

2016 LECTURES HIP

The 27th Annual
Oklahoma City Lectureship
April 28 – May 1, 2016

Attacks against the Bible



*Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD;
and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*

Jeremiah 23:29





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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this lectureship is to point out the dishonesty, the foolishness, and the ignorance of those who reject the Bible as the inspired word of God, as they make their so-called claims to prove the Bible is full of contradictions and errors, and that it was written by humans in an ignorant, superstitious and a cruel age.

DEDICATION



This year we are privileged to dedicate the “27th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures” book to Marion R. and Cynthia Kay Fox. These two with their children Brent, Marcey, and Melanie, became part of the Barnes church of Christ in 1978. Marion was a young thirty-five years old at the time. Marion and Cynthia now have nine grandchildren!

This husband and wife team have served with the Barnes congregation for thirty-eight years! Yes, they have served, as Cynthia has ever been the preacher’s wife, serving in whatever area she was needed. For most of this thirty-eight years Marion served as the local preacher, but in 2005 he was appointed to serve as one the elders; during the next few years he preached once each month, but this eldership ended. However, Marion continued to preach once each month. When the local preacher moved another change was made and Marion became one of two preachers serving the Barnes congregation. Then, on July 18, 2010, the congregation once more appointed elders and Marion was one of four men appointed, but he continued to serve as one of the preachers. Truth is, Marion has preached for the Barnes congregation for thirty-eight years.

Not only has Marion served as local preacher and elder, but he started and has served as the only director of the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies.” He started the school in 1991 and he has faithfully taught classes every year from its opening date. Cynthia prepared and served a meal for the students for most these years! She has also been the lady who led the way in getting meals prepared for funerals.

Therefore, the “27th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures” book is lovingly dedicated to Marion and Cynthia Fox; faithful servants of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and dearly loved by the Barnes church of Christ!



PREFACE

The first time the word of God was attacked took place in the perfect setting of the “Garden of Eden!” The words used by the serpent were: “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden” (Gen. 3:1). The “serpent” took a very positive statement made by God and turned it into a negative one, as he placed the emphasis on the word “not!” Eve, knowing what God had said, replied to the “serpent:” “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” (verses 2 – 3). The “serpent” played up the one percent, while Eve looked at the ninety-nine percent! With this first “attack against the word of God” the Devil has continued to waged war against the word of God through the ages!

The nature of the attacks has never changed! Notice as Eve looked at the forbidden fruit: “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise” (Gen. 3:6). Near the end of the New Testament, John, the apostle of Christ wrote: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). Satan’s approach never changes! Notice the three ways which he tempts us to sin: 1) “good for food” which equals “lust of the flesh;” 2) “pleasant to the eyes” equals “lust of the eyes;” and 3) “desired to make one wise” is John’s “the pride of life.” In the “serpent” attack in the garden he said: “Ye shall not surely die!” (Gen. 3:4). With these words the battle cry of Satan launched!

The Bible, which is the inspired word of God, is the one book that reveals sin; it reveals what sin is: “All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17) and: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). The word “transgresseth” is the Greek “anomia” and means: “violation of law;” or “doeth also lawlessness.” John is not addressing one sin, but the “eth” on the word “committeth” is continuing action and the same thing is true of the word “transgresseth;” it is a manner of life that persists in sin; or continues in lawlessness! This person’s life is an “attack against the Bible! His life persists in living in “the lust of the flesh”, “the lust of the eyes”, and “the pride of life;” which John wrote: “is not of the Father, but is of the world!” Those who persist in sin have joined with the “serpent” in his attack against the word of God: “Ye shall not surely die!”

If there is the God, and there is; if he said “ye shall surely die,” and he did; then, the “serpent” lied and so do all his followers who have joined him in his attack against the word of God through centuries! These attackers use every means of darkness this world has to offer in their attack! Paul wrote them in the first century: “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:13 – 14). The “attackers against the Bible” in their efforts to deceive the less knowledgeable and even the every elect, as they masquerade, disguise, transform, and fashion, themselves as “angels of light.” However, we must not be unwise to their efforts!

Therefore, “the purpose of this lectureship is to point out the dishonesty, the foolishness, and the ignorance of those who reject the Bible as the inspired word of God, as they make their so-called claims to prove the Bible is full of contradictions and errors, and that it was written by humans in an ignorant, superstitious and a cruel age.” The subjects of this year’s, “27th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures,” were so chosen to help the reader see that the Bible is the “the Verbally, Plenary, Inspired, Word of God,” that it is “our duty to trust and obey it,” and “that all those living after the gospel was

given to both the Hebrews and the Gentiles; therefore, all mankind have been amenable to the last will and testament of Christ.” But, we have also covered subjects that these attackers like to use, mostly in their dishonesty, as they try to deceive the young and innocent that the Bible is full of contradictions and errors!

-- Frank R. Williams,
lectureship director



Introduction to the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies

The Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies (OKCSBS) began its work in 1991. Presently there are men laboring in this work: Marion R. Fox, director; Frank R. Williams, dean of students; and Mike VonTungeln and Jerry Gore, instructors.

Classes have been conducted in various locations in Oklahoma. The work is centered in Oklahoma City with classes being conducted in congregations in the Oklahoma City area. The Barnes church, where the school is located, is an excellent location for this work. Classes have been conducted in Binger, Chandler, Hydro, Maysville, Piedmont, and Tuttle in the recent past. Other congregations have contacted us concerning our conducting classes in their building.

The Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies is designed to prepare men to be leaders in the Lord's church (elders, preachers, deacons, teachers, etc.) and women to serve in the church (teachers, etc.). The curriculum is Bible-centered and is designed to prepare the student to become an independent student of the word of God. It is the intention of the faculty at Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies that our students should not be taught "what to believe," but "how to learn from the Scriptures the will of God."

The full-time curriculum consists of four years of classes, one night per week presently (subject to change to two nights). Students seeking advanced options may choose to attend extra courses in Greek and other subjects. Also, part-time or audit students may choose to just take one course per night at their convenience. By stretching the course-work out into a four-year format there is a greater maturation in the learning process than in a two-year program. In addition, students can take advantage of our night schedule by continuing in secular work without needing to raise support from the church. By offering a schedule that fits people's busy lives, we allow our students to immediately increase their usefulness in local congregations.

In coming school year (2016-2017) a few changes will be made in the faculty. For a number of years the following men have served: Michael VonTungeln, Frank R. Williams, and Marion R. Fox. Then Jerry Gore was added and he has served the school well. However, due to the continuing health problems of Frank Williams, wisdom demands that another teacher be added; therefore, Chris Hill who serves the church in Lurthen and who has been a student in the school, has agreed to be added to the faculty.

We believe in the inerrancy and absolute authority of the Scriptures. We invite anyone to check out our school by contacting us and attending our classes. We are available to make presentations about our school to any congregation.

For more information, contact:
Marion R. Fox, director
1001 Twisted Trail
Oklahoma City, OK 73150
marionfox@okcsbs.com



A Word from the Dean of Students

The “Annual Oklahoma City Lectures” is part of the efforts of the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies.” It helps our efforts to teach and to promote the school. This is also true of our Journal, “One Heart,” which also teaches and promotes the school. Therefore, this page is devoted to the school.

The school is a work of the Barnes church of Christ, individuals and sisters congregations. To all those who read this page, if you would like to help in preparing other to teach others, the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies” is a great opportunity to do just this. Our school is open to all who desire to improve their Bible knowledge. But, we also have classes on subjects that relate to the Bible; such as Greek, starting with beginners all the way to advanced Greek. Students are free to pursue these Greek classes just as far as their desire takes them. We have classes on the history of the churches of Christ in America; and this study reveals the efforts of men who loved the truth and their struggles in their “search for the ancient order of things.” There is much to learn about the churches of Christ of today, as one studies the history of the churches of Christ of yesterday. Every book of the Bible is covered; from the Director to each teacher, there is no desire to just skim the books, but to have an in-depth study of each one. It takes longer, but the effort is well worth while as a student’s face light up as truth is seen for the first time.

Our students are made up of elders, deacons, preachers, Bible class teachers, and those who desire to increase their Bible knowledge! At least one of our preacher students also speak on the “Annual Oklahoma City Lectures” each year. Our former students are now preaching and working with churches of Christ in a number of places and speak on lectureships and hold gospel meetings. This last year, for the first time ever, we had a “Graduation Program” and three students received a “Diploma in Bible.” This had been our desire of many years, but more efforts were put on teaching than keeping records; thus, we never had a “Graduation Program.” The three who graduated were one elder and two preachers! Just to show the desire our students have in learning, two of these have continued in their study in the school!

Those who make up the school would like to encourage you to think about becoming a student of the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies” in the school 2016 – 2017! Our classes start at 6:30 P.M. on each Tuesday night and the ladies of the Barnes congregation, who also are students, prepare a full meal which is served between the first and second class periods. This means that you do not have to concern yourself with a meal before coming to class. Come and join us!

Frank R. Williams,
dean of students

Our Faculty

Marion Fox, director

Marion is a graduate of the Elk City School of Preaching and has preached for over 40 years and now serves as one of the elders of the Barnes congregation. His college degrees include: an A.S. (1963) from Southwestern Oklahoma State University, a baccalaureate (1965) and doctorate (1991) from Oklahoma State University, and masters (1969) University of Illinois. He has completed upper division Greek courses at Oklahoma Christian College. He has been a college professor (engineering-science division) and a National Science Foundation fellow in engineering, physics, and semiconductor manufacturing. Marion has authored several books and has engaged in several debates on various subjects.



