

## What Does It Really Mean to Be WOKE? | with Seth Dillon of The Babylon Bee

(June 20, 2023)

### Frank:

There is a word out there, ladies and gentlemen, in our culture. It's spoken almost everywhere by every side in the political debate and the cultural debate. It is the word woke. But have we ever really stopped to really define what that means?

You know, if you're a Christian, you're probably a Christian that actually believes in the Bible, not one of these fake Christians who claims to be a progressive Christian who doesn't agree with Jesus. Look, if you don't agree with Jesus, you're not a Christian. Knock it off, all right?

But if you're a Christian that actually believes what the Bible says, then you might say, well, that's woke. Well, what do you mean by that? What does that even mean, to say something, or someone, or some idea is woke?

Well, last week we had my friend Seth Dillon on the podcast of The Babylon Bee. He's the CEO and owner of The Babylon Bee, and we started to talk about this concept right at the end of the show. We didn't totally flesh it out. I wanted to have Seth back on because he's fighting wokeness through humor.

And he does a great job. And his team does a great job at BabylonBee.com. So, Seth, I wanted to continue our conversation and talk about this idea of wokeness. What do you think is the most accurate definition of what it means to be woke?

### Seth:

Well, there's a lot of them floating around. I've heard defenders of wokeness say that it's as simple as not being a jerk. That's all it is.

### Frank:

Not being a jerk.



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

**Seth:**

It's just not being a jerk. It's being a nice person. It's being conscious of the fact that there's marginalized and oppressed people who aren't treated well and refusing to be part of that problem. Not being a jerk. It's not really that simple, though.

I think part of the reason why people have a hard time defining wokeness is because there's a lot of philosophy behind it. There's like social Marxism, and critical theory, and all these more academic terms that deal with some of the underlying philosophy that's propping up the popular wokeness that's out there.

For a lot of people, it's really as simple as just virtue signaling. But there's a lot more to it under the surface. I think that kind of, at bottom, wokeness is a worldview. And it is a worldview that views society as being divided into basically two classes of the oppressed and the oppressors who are keeping them down.

And it seeks to correct that problem by, like we were talking about before in our last conversation, almost inverting everything. It's trying to deal with that problem of injustice, this claimed problem of injustice. And a lot of it, by the way, is imaginary injustice.

It's perceived injustice. It looks at disparities that are merely disparities and treats them as discrimination by default, for example. So, it sees injustice even where there isn't any necessarily and tries to right old wrongs with new ones. And added to all of it, what we see with the woke mob bullying people in cancel culture, that's the enforcement mechanism of wokeness.

It's enforcing this philosophy that's seeking to fix this problem of oppressor and oppressed and looking at it through the lenses of gender and race. And it's enforcing their solutions to this, the upending of society, the attack on everything that's true and good and all these traditional values that we've had.

And inverting everything with mob rule, and basically bullying everyone into compliance with this new worldview. And doing it, in the words of Elon Musk, while armored in false virtue. And

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek    PODCAST

so, it's a very sinister and destructive ideology. I'll actually give you the full quote of what Elon said, because it's great the way that he described it.

He's not defining wokeness here. He's just describing what it actually is in practice. He said wokeness is divisive, it's exclusionary, it's hateful. It gives mean people an excuse to be cruel while armored in false virtue.

**Frank:**

Wow.

**Seth:**

I couldn't put it better than that.

**Frank:**

Yeah, that is the outcome. And I think you're right. It's all about, as our friend Charlie Kirk would say, if it's Marxism, it's an ideology grounded in conflict. You're never going to have a community, a common unity, if you pit citizens against one another based on their identity group.

So, it might be simplest to say, in my view, anyway, I mean, what you said there is all true. But if I had to boil it down to one idea, I think your oppressor oppressed is really the key idea here. And that goes back to Marxism. It's basically, it seems to me, treating individuals by their identity group rather than their behavior.

**Seth:**

Yeah, but it's dishonest all the way through with that, too. Because what you saw with The Babylon Bee, for example...

When we got locked out of Twitter, it was because we violated a woke rule. We violated the rule. The number one rule of comedy used to be, be funny. That was the number one rule of comedy. Now, the number one rule of comedy is don't punch down.

