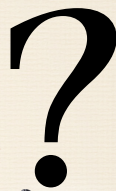
## What does it mean to be human?



**Are we the products of blind chance or the creation of God?**

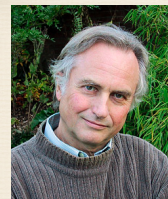


## What does it mean to be human?



Much of what we consider to be unique to humans may be simply an advanced evolutionary characteristic of lower forms of animal life.

**Language  
Reason  
Emotions  
Social connection  
Use of tools & fire**



*Richard Dawkins*

(British evolutionary biologist)

“Humans have always wondered about the meaning of life. . . life has no higher purpose than to perpetuate the survival of DNA . . . life has no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference.”

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*John C. Lennox*  
(Philosopher of Science)

“Either human intelligence ultimately owes its origin to mindless matter; or there is a Creator. It is strange that some people claim that it is their intelligence that leads them to prefer the first to the second.”

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## Observations of Anthropology

- Religion (broadly defined) seems to be a unique and universal characteristic of humans.
- Primitive polytheistic and modern materialistic expressions of religion tend to be tied to some form of nature worship. *Rom. 1:24-25 worship of human passions and nature.*
- Biblical expressions of religion are unique.

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## The creation account

*Genesis 1:26*

“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

*Genesis 3:3*

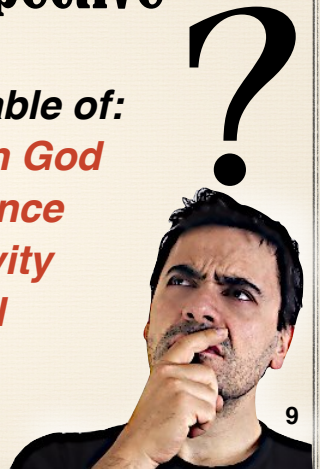
“you shall not eat of it or touch it, or you will die.”

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## A Biblical perspective

*Humans are capable of:*

- *communing with God*
- *a moral conscience*
- *dignity & depravity*
- *independent will*
- *being a steward of the creation*



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*Psalms 8*

“3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained;

4 What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?

5 Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty!

6 You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.”

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*C.S. Lewis*



“You don’t have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body.”

*Mere Christianity*

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# Docetism (to seem)

**meaning that Christ's body was not human but only seemed so, either as a phantom or of real but celestial substance.**

**His suffering was only apparent.**

**This was a doctrine in the early church associated with heretical Gnosticism.**

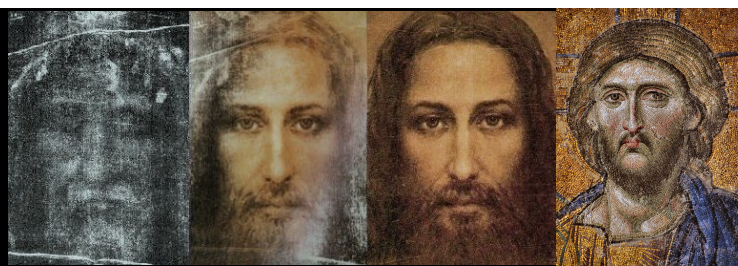
**Some people think that John's writings are addressing this issue.**

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## John 19

"<sup>31</sup> The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. <sup>32</sup> The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; <sup>33</sup> but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; <sup>34</sup> but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water <sup>35</sup> And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. <sup>36</sup> For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken." 13

"<sup>37</sup> And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." <sup>38</sup> And after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body. <sup>39</sup> And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him by night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. <sup>40</sup> And so they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. <sup>41</sup> Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. <sup>42</sup> Therefore on account of the Jewish day of preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there." 14



**What might Jesus have looked like based on the Shroud of Turin**



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**Jesus identified himself as a man.**

Matthew 4:4

"Man shall not live by bread alone."

John 8:40

"Now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth . . ."

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## Jesus was identified as a man.

*1 Tim. 1:5*

"There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus.**"

*1 Tim. 3:16*

**"manifested in the flesh"**

*Jn. 1:14*

"And **the Word became flesh** and dwelt among us"

*1 Jn. 4:2-3*

"By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses **that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God**"

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## Jesus had human characteristics.

*Luke 2:52*

**"he increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man"**."

*Hebrews 5:8*

"although He was a Son, **He learned obedience from the things which He suffered;**"

*Matthew 4:2*

**"he was hungry"**

*John 19:34*

**"When the spear was thrust into his side, and water and blood mingled came out, this was a sign that he had already died."**

*1 John 1:1*

**"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life."**

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## Why is the humanity of Jesus important?

- He needed to fulfill his Messianic role as priest and substitutionary sacrifice.
- He needed to be able to empathize with and intercede for us. Heb.4:15
- **He needed to affirm the dignity of all humanity.**
- **He needed to model for us what it means to be fully human.**

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## What it means to be fully human?

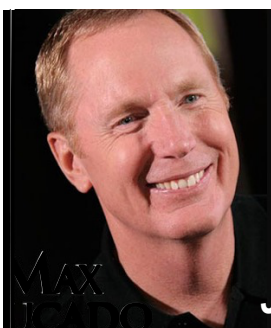
### Expectations

- **Abundant life** (security, significance, serenity) will be found in harmony with the values of God's kingdom.
- Life in a broken world calls for **love** in the face of **suffering**.
- Our ultimate **hope** is not in this world or this life.

### Priorities

- We are to cultivate a vibrant personal **relationship** with God through Christ.
- We are to **respect** the dignity of all people, especially those who are pushed out, stepped on, or left behind.
- With respect to our cultural environment we are to be **thermostats** rather than thermometers.

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The Bible is the story of two gardens. Eden and Gethsemane. In the first, Adam took a fall. In the second, Jesus took a stand.

— Max Lucado —

**Jesus, as the second Adam,**

- 1. Freed us to be who God created us to be.**
- 2. Modeled for us what that would look like.**

We do not merit our salvation  
but we are worth saving!

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