Marion has served as a teacher for the Elk City School of Preaching; Elk City, Oklahoma 1973-76; Westside School of Preaching; Duncan, Oklahoma 1976 (Fall); Oklahoma School of Bible/ Preaching; McLoud, Oklahoma 1977-1981; Great Plains School of Bible/Preaching; Elmore City, Oklahoma 1989-91; Rocky Mountain Audio and Video Bible Institute; Selmer, TN: 1999- 2005; and Online Academy of Biblical Studies; Dyersburg, TN: 2000-2005. Marion has served as Director of the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 1991-present.

Marion has held gospel meetings and preached by appointment in fourteen other states. He preached and lectured at two state universities in Russia on scientific evidences for the existence of God and lectured on the existence of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in England. Marion has authored seven books.



Our Faculty

Frank R. Williams, dean of students and instructor

Frank works full-time with the school and the Barnes church of Christ and now serves as one of the elders of the Barnes congregation. He adds more than forty years of preaching experience to our staff. He attended the Northside School of Preaching in Harrison, AR, graduating in 1972 with a Masters in Sacred Literature. In 1977, Frank made an evangelic trip to India where about 200 people obeyed the gospel. He served as local preacher for churches in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Wyoming, and Missouri and wrote weekly articles for four local newspapers. He has preached daily on three radio stations. He has preached in gospel meetings and lectureships in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Missouri, Georgia, Iowa and Tennessee and has preached at four congregations in California. He has had articles published in The One Heart Journal, Gospel Advocate, Firm Foundation, Contending for the Faith, The Gospel Standard, The Gospel Journal, and edited The Spirit of Restoration for three years. He has written a weekly bulletin article for nine years. Also in this experience is three years in the U.S Army where he served in the Army Security Agency. Frank has taught at the following schools: Northside School of Preaching (Harrison, AR.) 1971-1972 and 1975-1976, Wetumka School of Biblical Knowledge (Wetumka, OK.) 1992-1995, and Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies (Oklahoma City, OK.) 1995 – Present.



Jerry Gore, instructor

Jerry was born in Amarillo, TX., but has made his home in Midwest City, OK, for many years. He served in the U.S. Army from June 1967 – June 1970. He received a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Oklahoma. He did most of his work at Tinker Air Force Base. Jerry and Judy have two children. Jerry has taught Bible classes at the Barnes church for many years. Last year, he taught the full year at the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies, and has been a very good addition to the school and with his “engineering” mind, he is very detailed in his teaching.



Chris Hill, instructor

Chris was born in September 1971 and he graduated from Norman High School, Norman, OK. He also graduated from Moore-Norman Technology Center in 1990. He passed his ASE certifications and worked as a mechanic while attending college. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Christian University, class of 1997, with a Bachelor’s degree in Bible and Ministry. He is married to Joanna, who is also a graduate of Oklahoma Christian University and they have two children: Rachel and Luke. Chris has worked with Camp Shiloh, a Christian camp for children in New York, (1987-2001) and served on the board of directors from 1998-2001. He has also worked with the church of Christ in Honesdale, PA, from 1997-2001. He has also traveled to the Philippines two times where he helped with the preaching and conducted auto repair seminars. Chris has served as the local preacher with the church in Luther, OK for the past 15 years; where he also serves on the board of directors for the Luther Community Service Center which provides food and other necessities for low-income families in Luther. Chris has also been a student in the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies.





Dear Reader:

The One Heart Journal was originally conceived of as a much needed avenue to spread the news about the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies. In the first issue, an eight page, black & white journal went out and was well received. Less than one hundred addresses were sent copies of the first issue.

Almost eleven years later, the Winter 2016 issue of One Heart was mailed out to about 507 addresses, plus bundles were given to congregations by our students for local members. The original eight pages have been extended to twelve; however, due to our printer we have gone to black and white printing. While this is still small compared to many brotherhood papers, we believe things continue to moving in the right direction.

The Spring 2012 issue saw a change in the physical size of the Journal. This change was made to reduce the work in preparing the paper for mailing. This will also allow an increase in the number of pages; thus, the number of articles in future issues. As the number of pages and articles are increased, we will not reduce the quality of the articles. Sound biblical writers will be asked to write articles! It is our deepest hope that we can finally get four issues of the Journal mailed out each year. Subjects will be assigned to writers months in advanced so each will have time to study and write, quality articles!

It has never been our desire to add just one more paper to hundreds already produced by the churches of Christ. It has been said: "the churches of Christ have more papers per member than any other religious group!" This Journal was intended for a specific purpose: to demonstrate the level of teaching and soundness of doctrine taught at the "Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies. Inside each issue you will read articles by our faculty representing the kind of material they present in class on a regular basis. However, we are now reaching out to seek other sound brethren to write. A number of these are speakers on our lectureship. As the "Annual Lectureship" is a work of the Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies.

The Journal also allows us an opportunity to keep students, supporters, and area congregations informed about upcoming events and the class schedule for the school. We intend for the school to be a benefit to the church in the central Oklahoma area, and to do that we need more people to be aware of what we offer.

Just like the school, the One Heart Journal is made available at no cost to subscribers. Loving members of the Lord's church contribute to the work and make it possible to publish and mail the Journal every quarter so that no subscription fee is ever necessary.

If you would be interested in receiving One Heart individually or for your congregation, please let us know so that an appropriate arrangement can be made. More people receiving One Heart mean more people are learning about the school and potentially participating in its work and growth.

In His Cause,
Frank R. Williams,
Editor, One Heart Journal

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The Bible is the Verbally, Plenary, Inspired, Word of God.

Johnny Hinton



Johnny D. Hinton is the Preaching Minister for the 29th & Yale congregation. Johnny obeyed the gospel at age 11 and within a year preached his first sermon. Beyond training in the local church, he has degrees from two Christian colleges and has done extra work through a variety of other institutions.

Johnny entered full time ministry over 25 years ago. His experience includes Youth and Missions, but mostly Preaching.

Brother Hinton also loves to teach. He teaches in the church's Bible School program as well as conducting personal Bible studies. Johnny has been an adjunct Bible teacher at a Christian university as well as working with four other preacher-training programs.

INTRODUCTION:

- 1. The Bible is the Word of God.***
- 2. The Bible is the Inspired Word of God.***
- 3. The Bible is the Verbally Inspired Word of God.***
- 4. The Bible is the Plenary Inspired Word of God.***

Conclusion: The Bible is the verbal and plenary inspired Word of God.

The Bible must be inspired, it inspires me -- NO!

The Bible inspires you because it is inspired!

A church was looking for a new preacher. They sent out a questionnaire on which was the question about what is meant by inspired. One fellow spent 3 pages but never really answered the question.

I answered in a couple of paragraphs. Sorry to say, but Frank asked for 10 typed pages of manuscript. Still yet, this manuscript is not that long.

In referring to the Bible I am speaking of the Protestant Bible. It does not contain the apocryphal books or the pseudepigrapha. These writings were never a part of the Old Testament as canonized by those responsible. In fact they came quite late and are spurious in part because they have unsound ideas within them.

The Bible is a book. But it is so much more. In fact it is a library of books. This library has 2 major divisions.

The first major division is known as the Old Testament. It is a collection of 39 books. This collection is further divided by genre or type of literature.

- There are 5 books of law which are largely narrative.
- There are 12 books of history which are also narrative.
- Then we have 5 books of poetry or wisdom literature.

- After this we have 17 books of the prophets.
 - This last set is even further divided into what is called the major and minor prophets.
 - These designations merely describe the length of the books.
 - There are 5 major and 12 minor prophets.

The second major division is known as the New Testament. It is a collection of 27 books. This collection is also divided by genre.

- There are 4 biographies on the life of Jesus of Nazareth.
 - These are called gospels and are largely narrative.
- Following these is an historical book on the expansion of the church in the first century.
- Next we have a collection of letters (a.k.a., epistles).
 - This set has 2 subdivisions: general and Pauline.
 - Some of these are written to particular churches while others address individuals.
- And last we have a book of apocalyptic prophecy.

Some outstanding facts about the Bible:

- It took roughly 1500 years to complete.
- About 40 different men were used as writers.
 - They came from varied backgrounds and levels of education.
- They came from 3 different continents:
 - Africa
 - Asia
 - Europe.
- They wrote under or about 3 different religious systems (a.k.a., dispensations):
 - Patriarchal system
 - Mosaic system
 - Christian system
- And they used 3 different languages:
 - Hebrew and Aramaic in the Old Testament
 - Greek in the New Testament.
- The storyline of the Bible can be easily broken into 15 time periods.
 - Each period is historical with key people, places, and events.

And yet with all of these variables the Bible is a consistent and cohesive whole essentially telling one story. Statistically this is very strong internal evidence of a single divine mind behind it all. The Bible is indeed the inspired word of God.