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek    PODCAST

And punching down, of course, is this idea that there are people beneath you, potentially, who should never be joked about. They're marginalized, they're oppressed.

If you're a white, straight, Christian, male person, then there's a whole lot of groups that are underneath you that are nowhere near as privileged as you, and you shouldn't be allowed to joke about them because that would be punching down. That's the oppressed and oppressor binary. Right?

**Frank:**

Right.

**Seth:**

And so, they were applying this woke standard to us where they're saying, look, you made a joke about a marginalized person and that's not allowed. That's hateful conduct. And I'm looking at the situation, going to myself, wait a minute. What are you talking about?

This joke was about a high-ranking white male government official, for one thing. What does the word marginalized mean? You look at someone like Dylan Mulvaney, for example, who's on the cover of every magazine, is sponsored by every Fortune 500 company, just wildly popular celebrity on the red carpet at award shows and ceremonies. And we're supposed to believe that this person is marginalized and oppressed?

Like, those words don't even apply. If you look at the definition of marginalized, it's something like powerless, forgotten, sidelined. You're relegated to the outskirts of society. Marginalized, really? These people have the will and the power to punish you for so much as making a joke about them. I don't have that much power. You can joke about me all you want. I can't get you silenced.

**Frank:**

In this regard, there's no white privilege. There's gay privilege.

**Seth:**

Right.

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
.ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

**Frank:**

I mean, that's really what's going on now in our culture. Although, it may be tipping a little bit now.

**Seth:**

Pride privilege.

**Frank:**

Because of the mad extremes that the pride community has gone to. To the point that even parents are going, okay, enough of this. You're going after my children now? You're telling me that cross-sex hormones and surgeries are in my child's future and if I don't agree with them, you're going to take the child away from me?

And you're going to push this in schools, and you're going to push it in your business? No, stop. This has gone way too far. It's not live and let live, is it? It's let's impose this new evil immorality on people and claim that we're oppressed.

**Seth:**

Right.

**Frank:**

How can that be? Everything's turned on its head. That's the problem right here. It's turned on its head. And when people point it out...in fact, I think that's probably one reason why The Babylon Bee, Seth, gets a lot of attention.

Conservatives love it because you're making points that if you tried to make it in a serious way, you'd get shouted down. And liberals hate it, or leftists hate it, because you're so effective at pointing out the hypocrisy and the distorted values that these people have.

**Seth:**

That might be the reason why they hate it. Part of the reason, they're also baffled by it. There's a lot of people on the left who don't understand the jokes that we're making. It kind of makes sense.

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

There's a reason why people on the left will think *The Onion* is really funny. And people on the right will think The Babylon Bee is really funny. But they don't think the other one is funny.

And a lot of the reason for that disconnect, the reason they don't see humor in it is because the worldview that the humor is rooted in is something that they fundamentally disagree with. And so, when we talk about the structure of a joke and what makes a joke funny, the thing that really makes a joke funny is that it has truth to it. That's where the comedy comes from.

**Frank:**

Absolutely.

**Seth:**

The fact that there's this underlying truth that's being exposed and drawn out in a humorous, entertaining way. And it's the acknowledgment of that humor that makes you go, aha or laugh. The acknowledgment of that truth, I mean, that makes you laugh.

If the joke is being told on the basis of a worldview that you disagree with, that you think is false, then you're not going to find any truth to that joke. Therefore, you're not going to find the joke funny. It's going to be a swing and a miss for you every time. And so that's kind of why the left is, like, completely baffled by our comedy. Like, this isn't funny. Why isn't it funny?

And they think it's because our jokes are rooted in a false narrative, not reality itself. And I think the best response to that is to say, now, wait a minute. Then why do our jokes keep coming true left and right? If we're rooted in a false narrative and not reality, then why are they prophecies more often than not?

**Frank:**

In fact, the president himself, President Trump, I think on at least a couple of occasions, thought one of your headlines was true. One of them was, "Twitter Shuts Down Entire Network to Prevent Trump from Tweeting." He tweets it out like, they did that?

