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Hallowed Secularism

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10-23-2007

### October 23, 2007: Humanism and Religion

Bruce Ledewitz

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Title: Humanism and Religion

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1023/2007--Humanism began in the Bible, with the question, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" Psalm 8 sees the tension that humanism must always struggle with. Man is not impressive. Certainly man is not enough for God to care about. He lives only a little while and he does great evil while he is alive. He does not love himself or his fellow men. The widow and the orphan are not protected, as commanded by God's law. Yet for all that, man is glorious. The Psalm continues: Yet thou has made him little less than God, and dost crown him with honor. Thou has given him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet... . You cannot do better than that in stating the question of man. The Bible understood long before it was objectively true that human beings would totally dominate their world. Humans would have the capacity to destroy everything. Today, when the issue of global warming is raised, some religious believers retreat to a strange doubt that human beings could have the capacity to do so much harm. Often I have heard it said, the Earth will abide. Puny man could not be such a threat. But the Psalmist understood man's power very well. The Psalm asks the question, why did God give such power to an imperfect creature like man? This is where humanism should begin. There just is no reason for humanism to reject the Bible as its starting point. As Psalm 8 demonstrates, the Bible is a humanist document. The Bible is a celebration of man's capacities, although that celebration is mixed with a fear of man. But how could any honest humanism feel differently?