Other lines of evidence to which writers appeal in order to illustrate the fact that the Bible is more than mere human in origin include the following:

- Manuscript evidence

- o the New Testament for instance has more extant copies in the original language than any other piece of literature in antiquity by a huge margin.
 - Archaeological evidence
 - o it seems that every time a spade of dirt is turned over in the Bible lands that has any bearing on the Bible it serves to corroborate what had already been recorded.
 - Prophetic evidence
 - o there are hundreds of prophecies from the Old Testament concerning both the coming of the kingdom as well as the Messiah which were in fact fulfilled in the establishment of the church and the person of Jesus of Nazareth.
 - Scientific foreknowledge
 - o the Bible reveals a level of knowledge about a variety of things in the scientific realm that were not discovered for centuries or even a millennium.
- (see: http://www.equip.org/bible_answers/how-do-we-know-that-the-bible-is-divine-in-origin/)

Thanks to the vast amount of manuscript evidence preserved it is most certain that our Greek texts today are virtually autographic. The Bible has had a profound influence on Western Civilization. This book has been the motivation for some of the world's most profound literature, art, and music.

The one story mentioned a few paragraphs above focuses on one primary character -- Jesus. The Bible foretold his coming. It tells of his presence in the world revealing his character and his teachings. Furthermore it speaks expectantly of his future return. The person of Christ is not only foretold in predictive prophecy, it is foreshadowed in a wide variety of ways such as numerous characters and events in the Old Testament as well as the sacrificial system of ancient Israel. (cf. Luke 24:44-45)

We are not talking about the kind of inspiration from which we get the fine arts in painting, sculpting, or music. I define this type of inspiration as: highly motivated creativity.

Rather we are talking about the origin of the Sacred Scriptures. The Apostle Paul used a term in 2 Timothy 3:16 which is the basis of this whole discussion. Most standard English translations use the word "inspired" while a few have the phrase "God-breathed" or something similar. The original term "theopneustos" is a compound word. The two terms from which it is built are "theos" (God) and "pneo" (to breathe).

Paul expounds on the purpose of the Scripture as being useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. By this process every servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The mechanics of how inspiration works can be found in a couple of key texts. Peter describes it as follows, "*prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*" (2 Peter 1:21, NKJV). The term in the prior reference "moved" is rendered as "carried along" in the NIV. This particular word carries with it the idea of a ship's sails being filled with the wind. Paul explains it in this fashion, "*Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words*" (1 Cor. 2:13, ASV). Paul further expounds on this subject:

"...by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I wrote before in a few words, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (1 Cor. 2:3-5, NKJV).

I find it especially informative that the Apostle Peter categorizes Paul's writings as part of the Scrip-

ture (2 Peter 3:15-16). Paul essentially makes this claim himself, “If anyone thinks of himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37, NKJV).

The claim of inspiration is found all over the Bible. The phrase “*thus saith Jehovah*” (ASV) is repeated 281 times in the Old Testament. Another phrase “*the word of Jehovah*” (ASV) is found 239 times in the Old Testament as well.

At other times God says that he puts his words into the mouths of the prophets.

- Isaiah (Isaiah 51:6)
- Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:7; 5:14)

We can see an interesting development between the Old and New Testaments. The former will designate a human speaker or author and the latter will attribute the passage to God or the Holy Spirit.

- Psalm 2:1-2 (David) > Acts 5:25-16 (Holy Spirit)
- Psalm 95:7 (Psalmist) > Hebrews 3:7 (Holy Spirit)
- Psalm 45:6 (Sons of Korah) > Hebrews 1:8-12 (God)

Now it is about time to focus more sharply on the objective of this lecture. What exactly is meant by referring to the Bible as inspired? Most often those who truly respect the Bible as God’s inerrant word, believe that the inspiration of Scripture is both “plenary” and “verbal.” Before we identify these terms, understand that there are some who question, “Where in scripture does it claim ‘verbal and plenary’ inspiration?” Or there are some who call it an “extra scriptural” stance.

So let us examine these two keys terms and then see whether or not the Scriptures describe themselves in such a manner.

DEFINITIONS:

PLENARY, adj. [L plenus full -- more at FULL], (15th c)

- 1: complete in every respect : ABSOLUTE , UNQUALIFIED
- 2: fully attended or constituted by all entitled to be present

VERBAL, adj. [L verbum word], (15th c)

- 1 a: of, relating to, or consisting of words
b: of, relating to, or involving words rather than meaning or substance
c: consisting of or using words only and not involving action
- 2: of, relating to, or formed from a verb
- 3: spoken rather than written
- 4 : VERBATIM , WORD-FOR-WORD
- 5 : of or relating to facility in the use and comprehension of words

(Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2016)

To apply those two definitions, let’s look at two references from Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16

KJV: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, ...”*

NIV: *“All scripture is God breathed, ...”*

ALL (plenary) scripture is God BREATHED (verbal)

Matthew 4:4

KJV: *“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”*

NIV: *“Jesus answered him, ‘It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

EVERY (plenary) WORD (verbal) that comes from the MOUTH (verbal) of God

2 Timothy and Matthew blended:

“All scripture (every word) is God breathed (comes from the mouth of God)”

We could even reconstruct these this way:

-- All scripture comes from the mouth of God

-- Every word is God breathed

I do not know how this could be any plainer. It seems one would have to have a predisposition against the idea of inspiration to miss this.

The reading and study of the Bible allows us to hear God’s word. The implications of an inspired Bible are huge. The Bible in textual form has the exact same authority over us as if the words came from the mouth of God -- because they did!

In conclusion let me say that this topic can be considered a mere exercise in academics. But it is so much more. The rule of faith and practice in Christianity rests upon this book. We would not know how to be saved from our sins or how to behave as disciples of Jesus without it. In fact, we would remain aimless in knowing how to please God had he not given us his inspired word. We should be grateful for all whom God has used to reveal, copy, preserve, and translate the Holy Scriptures.

Our greatest expression of thanks is our diligent reading and studying of, and our obedience to its express terms, approved examples, and clear implications.

Tolle lege

Take up and read!

Resources consulted:

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Countering the claim that a benevolent God would not allow suffering?

Frank R. Williams



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Frank started in 1968, first in Jasper, AR, and has preached almost 46 years. He has done local work in Arkansas, Wyoming, Missouri, and Oklahoma. He has preached in the following states, in lectureships, gospel meetings, and other occasions: Arkansas, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Missouri, Texas, Georgia, Iowa, and California. He has written articles appearing in: Gospel Advocate, Firm Foundation, Christian Standard, Gospel Journal, edited, “The Spirit of Restoration” for about three years, and now serves as editor of the Journal “One Heart.” Frank made a preaching trip to India in 1977. Frank is now serving as an elder and associate preacher for the Barnes church of Christ.

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The subject before us is one of the favorites of the anti-God folks! “How does a benevolent God allow suffering?” It is based upon the idea that a benevolent, all loving God could not allow suffering! However, is this a good premise upon which to base their case; since there is suffering, therefore, God does not exist?

First, it is freely admitted that suffering exists! The nightly news reports remind us daily of the sufferings of humanity, of the shocking tragedies that nature brings upon humanity in tornadoes and hurricanes; the brutality that man perpetrates upon each other; and of the innocent suffering of those who are killed because of a drunken driver. Yes, freely we confess that suffering exists!

God Is Known By The Things That Are Made

The first failure of those who deny that God exists is that they do not understand the God revealed in the Bible! The God-denying folks know very little, if anything, about the God revealed upon the pages of the Bible; of which they are willingly ignorant. This ignorance does not excuse them; as Paul wrote: *“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse”* (Rom. 1:20). In other words, being ignorant of God as revealed in the Bible is no excuse for not knowing that he exists! Paul declared that “the things that are made,” reveal even God’s “eternal power and Godhead.” It is true that nature, “the things that are made” in Paul’s statement, do not reveal the character of God, such as his love, his mercy, and his goodness; however, they do declare his existence! It is his character, his nature, that the God-denying folks fail to understand! This can only be revealed by Divine revelation and this means in order to know the God of the Bible, one must honestly study it!

The Holiness Of God

It is the Holiness of God that our friends, who deny the existence of God, fail to understand. All the essential perfections are summed up in the word “holy,” when applied to God. He who is omnipotent (infinite in power) is holy; He who is omniscient (having complete knowledge) is holy; and He who is omnipresent (present everywhere at the same time) is holy, and this is the God revealed upon the pages of the Divine revelation: the Word of God! This is God! This is the One God of Genesis one, verse one: *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* However, this is not all that God is; not by any means! The God revealed in the inspired record is a number of other things: 1) *“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love”* (1 John 4:8); 2) *“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all”* (1 John 1:5); 3) *“Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful”* (Psa. 116:5). On and on the list could go; but allow John to sum it up as he wrote: *“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him”* (John 1:18). To know Jesus, as he is revealed in the New Testament, is to know God! This is the One God our friends, who deny the existence of God, fail to understand!