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
.ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

**Seth:**

That's the other thing, too. If your joke is believable...one of the main criticisms that we get all the time is that we're making our jokes too believable on purpose, so that we will dupe people into believing them, which is just a silly criticism.

But when your joke is actually believable, like, when we do a joke like, "CNN Praises the Taliban for Responsibly Wearing Masks", and it's showing, like, these cloth coverings over their face, not COVID masks. It's like, people thought that was true when it went viral, and it got fact checked.

And whose fault is that, that people thought it was true? You've got to evaluate that. Is it the satirist fault? Is it the person who wrote this fault because they're trying to dupe you? Or is it that you could actually see CNN doing this? It's believable. There's something believable about it. I think that's the mark of good satire. People to believe in your jokes, thinking they're real.

**Frank:**

Oh, it is. You would not believe how many times I have people in my Twitter feed when I put out a Babylon Bee headline. "Are you aware this is satire?" [Laughter]

**Seth:**

They're letting you know.

**Frank:**

I think the joke is on you, sir. Yeah, I think the joke is on you. Now, who are the biggest critics of The Babylon Bee and why are they wrong?

**Seth:**

Who are they? Well, we have a growing number of critics. It used to be all fun and games. But as you grow, as you get more popular and more people become aware of you and more people find reasons to dislike you, you get more and more critics.

We have a lot of critics in the Christian community who think that we're too flippant, too snarky. We've talked about this some. They think that, they object to the mockery itself as

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
.ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

being something that you shouldn't engage in, that it's not exemplifying the fruits of the spirit, basically. It's not loving. So, we get a lot of that.

We also get, obviously, people on the left who mock and hate us because they don't like how effective we are at exposing their bad ideas. And they don't get it. And now we've got all this infighting on the right, where we also have Trump and DeSantis supporters going at each other over The Babylon Bee and who has claim to us. So, there's a lot of political battling that's going on right now.

So, I don't know. I don't know who our biggest enemies are. I think that obviously we face the most opposition from the woke tyrants in control of tech. That's where we've faced the most real opposition that's actually impacted our voice and our ability to actually tell our jokes in the public square.

That's where it's come from, is the people in positions of power trying to make sure that you can't joke about these things. Trying to make sure that it's considered punching down and off limits. And the reason that they're wrong is because we're not punching down. We're punching up.

We're punching back is the way I like to put it. We're punching back because we've been on the ropes in the culture war for a long time. And conservatives, they're capable of being funny. They're capable of making jokes. In fact, their jokes are actually rooted in the truth.

I think we've demonstrated with all of our jokes that have come true. So, I think they're wrong for that reason. It's obvious that there's something to what we're doing. There's an audience for it, and I think we're effectively pushing back on their false narratives, and poking holes in them.

And that's why they don't like us. But that's the comedian's job. Did you see Bill Maher's special where he was talking about gender affirming care for kids, and he was mocking it and saying, kids identify as all kinds of things?

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
ORG**





*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek    PODCAST

If we affirmed them in their identities, the world would be filled with cowboys and princesses. He's like, when I was a kid, I wanted to be a pirate. Thank God no one scheduled me for pleg surgery and eye removal.

**Frank:**

Yeah.

**Seth:**

That's what comedians are supposed to do. That's poking holes in the popular narrative.

**Frank:**

I've quoted Maher several times on that. And 20 years ago, I was on his program *Politically Incorrect*, when he was on ABC, on several occasions. And he and I were in agreement on several things. Because he, although he's an atheist, he's a classical liberal.

And when I was on, it was right during the heyday of 9/11. So, he and I were in agreement on Islam and a few other things. Of course, we were on opposite ends of abortion. But lately, Maher has made more sense, and I've said this on the podcast before. People like Bill Maher and even Richard Dawkins have more courage and speak more sense than many American pastors.

Because they come out and speak the truth on transgenderism. In fact, Dawkins came out and said, I'm sorry, there's only two genders. It's science. Right? And he came out and rightfully said that Islamophobia is nonsense because Islam is not a race, it's an ideology. And there are people of every different ethnic group that are Muslims.