The God Is Not A God After The Image Of Man

It is because of this failure that our friends try to invent a “god” after their own image, then, they ask: “How does a benevolent God allow suffering?” But God is not of the image of man, but man is of the image of God. Moses wrote in the first chapter of Genesis: *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:...”* (verse 26). Going back to the “holiness” of God, it must be understood that God, unlike man, cannot allow sin to go unpunished! The “god” made in the image of man, may like a father look at the disobedience of his child and overlook the wrong done; but the God of holiness cannot do such! If he could, he would not be God! In the beginning God created man and made them *“male and female created he them”* (Gen. 1:27); and when he had completed his creation he looked upon it and said: *“..., behold, it was very good”* (Gen. 1:31). He placed the man and woman in a perfect garden and said to Adam: *“... to dress it and to keep it”* (Gen. 2:15). Following this responsibility, God gave this commandment: *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* (Gen. 2:16-17). The commandment was clear, easy to understand and there is evidence that Eve understood it as she speaks to the “serpent” in Genesis chapter three: *“We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die”* (verses 2-4). But, of her own will, she looked upon the forbidden tree: and *“saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat”* (Gen. 3:6). God, who is so unlike man in his weakness; could not just overlook their disobedience, but according to his holiness God had to be true to his nature, to his character, to his holiness; therefore, he would physically remove them from the garden which was symbolic of their spiritual death! Then, to remind the woman of her sin, he said to Eve: *“I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”* Then God said unto Adam: *“Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”* (Gen. 3:16-19). The perfection of the garden was no more; and every time a woman experiences the pains of child birth, it is a reminder of the sin committed in the garden by Eve; and every time man pulls thorns and thistles from the earth, it is a reminder

of Adam's sin! But it is also a reminder of God's holiness! However, we must not overlook the last words of God to them: *"for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;"* my friends, every trip to the cemetery when a body is lowered into the earth, it is a reminder of God's truth and of God's holiness! The God denier does not deny God's existence simply because God exists, but because he is holy and his holiness demands that sin must be punished! But even here God's mercy is seen as he makes a promise about "the seed" of the woman, while speaking to the serpent: *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"* (Gen. 3:15). In God's holiness there is also grace, and God gives the first promise that through the bloodline of the woman a savior shall come! Therefore, Paul wrote: *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"* (Gal. 4:4-5). Those who deny the existence of God, who appear only to be concerned with things of this life, fail to see the greater need of mankind! The salvation of his spirit/soul! Now, we must not fail to understand this most important point! The physical consequences pronounced by God upon humanity, the male and female, does not mean that mankind is guilty of Adam's sin! Neither does suffering these physical consequences have any bearing on their relationship with God; no, not in any way, but it is the result of sin and sin has consequences.

Now, let us take a look at Noah and the worldwide flood. This takes us to Genesis chapter six. God looked upon his creation and *"saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (verse 5). What was the reaction of the God and his holiness? Verse six reads: *"And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."* Before continuing, let me clarify the meaning of the word "repented" as it has been misunderstood by some. It is the Hebrew, "naw-kham," which means: to breathe strongly in sorrow. What followed God's deep sorrow? Moses wrote: *"And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them"* (Gen. 6:7). This could have been the end of humanity, but God's mercy but God's grace a part of God's character, which the God-denier likes to overlook, comes through! God said to Noah: *"Make thee an ark of gopher wood; ..."* (verse 14). And what would this ark do? It was the means by which God would continue the existence of humanity! But, let us not fail to get the lesson; God's holiness demanded that sin be punished, but God's grace provided a way of salvation! This salvation was then realized when coupled together with Noah's obedience! So Moses wrote: *"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he"* (Gen. 6:22). At the end of this worldwide event, Moses wrote of God: *"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth"* (Gen. 9:13). Therefore, every time we look into the sky and see a rainbow, let us remember with God's punishment, also came God's promise: *"the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh"* (Gen. 9:15) the evidence of God's grace!

The Earth And The Heavens Changed

But, this is not all that we must learn from the events of Genesis chapters six through nine. No, the universe changed, the earth and the heavens changed, and "mother nature," as we like to say, as it was known before the flood has never been the same! It had never rained before the flood, as Moses wrote: *"But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground"* (Gen. 2:6). In describing what took place as the rain started coming down as Noah was in the ark, Moses wrote: *"the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened"* (Gen. 7:11) and this is but a brief description of what took place! On this side of the flood we have rain! But due to the change in nature we have more; we now have tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and all kinds of natural disasters. Each should serve to remind us of the physical consequences of sin. Once more we must keep in mind, these physical disasters which we see year after year; as we see people suffering as a result; does not mean that these suffering people are suffering because of

their sins! Here is a good time recall the words of Jesus: “...for he (God, frw) maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. 5:45). It may be added, without doing any harm to the context, the sun and rain being part of nature, so are tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and all kinds of natural disasters and they come upon the just and on the unjust! Though they are the result of the great flood, which came about because of man’s sin, those who suffer today should not be judged guilty of sin! Let me here call your attention to a question put to Jesus by this disciples: “*And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him*” (John 9:1-3). Just because bad things happen to you, or someone else, it is not evidence that they have sinned! Nevertheless, it must never be lost in our understanding that sin has consequences and sometimes the consequences are the result of sin! (Notice on page 13, “Free Moral Agent of Not,” the person who uses his free moral agency to get drunk.)

God Knows What Is Best For Mankind

The God denying folks also deny that the way of God is the right and the best way for all mankind! No being, heavenly or earthly, knows mankind and what is best for mankind better than does the creator of man! Here let us recall the word of Genesis: “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth*” (1:26). First, just for the sake of testing; let us look at the last part of this verse. Is there any creature, other than man, that has “dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth?” “The fowl of the air” may teach their little ones certain things; the king of the beast may teach their little ones certain things; but it is man that has “dominion” of all. We eat the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, the cattle, and we tame the other creatures! We have even learned to take the venom from the rattlesnake and use it for good! The second part of verse twenty-six being true, why would we doubt the first part: “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness?” Man is unlike any other of God’s creation! It is said of man, and of man only: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness!” But this places more responsibility upon mankind than it does upon any other creature on the face of the earth! Peter addressed this responsibility directly: “*Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy*” (1 Pet. 1:16). Man being created in the “image” and the “likeness” of God, has the responsibility to maintain that “image” and “likeness,” which Peter say is “holiness!”

Mankind’s Obligations To God

When mankind fails in his obligations to God, man is always less than he could be and Solomon reveals man’s obligations to God: “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil*” (Ecc. 12:13-14). The “commandments” of God is the law of God; whatever that law is at the time they are living! Failing to obey God’s commandments, his law, is sin! John defends it: “*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*” (1 John 3:4). Understand, “transgression” is “lawlessness,” and “lawlessness” is “transgression.” Here John is referring to the Law of Christ, as this is the Law to which all people then and now living are amenable; as Paul stated so clearly in Athens: “*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*” (Acts 17:30-31). Paul’s point, “*but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent*” and the assurance of this judgment is the resurrection of Jesus! Let us not forget that sin has consequences! Sin always has

spiritual consequences, and it may produce physically bad results as well. The spiritual consequences are summed up in one word, “separation;” spiritual separation from God, which is spiritual death! Paul stated: *“For the wages of sin is death; ...”* (Rom. 6:23). When God said to Adam: *“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;”* it was spiritual death. On that day Adam and Eve were spiritually separated from God; and to show that spiritual death, God physically expelled them from the garden, from the tree of life which also produced the physical consequences; therefore, Paul wrote: *“For as in Adam all die!”* (1 Cor. 15:22), not spiritually, but physically!

Spiritual Punishment Is Invisible

This naturally brings us to a most important point that is so often overlooked. Spiritual punishment is invisible; it is unseen by the human eye. You cannot see when a person is spiritually separated from God! So, how does a benevolent God, whose holiness demands that sin be punished, show to mankind the consequences of sin? When the first sins, and yes, there was more than one sin committed; God expelled them from the garden! Physically, symbolically, God showed Adam and Eve the spiritual result of sin: separation! It did not mean then, and it does not mean now, eternal separation; for God in his benevolence has provided a means of forgiveness! Nevertheless, it is necessary that we gain the best understanding we can, just here. The same thing is true in the case of the wickedness in the days of Noah; so great was the wickedness, “that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;” so how does God show his holiness and his benevolence? He destroyed the evil and saved the righteous! In doing so God has left us with physical evidence that sin must be punished; through the natural acts of nature today, God reminds us of the flood in the time of Noah. He reminds us that sin must be punished! These acts of nature today are not punishment for our sins, as the sun shines on the just and the unjust and the rain comes upon the just and the unjust, and so do the other acts of nature: tornados and the hurricanes! But, they should remind us of why they exist!

Man Is The Perpetrator Of Evil

There is a most important second point, which the “God does not exist” folks, like to overlook, or turn a blind eye to! When you look at the evil that exists, outside of the acts of nature. The question must be answered: who produces the evil among us? Who does the murdering? Who does the acts of violence upon his fellows? Who causes the wars between nations and peoples? James answers the question to the believer; *“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?”* (James 4:1). But, the “God does not exist” folks will not accept this; therefore, we give the following. The answer is so clear it is undeniable; it is not God that is responsible, but man himself! It was the evil in the heart of a man that caused six million Jews to be put to death in World War II. His name was Hitler!



American soldiers walk by row after row of corpses lying on the ground beside barracks at the Nazi concentration camp at Nordhausen, Germany, on April 17, 1945. The camp is located about 70 miles west of Leipzig. As the camp was liberated on April 12, the U.S. Army found more than 3,000 bodies, and a handful of survivors. # AP Photo/US Army Signal Corps.



In more recent years, there was Pol Pot, the Butcher of Cambodia, in “the killing fields!” where at least 1.5 million were killed.

Photo of excavation pit with skulls of people killed by the Khmer Rouge.



It was an act of free moral agency that allowed men to write the “Declaration of Independence,” then, to sign on July 4, 1776, in Philadelphia. One statement stands out: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” This is the greatest uninspired document every written by humankind! It was an act of man’s free moral agency!



Most everyone has seen ads on T.V. about the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Do you know how it got started? It is the result of one man’s dream! Who was using his free moral agency for good! We older folks will remember the T.V. show, “Make Room For Daddy” (1953 – 1965)

Forty-eight years after opening the doors, St. Jude is one of the nation’s leading pediatric research and treatment centers devoted solely to children with cancer and other catastrophic diseases; the first institution in which both research and treatment were conducted under one roof – It is located in Memphis, TN.

5,700 active patients visit the hospital each year, in 48 years, 273,600 children have been helped at this one hospital.



Free Moral Agency Or Not

So, the God-denying ask, “How does a benevolent God allow so much suffering?” There are at least three possibilities: 1) never to have created man in the first place; 2) to have created man as a robot, without free moral agency; or 3) created as a free moral agent. Here is also a good time to bring up a complaint that is often made against God: “God is too restrictive, in that he does not give man total freedom.” When as a matter of fact, God does give man total freedom, in that he created man as a free moral agent! Meaning God gave to each person the total freedom to make his own choices! Here is a good time and place to ask our “God denying friends, which of the two would you choose:” 1) Never to have been created, or 2) created a role of a free moral agent? The free moral agency of man is seen in God’s words to Adam: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Adam and Eve were free to eat, or not to eat! God in his holiness clearly revealed the consequences of their action should they decide to eat of the forbidden fruit: “thou shalt surely die!” No charge can rightfully be laid at the feet of God; as he was forthright, at the very beginning with Adam and Eve! Not only this, but God has warned us to guard our hearts: *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life”* (Pro. 4:23); and Jesus would tell us why we should “keep” the “heart with all diligence,” as he said: *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies”* (Matt. 15:19). And the wise man said: *“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: ...”* (Pro. 23:7). Get this now, the wise man did not say, you are as you think you are, but he said you are what you think! There is man and his free moral agency! The man who, of his free moral agency, determines to stop in at the local bar, and have a few drinks; understanding that each one reduces his mental and physical abilities; then, once more using his free moral agency, gets behind the wheel of his car and gets on the highway is responsible for what happens and not God! Down the highway he goes in his weakened mental and physical abilities, unable to control his car and he hits head on another car. In the other car is an innocent baby who is killed. Do we honestly ask: “How could a benevolent God allow such evil?” Let us recall from the pen of the inspired apostle Paul: *“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”* (Eph. 5:18). It is not that God does not allow you to get drunk, but that he commands you not to get drunk! Yet, you as a free moral agent; have the freedom to get drunk! But understand, you and not God is responsible for what follows! Go ahead and take the dead innocent baby in your hands and ask: “Who is responsible?” Don’t point your fist at God, but the man who disregarded the commandment of God: “And be not drunk with wine!”

The Questions Can Never Be Answered To The Satisfaction Of Some

It needs to be understood, that we can never answer all the questions, nor can we ever answer the ones we can to the satisfaction of some. Why is this? First, there are more reasons than can be given here, but a few will be helpful. Second, some of those who ask the questions will never accept an honest answer. Third, some are ignorant of what the Bible teaches and they are not interested in learning what it does say. Fourth, some are so full of themselves that nothing else matters. Fifth, to some the idea that God exists is too horrifying, for if God exists they must answer to him, so they will never accept the existence of God!

Nevertheless, the apostle’s words still stand before every one of us as a personal challenge to the world of reality: *“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened”* (Rom. 1:20-21).

Therefore, A Transition

In the remainder of our time, we will make a transition in our study. To those who examine the evidence of *“the things that are made”* (Rom. 1:20); and rightfully conclude that God exists; we will examine the evidence which proves the Bible is the verbal, plenary, inspired, Word of God! This is what Paul declared: *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* (1 Tim. 3:16-17). These folks, after giving time in studying the Bible will come to see that the God revealed upon the pages of the Bible, is holy! This brings us to the question: What does God’s holiness mean to us? Peter answers our question in quoting the Old Testament, wrote: *“Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”* (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:16). Raymond Kelcy correctly said: *“Thus it is seen that holiness is basic to true religion in both the Old Testament and the New Testament; without it, no one shall see the Lord”*. Kelcy, in his last remarks was referring to the words of Hebrew 12:14: *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”* My friends, God’s holiness obligates us to be “holy!” It is a universal truth, that people everywhere will imitate the God (god) whom they worship!

How can we expect to enjoy intimate fellowship with God who is holy unless we are holy too? Intimate fellowship with God is the greatest good we humans can experience in this life, but without holiness this fellowship is impossible! Therefore, in the Old Testament words are written and in the New Testament Jesus quoted the words: *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment”* (Mark 12:30). The inspired word reveals God’s mind, so we must learn it; it reveals God’s heart, so we must love it; it reveals God’s will, so we must live it! Therefore, our whole being, mind, will, and heart must be controlled by the Word of God. This being the first commandment!

It is here that I ask, the God-deniers, and those who claim to believe, would you do what is best for your fellows, as we come back to the questions: “How does a benevolent God allow suffering?” Now for the second commandment: *“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”* (Mark 12:31). The holiness of God demands that we be holy; and this holiness demands that we are to love our neighbor as ourself! In this we can practice true love, true forgiveness and in the words of Jesus: *“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:..”* (Matt. 7:12). Where is the suffering of man at the hand of man in those words?

If this is not enough, give deep thought to these challenging words of Jesus: *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you”* (Matt. 5:44). Then, there are the words of Paul: *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things”* (Phil. 4:8). What if, the God-deniers, would follow these words? Would it help remove suffering from among us?

FINALLY, A WORLD WITHOUT GOD

Finally, how do we answer the question: “How does a benevolent God allow so much suffering?” Here is a question for those who ask such a question: “Would there be less or more suffering in a world without God?” It is true we still have tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other things that we call “natural” disasters, which came upon this earth following the worldwide flood because of the sin in the days of Noah. These will not be removed, but when they happen, we see the goodness of humankind working as they exercise their God-given free moral agency doing good unto their fellows!

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

Countering the claim that Genesis chapter one and chapter two are two creations.

GENESIS ONE AND TWO

Bryan Hodge



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Bryan and Melinda (Wilson) were married on February 13, 1988 and they have three children: Jasmine Juneau who is married and has one child (Fort Worth, TX); Jasper Hodge (Forth Worth, TX); and Chloe Hodge (Denton, TX).

He started preaching in 1991 and has done local work with the church of Christ in La Junta, CO; Savannah, TN; Truth or Consequences, New Mexico; Talco, TX; Marshall, TX; Anchorage, AK; and is now working with the church of Christ in Youngsport (Killeen), Texas. He has preached in gospel meetings and lectureships in: Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alaska, Wyoming, and Louisiana; he has also preached overseas in: India, Jamaica, Ghana, Panama, and England. He has written articles appearing in: the Gospel Journal, Think Magazine (Focus Press), Bulletin Digest, Bulletin Briefs, The Guide, The Apologist. This is Bryan's first time to speak on our lectureship.

In 2012 Bryan had a debate with Kevin Miller a Seventh Day Adventist.

An interesting event which he noted, is his website – bryanhodge.net; internet radio: Great Bible Texts on thegospelradionetwork.org. Melinda works for Central Texas College in the Hospitality and Culinary Arts Department.

The theme of this lectureship is: Attacks Against the Bible. My specific assignment is Genesis one and two. I am to consider whether, or not, these two chapters can be harmonized. Do they agree or not? I am also to consider other issues concerning creation, such as – whether the word “replenish” (Genesis 1:28 KJV) implies a prior creation, before Adam and Eve.

IMPORTANCE OF GENESIS ONE AND TWO

Let us consider the importance of these two chapters, before we get to my specific assignment. These two chapters are quoted and alluded to by Jesus and the New Testament writers. Consider: (1) Genesis 1:1 (John 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 1:10; 11:3); (2) Genesis 1:3-5 (2 Corinthians 4:6); (3) Genesis 1:11 (1 Corinthians 15:38-39); (4) Genesis 1:26-27 (Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6); (5) Genesis 1:31-2:1 (Exodus 20:11; Acts 14:15; 17:24; Revelation 4:11; 14:7); (6) Genesis 2:2 (Hebrews 4:4); (7) Genesis 2:4 (Mark 13:19); (8) Genesis 2:7 (1 Corinthians 15:45); (9) Genesis 2:9 (Revelation 2:7; 22:14); (10) Genesis 2:17 (Romans 5:12); (11) Genesis 2:18, 22 (1 Corinthians 11:8-9); (12) Genesis 2:23-24 (Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; 1 Corinthians 6:16-17; Ephesians 5:30-31).

There are several foundational truths which are taught in these two chapters. Consider:

1. There is a God (Genesis 1-2).

This is declared with emphasis. “God” (eloheem) appears 46 times in these two chapters; “LORD” (Yahweh) appears 11 times in these two chapters; Personal pronouns are used for God 20 times in these two chapters. Together, this tallies: 77 references to God in 56 verses!

2. God created the universe (Genesis 1-2).

He created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1; 2:1). The heavens (Shamayin, high places) include outer space (Genesis 1:14-17; Deuteronomy 17:3; Psalm 19:1-6; Matthew 24:29), and the earth's atmosphere (Genesis 1:20; Deuteronomy 4:17 "air"; Jeremiah 4:25; Luke 9:58 "air"). The earth (eres, the entire planet or dry land, land). The reference is to this terrestrial sphere.