So, maybe you ought to be afraid of jihad. Maybe that's a good thing to not want to happen. Right? Of course. He's also come out against censorship. Dawkins has, as Maher has. So, why are atheists like Maher and Dawkins making these points and pastors are afraid to make these points? That's a sad statement of the Church. A real sad statement.

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
.ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

**Seth:**

That's a good question. I wish I knew the answer to that question. I have a lot of respect. Both of those guys that you just mentioned, Bill Maher and Richard Dawkins, are very, what's the right word? I mean, they're so nasty when it comes to religion, including Christianity.

**Frank:**

Yeah. They're very demeaning to Christians.

**Seth:**

Very demeaning, extremely derogatory, condescending. They think we're absolute idiots for believing that any of this stuff is true. And they mock and ridicule us for it. When Bill Maher actually talked about The Babylon Bee on his show, he said, have you heard of The Babylon Bee?

It's like a Christian version of *The Onion*. He's like, who thought that was necessary? He's like, I thought the religion itself was satire. So, he's always mocking us. It's a good joke. It was funny. But yeah, I don't know. I mean, these guys, they are at least in agreement with us on the issue of the importance of our ability to speak the truth, our ability to disagree and debate.

They'd both agree that science requires debate, for example, and that knowledge of truth requires debate. And so, they may not like what we say. And they may think it's fantastical and funny, the things that we believe, and they'll make fun of us for it. But they respect our right to say it.

And that's a very rare, and powerful, and valuable thing. And so, I'm very appreciative for their voices in this conversation, that's for sure.

**Frank:**

Yeah, absolutely. In fact, Richard Dawkins has also a little bit softened his tone toward Christianity recently, because he realizes that a tepid secularism cannot resist a rabid Islam. And so, he's thinking maybe a Christian society is better, a better opposition to a jihad kind of Islamic society. So, he's starting to rethink. He doesn't obviously think Christianity is true.

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
.ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

**Seth:**

It may not be true, but it may have better practical outcomes. It may be better for society in general. Yeah. Which is good for him for having the humility to at least come to a point where he's willing to say something like that.

Because he knows and he's already seen it happen. People on the right, Christians, conservatives, whoever, are going to take that and run with it and say, oh, Richard Dawkins is on our side now. And he's going to have to deal with that. He doesn't want to be portrayed that way.

**Frank:**

Right.

**Seth:**

What's your answer to the question of why pastors are unafraid to be as bold as these atheists who are outspoken on this stuff?

**Frank:**

Well, there's a lot of reasons. One is they've been falsely indoctrinated into the idea that they can't speak on political issues. And since everything now is political, they think they can't say anything. That, of course, is not true. Are only atheists qualified to run the country? Where did we come up with that idea?

Comes from the Johnson Amendment in the 1950s, which was, of course, unconstitutional anyway. Secondly, some of them have big staffs. And they think, if I start speaking on these issues, I'm going to lose a lot of people, and I won't be able to support the church anymore.

And actually, when they say that, they're right to a certain extent. They will lose some people. But experience shows, and Tony Perkins at the Family Research Council will show you that, yeah, you will lose some people. But you're going to gain a whole bunch more. And they're going to be truly devoted disciples. They're going to be dialed in.

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

**Seth:**

People are emboldened by your own boldness, and that courage is contagious.

**Frank:**

Exactly.

**Seth:**

And as many people as you lose...yeah.

**Frank:**

You look at people like Jack Hibbs, or Gary Hamrick, or there's several other pastors around the country that will speak the truth on these issues. And their churches are exploding because people are looking for a track to run on, Seth.

They want to know themselves. Congregants want to know themselves they're not crazy. Are there more than two genders? Maybe it's me. I'm having so many people suggest that there are more than two genders. And they're demanding at me that I come up with pronouns. What's reality here? Every once in a while, the congregation needs to be reminded they're the sane ones.

**Seth:**

Yeah. Confusion must be met with clarity. It must be met with clarity.

**Frank:**

Absolutely.

**Seth:**

Not just with our children. I make the point all the time about kids, but it's not just with kids. The madness around us is so all consuming, and it permeates every level of our society at this point. That even adults who should know better are becoming sympathetic to some of the ideas or starting to think that they're normal or okay and becoming tolerant of them. And the confusion has to be met with clarity at every level.