He created the sun, the moon, and the stars (Genesis 1:14-18). [Note: The planets were not distinguished from the stars by the Hebrews]. They were created for the benefit of those who would dwell on earth (Genesis 1:14-17). They provide light and divide time into days (and months), seasons, and years (Genesis 1:14). They also declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:20).

He created life: plants (Genesis 1:11-12); aquatic animals and birds (Genesis 1:20-22); land animals (Genesis 1:24-25); man (Genesis 1:26-27). Moses wrote, "In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and all that is in them" (Exodus 20:11). The writer of Hebrews declared, "Every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4).

3. God created man in His image (Genesis 1:26-30).

Man did not arrive on earth by chance. God made man.

Man is not a newcomer to earth. He did not evolve from a simpler life form (Genesis 2:7, 18, 21-23). Man has been observing creation "since the creation of the world" (Romans 1:20). That is, since the sum total of creation (cf. Genesis 2:1; Exodus 20:11). The creation of man is near enough to the beginning that Jesus said, "From the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female'" (Mark 10:6).

Mankind (male and female) was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). The language has to do with authority (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:7-9. Notice that in this passage the male, not the female, is in the image of God). God gave man dominion over the rest of creation. Robert Morey commented, "Image of God simply meant that man was created to be and to do on a finite level what God was and did on an infinite level. Man was created to reflect God in the created order" (Bert Thompson, *Rock Solid Faith*, Vol. 2, p. 110). Just as God has given man dominion over the rest of creation (Genesis 1:26-27 cf. Psalm 8:3-8).

There is a difference between man and the rest of creation. (1) Man may use the land: (a) to cultivate (Genesis 2:5; 3:19; 4:2; Job 1:14; 1 Kings 19:19; Jeremiah 4:3; Hosea 10:12; Matthew 13:3-ff; James 5:2); (b) to build (Jeremiah 29:5; Matthew 21:33); (c) to extract resources (Genesis 21:25-ff; John 4:6-ff; Job 3:21cf.; Proverbs 2:4); (2) Man may use plants: (a) for food (Genesis 1:29; 3:2; Deuteronomy 20:6; Luke 13:6-ff; Matthew 21:19-20; 1 Corinthians 9:7); (b) for shade (1 Kings 4:25; Micah 4:4); (c) for covering (Genesis 37:24; 41:42; Nehemiah 8:14-15); (d) for lumber (Deuteronomy 19:5; 1 Kings 5:6; Matthew 7:4); (e) for fuel and fire (Exodus 27:20; Isaiah 44:15-16; Matthew 6:30). (3) Man may use animals: (a) for food (Genesis 9:3; Luke 11:11-12; John 21:9-14; Acts 10:9-16; 1 Timothy 4:1-5); (b) for produce, such as milk, eggs, and wool (Genesis 18:8; Job 6:6; Proverbs 27:27; 31:13; Luke 11:12); (c) for clothing (Genesis 3:21; Job 31:20; Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6). (d) for shelter (Exodus 36:14, 19); (f) for writing material (2 Timothy 4:13); (g) for work (Deuteronomy 25:4; Job 30:1; 1 Kings 19:19; 1 Corinthians 9:9; 1 Timothy 5:18); (h) for transportation (Luke 10:34; John 12:14-15; Acts 8:27); (i) a pet (2 Samuel 12:3). Man's dominion also allows him to defend his property against animals (Exodus 21:28; 23:29; 1 Samuel 17:34-37 cf. 1 Timothy 5:8).

Do not misunderstand. God does not want us to be wasteful (Proverbs 12:27; John 6:12-13), or unnecessarily cruel to animals (Proverbs 12:10). We are stewards of His creation.

When God said, "Let Us make man in Our image" (Genesis 1:26), He hinted at the complex nature of the Godhead. The Father was involved in creation (1 Corinthians 8:6). The Son was involved in creation (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1-2). The Holy Spirit was involved in creation (Genesis

1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4; Psalm 104:30a).

4. God Created Marriage (Genesis 2:18-25).

The animals had mates. However, Adam as alone. There was nothing comparable to him. God made sure that Adam grasped this point.

Then, God made woman. He created marriage. He did not create a Steve for Adam, or a Madelyn for Eve. He created Adam and Eve. He joined one man and one woman. This is His ideal design for marriage (Genesis 2:24). This union of husband and wife is to be closer than even the parent-child relationship (Genesis 2:24). Jesus taught, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said ‘for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:4-6).

5. Man and woman have different roles in the home (Genesis 2:18).

Eve was created to be Adam’s helper. Adam was first formed and then Eve (1 Timothy 2:13). Paul wrote, “Man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but the woman for the man” (1 Corinthians 11:8-9). Eve was plainly told, after eating the forbidden fruit, that he husband was to rule over her (Genesis 3:16).

Paul grounded the woman’s role in creation (1 Corinthians 11:8-9; 1 Timothy 2:13-14). God’s plan is for man to be the leader in the home (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:3-5), and in the church (1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

God spoke to Eve about childbirth (Genesis 3:16), and to Adam about farming (Genesis 3:17-19). This seems to indicate a different focus. The wife is to be a homemaker (cf. Titus 2:5). The husband is to be the breadwinner. Yes, a woman can help him bring in income (cf. Proverbs 31:16, 24; Acts 18:1-3). Yes, a man can help in domestic work (cf. Genesis 18:1-8). However, there is a different focus or emphasis. There is a division of responsibilities.

6. Work is not a curse (Genesis 2:15, 18).

Work became more difficult as a result of Adam and Eve’s sin (Genesis 3:17-19, 23). However, it is a mistake to think that work itself is a curse. Man was designed to work (Genesis 2:15, 18).

God has always expected man to work. He did in the patriarchal system (Genesis 3:17-19, 23; 4:2). He did in the Mosaic system (Exodus 20:9-11; Deuteronomy 5:13-14). He does today, in the Christian system (Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-15). Work allows man to sustain life on earth, without someone working no one could live.

God designed Israel’s work week around the creation week (Exodus 20:9-10; Deuteronomy 5:13-14). Man needs rest. God set aside one day in seven as a day of rest. Men have tampered with this, but it still works best. David Barton has written, “Following the French Revolution (1789), France made a calendar change so that workers were allowed one day rest in ten rather than the traditional religiously based one in seven... Apparently, the result on the worker’s health and morale was so detrimental that one day rest in seven was reinstituted” (Barton, Original Intent, p. 67, footnote).

7. Man is accountable to God (Genesis 2:16-17).

God forbade Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They ate and there were consequences. They were cast out of the garden. They were cut off from the tree of life, and thus, began to physically die. They lost their close relationship with God. Sin has consequences.

What did God mean when He warned, “in the day you eat of it you shall surely die”? They did not immediately physically die (Genesis 4:1-5:5). Here are some possibilities: (1) It is possible that this means that their physical death would become certain on that day. Eric Lyons has written, “The avail-

able evidence shows... that the Hebrew idiom ('in that day') refers to the certainty of death, not the immediacy of it. For example, King Solomon once warned a subversive Shimei: 'For it shall be, on the day (same original wording – B.H.) you go out and cross the Brook Kidron, know for certain you shall die...' (1 Kings 2:37). As the next few verses indicate, Shimei could not have been executed on the exact day he crossed the Brook Kidron, Solomon did not call for him until after Shimei had saddled his donkey, went to King Achish at Gath, sought and retrieved slaves, and returned home (approximately 50-60 miles round trip). It is logical to conclude that this would have taken more than just one day (especially considering a donkey's average was only 20 miles a day...). It was only after Shimei's return from Gath that King Solomon reminded him of his promise saying, 'Know for certain that on the day you go out and travel anywhere, you shall die'? (1 Kings 2:42). As Hebrew scholar Victor Hamilton noted, 'This phrase (in Genesis 2:17; 1 Kings 2:37, 42 and Exodus 10:28-ff) is underscoring the certainty of death, not its chronology'" (Lyons, *The Anvil Rings*, Vol. 1, p. 32). (2) Some have suggested that an immediate physical death is warned of, but God substituted animal sacrifice. Garry Brantley commented, "God did not require them to pay the full penalty for their transgression, but set in motion a redemptive plan in which He accepted a substitutionary sacrifice for sin. This is reflected in the animal sacrifices of the Mosaic economy, and ultimately in the physical death of Christ. In Adam and Eve's case, it might be that the animals from which God made the skins to clothe their naked bodies represented the first sin offering" (Brantley, *Questions and Answers, Reason and Revelation*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 1995). This is an interesting theory. However, nothing indicates that the tunics of skin were from a substitution which spared their lives. Though, it is possible. (3) Some have suggested that this refers to spiritual death. They sinned. Sin separates man from God. They were spiritually dead. However, God had a plan to restore spiritual life to mankind (cf. Romans 5:12-21). This is the theory. However, the language, "you shall surely die," at least usually in scripture refers to physical death (Genesis 2:16-17 cf. Genesis 20:7; 1 Samuel 14:44; 1 Kings 2:37, 40; 2 Kings 1:4, 6, 16; Jeremiah 26:8. Exceptions – Ezekiel 3:18; 33:8; 33:14). I lean toward the first explanation. Though, the second explanation is an intriguing theory.

Some might wonder: "What's the big deal? Why would God so react to the eating of this fruit?" The answer to this is that God placed a choice before them. Their choice was not so much about the fruit. It was about whether they would follow His will or their own. They chose to reject the rule of God for the rule of self. The big issue in every age is who will be God – Jehovah or self?

God is gracious and merciful. He preplanned a way for man's redemption (1 Peter 1:18-20). Victory over Satan would come through the seed of woman (Genesis 3:15 cf. Galatians 4:4).

CRITICISMS OF GENESIS ONE AND TWO

Perhaps no section of the Bible has been more attacked than Genesis 1 – 11. Opponents of the Bible know that if Genesis is discredited, then so also is the rest of the Bible, for Genesis is foundational to the rest.

Again, my assignment is Genesis one and two. Let us consider some common criticisms of these chapters.

1. Critics believe that there are two completely different accounts of creation (Genesis 1:1-2: and Genesis 2:4-2:25).

It is true that there are two accounts given of creation; but they are not completely different accounts. The second account may be likened to "instant replay (from an) isolated camera (or different angle – B.H.), here the cameraman allows the viewer to go back and see an event in greater detail" (Editor Curtis Cates, *Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship: The Book of Genesis*, p. 79). The two accounts have different focus. The first account focuses on the chronological order of creation. The second account focuses on man and his surroundings in Eden. More detail is given in the second

account about certain things: (a) God's expectations of man (Genesis 2:15; 2:16-17); (b) Man's relationship to the animals (Genesis 2:19-20); (c) The creation of woman, and her relationship with man (Genesis 2:18-25).

2. Critics believe that the two accounts contradict each other.

It is alleged that there is a different order for the creation of plants. The first account indicates that plant life was created on day three (Genesis 1:11-13), and man on day six (Genesis 1:26-31). The second account speaks of a time before any plant of the field and any herb of the field had grown "for... there was no man to till the ground" (Genesis 2:5). Moreover, the second account mentions man, and then says, "And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" (Genesis 2:8-9).

Genesis 2:5 returns us to a time prior to man's creation, and it speaks to the importance of man to plant life. Two things are mentioned as being needful to expedite plant growth: water and cultivation. God supplied the water (Genesis 2:6) and man (Genesis 2:7). Albert Barnes comments, "At first sight... it might be supposed that the vegetable species were not created at the hour of the day to which the narrative refers. But it is not stated that young trees were not in existence, but merely that the plants of the field were not yet in the land. Of the herbs it only said that they had not yet sent forth a bud or a blade. And the actual existence of both trees and herbs is implied in what follows. The reason for the state of things above described are the want of rain to water the soil, and of man to cultivate it. These would only suffice for growth if the vegetable seeds, at least, were already in existence. Now, the plants were made before the seeds (Genesis 1:11, 12), and therefore the first full-grown and seed-bearing sets of each kind were already created. Hence we infer that the state of things described in the text was this: The original... if they had dropped a seed, it was only on the land, and not in the land, as it had not yet root... man comes in merely as an auxiliary to nature in preparing the soil and depositing the seeds and plants to the best advantage for rapid growth and abundant fruitfulness" (Barnes Notes, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, p. 82-83).

Genesis 2:8-9 is emphasizing the beauty and provisions which God supplied for man in Eden. James Burton Coffman comments, "Here is merely a recapitulation to show the desirability and beauty of the home God prepared for his first human children" (Coffman, Commentary on Genesis, p. 48). Here are some possible solutions to the issue of chronology: (a) It is possible that chronological order is not being followed. This may simply mean that animals which God had formed and now brought these before Adam. Some have suggested that the Hebrew *yatsar* could be translated "had formed" (e.g. Archer, A Survey Of The Old Testament Introduction, p. 133; Lyons, The Anvil Rings, Vol. 1, p. 25). The English Standard Version so renders it. (b) Others have suggested that it is possible that God created these animals at this time and brought them before Adam. Eric Lyons writes, "The text never says that there were no animals created on the sixth day of creation after Adam. Although in my judgment it is very unlikely... some commentators hold this view (Lyons, p.27).

It should be remembered what constitutes a real contradiction. J.W. McGarvey correctly states, "Two statements are contradictory not when they differ, but when they cannot both be true. If on any rational hypothesis, we may suppose them both to be true, we cannot rightly pronounce them contradictory. We are not bound to show the truth of the given hypothesis; but only that it may be true. If it is at all possible, then it is possible that no contradiction exists" (McGarvey, Evidences of Christianity, Part 3, p. 31).

3. Critics believe that the two accounts came from different (uninspired) sources, which was later patched together by a redactor (editor).

The Documentary Hypothesis, as it is called, is a theory which concerns not just Genesis one and two, but the entire Pentateuch or Torah (Genesis – Deuteronomy) and even Joshua. This theory has

been around since the earth 18th century. This theory was developed, modified and popularized by the following men: German minister, H.B. Witter (1711); French Physician, Jean Astruc (1753); German professor, J.W. Eichhorn (1780-1783); and German Professors – Karl Graf and Julius Wellhausen. The theory holds that there were four different sources: E=this source used the name Elohim for God; J=this source used the name YHWY or Jehovah and Elohim for God; P=this source addressed priestly manners and concerns, and used the name Elohim for God; D=this source contained most of the book of Deuteronomy. We shall not fully address this issue, but shall confine our task to Genesis one and two [Recommended reading for more information on this theory: Gleason Archer Jr., A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, Part One; For brief reading – Eric Lyons, The Anvil Rings, Vol. 1, Chapter 3; Editor Curtis Cates, Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship: The book of Genesis, Chapters 31 and 35].

Critics assign the first account to P or E source and the second account to J source. Elohim is used for God in both the first and second accounts. However, YHWY or Jehovah appears only in the second account [This assumes the words of Genesis 2:4a, “This is the history of...” are a superscript or heading and not a subscript or closing. Most believe this. Henry Morris in The Genesis Record suggest it is not.]

Does this difference in language demand a different source? No. (1) It is not uncommon for a writer to vary language. Gleason Archer Jr. writes, “The documentarians have... assumed without proof that the ancient Hebrew authors were incapable of variety in their modes of expression; variety in the biblical text can only be explained by diversity of authorship. Yet, it is well known that in the literature of other nations, the accomplished writers were apt to employ variety of phrases in order to avoid monotony (Archer, p. 130). Consider the following passages: Genesis 21:1-2; Genesis 28:12-13; Genesis 30:23-24; Amos 3:13; Habakkuk 1:12. (2) It is possible that the change of language is for emphasis sake. Elohim refers to power or might. It is an impersonal name. Jehovah refers to God as the eternal existing one. It is also a personal name. One writer remarks, “Elohim is the general name for God and is used in the context of God as creator... Yahweh (the LORD) is God’s personal name and is used in the context of God having a relationship with His people (blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart_693.cfm).

The uniform tradition of Jews and early Christians attributed the Pentateuch to Moses. Josephus write, “Five are the books of Moses, which comprise the laws and earliest traditions from the creation of mankind down to his death” (Contra Apionem 1.8). Jesus attributed the law (Genesis – Deuteronomy) to Moses (Luke 24:27, 44). He clearly is said to have written portions of Exodus (Exodus 17:14; 20:22-26 cf. Joshua 8:30-32; Exodus 24:4; 34:27); Leviticus (Leviticus 12:8 cf. Luke 2:22-24); Numbers (Numbers 33:2); Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 31:9, 19, 22, 24; Deuteronomy 24:1-4 cf. Matthew 19:7-8).

Henry Morris poses an interesting theory which does not deny inspiration. He believes that Moses compiled by Holy Spirit guidance earlier records. He divides the book as follows: (1) The generations of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1 – 2:4). This record evidently was given by God. (2) The generations of Adam (Genesis 2:4b-5:1). This record, he believes, to be from Adam. (3) The generations of Noah (Genesis 5:1b-6:9). This record was written by Noah. (4) The generations of the sons of Noah (Genesis 6:9b-10:1). Noah’s sons supposedly recorded this. (5) The generations of Shem (Genesis 10:1b-11:10). Shem kept these records. (6) The generations of Terah (Genesis 11:10b-11:27). This record was kept by Terah. (7) The generations of Isaac (Genesis 11:27b-25:19). Isaac kept these records. He also appended his own record with Ishmael’s (Genesis 25:12). (8) The generations of Jacob (Genesis 25:19b-37:2). Jacob kept these records. He also appended his own record with Esau’s (Genesis 36). He adds that Genesis 36:31-39 was likely inserted by Moses. (9) The generations of the sons of Jacob (Genesis 37:2-ff). This record was kept by Jacob’s sons or one of Jacob’s sons. This theory is set forth in The Genesis Record (pp. 22-30). Morris points out, “It... is significant that, although the

Book of Genesis is quoted from or alluded to at least two hundred times in the New Testament, as we have already noted, in none of these references is it ever stated that Moses was the actual author. This is especially significant in view of the fact that Moses is mentioned by name at least eighty times in the New Testament approximately twenty-five of which refer to specific passages attributed to Moses in the other books of the Pentateuch. While this evidence is not conclusive, it does favor the explanation that, while Moses actually wrote the book of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, he served mainly as the compiler and editor of the material in the book of Genesis. This in no way minimizes the work of the Holy Spirit, Who infallibly guided him in the process of compilation and editing” (Morris, *The Genesis Record*, p. 26). It is an interesting theory. However, it is far from an established fact.

Let us make two final points in the Documentary Hypothesis. (1) The source documents (EJPD) have never been located. Not even a fragment. (2) Jesus treated both accounts of creation as the word of God (Matthew 19:4 cf. Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:5 cf. Genesis 2:24).