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek

PODCAST

**Frank:**

Yeah. And ambiguity breeds anxiety, ladies and gentlemen. If you're anxious about something, it's because you don't know what's right or wrong. You don't know which way to turn. You have too many choices. I mean, can you imagine if it was really true that there were 57 genders or whatever Facebook says?

What kind of pressure does that put on a young person who's trying to find him or herself. I've got to choose one of these 57? I mean, that's just paralysis. That's anxiety. And we've got to clear out the ambiguity and say, no, God made men and women, boy and girl. You are what you are. You can change your mind. You can't change your biology. It's impossible.

We need to speak these truths, especially pastors. You're doing your congregations a disservice if you're not speaking the truth. Regardless of what the outcome is, you need to speak the truth and leave the results to God. You may be thrown into a cistern like Jeremiah. Oh well. You're here to build the kingdom of God, not your own kingdom.

**Seth:**

Amen. Well said.

**Frank:**

All right. Well, let me ask you one other thing before we go. And it has to do with Elon and Twitter. How important do you think it is to free speech that Elon has control of Twitter at this point?

**Seth:**

Highly important. Much more important than...well, there may be some other answer down the road. I've said before that we shouldn't have to be dependent on benevolent billionaires to solve these problems for us. It's the function of the law. But the law is not there yet.

And, well, since the law is not there yet, we don't yet have laws against, for example, viewpoint discrimination, something like common carrier doctrine that's applied to telecom companies, and transportation providers, and things of that nature.

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
.ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek      PODCAST

Given that that's not there, it's hugely important. Because, really, Twitter is one of the biggest social platforms worldwide. It's not the biggest, but it's one of the biggest. And right now, it's the only one. You see people flocking to it, Frank.

You see the Tucker Carlson show is now there. You've got a lot of people who are launching their content. Daily Wire is getting shut down on YouTube, and so they're moving all of their video podcasts onto Twitter. There isn't even yet a way to monetize on the platform. It's being promised in the future.

But people are going there just for the sake of the fact that they're able to speak freely there. They're being promised that if they say things that are politically incorrect, that go against whatever the narrative is that you're not supposed to challenge...

As long as it's lawful speech, Musk is promising that you'll be allowed to continue to stay on the platform and have a voice. And so, you can't even put a price tag on that. You could say \$44 billion, but I think it's worth even more than that. And I think the fact that Musk was willing to lose money on this investment, and he has.

We're told Twitter is worth a fraction of what it was when he first acquired it. He said he paid an outrageously high price for it. I'm thankful that he did. Because if not for that action, we would not have a platform at all. All we would have were these echo chambers.

There are smaller platforms that aren't akin to really the town square, the public square, because they're not where public discourse on a grand scale is taking place, where both sides are represented and going at each other. There are echo chambers where you can still speak these views. But broader platforms, Twitter is the only one.

**Frank:**

It is. Well, I agree with you. I'm glad that he is now in control. Let's pray he stays in control. And let's also hope that some of these other platforms will loosen up their censorship, because that's just what it is. They just don't like what we are saying.

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
.ORG**



*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
*to be an* **ATHEIST**

with Dr. Frank Turek    PODCAST

But friends, we need to keep speaking the truth, regardless of the consequences. And pastors, you're called to be salt and light, not tax exempt. All right? If you're worried about your tax exempt status, you're in the wrong business.

You're not going to lose it anyway. But if you are worried about that, that's not the issue. The issue is to speak the truth. Because you have a responsibility to take care of your flock, to drive off the wolves, and build the kingdom. So, let's do that together.

And I'm so thankful that, Seth, that you're heading The Babylon Bee. Let's keep that going because that is such a wonderful way to get people to consider the truth. Especially with all these absurd ideas out there. So, thanks so much for doing what you're doing.

And friends, check out TheBabylonBee.com. You can subscribe there for special subscriber content. I'm a subscriber. I hope you'll be as well.

And look out for the new book coming in September called *The Babylon Bee Guide to Gender*. It's going to be a hilarious way of dealing with this absurd gender ideology we have going on here. And I will see you here next week, Lord willing. God bless.

**CROSS  
EXAMINED  
ORG**