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT CREATION

There are common questions which are asked about the Genesis account of creation. Here are some concise answers to some of these common questions.

1. Is Genesis Myth?

All of the New Testament writers quote or reference the book of Genesis. There are 200 specific references to Genesis in the New Testament (for the list, see – creationstudies.org). Half of the 200 references are from Genesis 1-11, and 63 are from Genesis 1-3. All of the New Testament writers make reference to Genesis. All of the New Testament books contain allusions to Genesis except the books of Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John. Only 7 of the 50 chapters of Genesis are not quoted in the New Testament (20, 24, 34, 36, 40, 43, and 44). There are 14 references to the flood in the New Testament (stats from Dave Miller, Fundamentals II Class Notes, Brown Trail School of Preaching). Not one New Testament writer presents characters or events in Genesis as myths.

The Bible presents the people as historical characters. Abel is presented as being as historically real as Zachariah (Matthew 23:35). Noah and Job are presented as being as historically real as Daniel (Ezekiel 14:14, 20). Never are the characters of Genesis depicted as myths by Biblical writers.

Certain teachings are based upon Genesis. Jesus’ teaching about marriage is grounded in creation (Matthew 19:4-6). Paul’s teaching about women’s roles is grounded in creation (1 Corinthians 11:8-9; 1 Timothy 2:13-14). Israel’s work week was based on creation (Exodus 20:9-11). There is no hint that these were taken as myths or fables.

2. Is there a gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2?

Some have theorized that the heavens and the earth were created in Genesis 1:1, but that it became “without form and void” in Genesis 1:2. Moreover, it is theorized that between these verses there lived plants, animals, and even a pre-Adamic race of men. However, God destroyed all life and started over in Genesis 1:2. This theory is popular with some because, it allows for an old earth.

Some common arguments to support this view are: (a) It is argued that the term “was” could be rendered “became.” (b) It is argued that Adam and Eve were told to “replenish” the earth (Genesis 1:28 KJV). (c) God did not create the earth in “vain” (Isaiah 45:18). This is the same original word translated “without form.” (d) A distinction between “created” (bara) and “made” (asah) is made.

Let us briefly answer these arguments. (a) Should “was” be rendered “became”? Henry Morris has written, “The verb is the regular Hebrew verb of being (hayetha), not the word normally used to denote a change of state (haphak). Although hayetha can also, if the context warrants, be used to introduce a change of state, it simply means ‘was’ in 98% of its occurrences” (*The Genesis Record*, p. 49). Harold Stiger has commented, “When the verb ‘to be’ (hayah) is to be constructed as ‘became,’ the addition of

the prepositional lamedh is required with the following word to provide this meaning, and this preposition is absent here” (Bert Thompson and Gary Workman, p. 6). John Whitcomb remarked, “If it had to be translated ‘became,’ then we would have to say that Adam and Eve ‘became’ naked (Genesis 2:25)...” (The Early Earth, p. 146). (b) What about the word “replenish”? Henry Morris has written, “This does not suggest the idea of refilling... The Hebrew word is male, and means simply ‘fill’... of the more than three hundred times it is used, it is translated (in the KJV) by ‘replenish’ only seven times; and even these could have been rendered ‘fill’” (The Genesis Record, p. 76). The NKJV, NASB, and ESV render it ‘fill.’ The New Brown-Drivers-Briggs-Gesenius Lexicon renders it “fill.” Wayne Jackson commented, “The word, ‘replenish,’ at the time the King James Version was translated simply meant ‘fill’” (Notes From the Margin of My Bible, Vol. 1, p. 3). (c) What about Isaiah 45:18? “The immediate context... has to do with Israel and God’s promises to His people. Isaiah reminds his listeners that just as God had a purpose in creating the Earth, so He had a purpose for Israel. ...God created the earth ‘to be inhabited’” (Bert Thompson, Popular Compromises of Creation – The Gap Theory). Wayne Jackson commented, “The earth was not created to remain empty; rather it was designed to be inhabited” (God’s Prophet of Doom and Deliverance; Isaiah, p. 91). What about Genesis 1:2? John Whitcomb wrote, “It was simply empty of living things and without the features it later possessed, such as oceans, continents, hills and valleys – features that would be essential for man’s well-being” (Bert Thompson, Popular Compromises of Creation – The Gap Theory). The words “without form” and “void” do not mean destruction. A concordance will demonstrate this point. Furthermore, John Whitcomb has written, “To be sure the only passages besides Genesis 1:2 where tohu and bohu appear together – Isaiah 34:11 and Jeremiah 4:23 – are placed in context which emphasize divine judgment. But even here the basic meaning of empty or uninhabited fits well” (The Early Earth, p. 148). (d) What about “created” (bara) and “made” (asah)? It is argued that God in Genesis 1:1 “created” (bara) the heavens and the earth. However, the six days refers to what he “made” (asah) (Genesis 1:31). The first word it is claimed refers to original creation, and the second to a remaking. However, such distinction is not there. The words are used interchangeably (Genesis 1:26 cf. 1:27).

The Biblical writers do not speak of a pre-Adamic human race. Adam is called “the first man” (1 Corinthians 15:45). Sin is said to have entered the world through Adam (Romans 5:12-ff).

3. Are the days of creation long periods of time?

This theory is popular with many. It allows for an old earth.

There are problems with this view. (a) A “day” is defined in context as “an evening and a morning” (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). (b) If a “day” refers to a long period of time, then what is an “evening” and a “morning”? (c) If a “day” refers to a long period of time, then what are “seasons” and “years” (Genesis 1:14)? (d) Bert Thompson has written, “Whenever the Hebrew word ‘yom’ (day – B.H.) is preceded by a numeral, it always carries the meaning of a 24-hour day” (Difficult Texts From Genesis, p. 8). The record speaks of “the first day,” “the second day,” etc. (e) Henry Morris has written, “When the words ‘days’ appears in the plural (Hebrew – yamin) as it does over 700 times in the Old Testament, it always refers to literal day” (Bert Thompson and Gary Workman, Difficult Texts From Genesis, p. 8). Exodus 20:11 reads, “in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.” (f) “The Hebrew phrase translated ‘evening and morning’ is used over 100 times in the Old Testament with the word ‘yom’. Each time it refers to a literal 24-hour day” (ibid, pp. 8-9). (g) If God had intended to convey a literal day, wouldn’t He have used the language He did? (h) Jesus asked, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female’” (Matthew 19:4). Does this sound like one can fit billions of years between day one and day six? (i) Paul wrote, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made... so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). Does this sound like man arrived billions of years after the creation of the world?

4. *Could there be gaps in genealogy after creation?*

It is thought by some that billions of years can be fit into gaps in genealogy. This allows them to believe in an old earth.

It is true that some of the genealogy lists do contain gaps. For example: Ezra 7:3 lists Azariah as the son of Meraioth. However, there are six descendants between them (1 Chronicles 6:7-9). Also: Matthew 1:8 lists Uzziah as the son of Joram. However, he was not the immediate son (2 Chronicles 21:1 cf. 22:1 cf. 22:11; 24:1 cf. 24:27 cf. 26:1). The later record is often abbreviated. Matthew groups his list of names into three sections of fourteen generations (Matthew 1:17). The ESV Study Bible commented, “Perhaps for ease of memorization, or perhaps for literary or symbolic symmetry, Matthew structures the genealogy to count 14 generations from each major section.”

However, this argument is weak. (a) The reason that we know of such gaps is because the Bible fills in details in other lists. This does not suggest billions of years of history unlisted anywhere in the Bible. (b) There is a great difference between gaps in names listed and gaps in chronology. For example: The Bible lists 10 generations from Adam to Noah and 1056 years (Genesis 5). Even if there were 50 generations there remains 1056 years of chronology. (c) Can you fit billions of years into 13 generations? Let me explain – How many years are there between us and Jesus? A bit over 2,000 years. How much time between Jesus and Abraham? About 2,000 years. The billions of years need to be fit into the time between Abraham and Adam. How many generations existed according to the Bible between these two men? The answer is twenty (Genesis 5 and Genesis 11). Enoch is confirmed to be the seventh from Adam (Jude 14 cf. Genesis 5). This leaves 13 generations in which to find these great gaps in genealogy into which one can insert billions of years. However, remember that there is a huge difference between gaps in genealogy and gaps in chronology! Chronologically there are 2,008 years between Adam and Abraham (this is based on Noah being 502 when Shem was born, and Terah being 130 when Abraham was born).

5. *How was there light on day one (Genesis 1:3), yet the sun, moon and stars were not created until day four (Genesis 1:14-18)?*

Some have suggested that the sun, moon and stars were created on day one, but were not visible upon earth until day four, due to the shroud of thick vapor. However, the words, “*Let there be...*” are the same words that appear throughout this chapter (1:3; 1:6; 1:14). This sounds like creation.

Bert Thompson and Gary Workman have written, “*On the first day God said, ‘Let there be light’ (Hebrew or) whereas on the fourth day God said, ‘Let there be lights (ma-or, light-bearers). Therefore, God’s first recorded statement created independent light without a light-bearer. And since God instructed the light-darkness cycle on that day, we must conclude that the light came from a fixed direction and that the earth rotated on its axis. In eternity there will again be light without the sun – Revelation 21:23’* (Difficult Texts From Genesis, p. 14).

There are other examples of light without the light bearing of the sun and moon. God provided a “pillar of fire” by night for the children of Israel (Exodus 13:21-22; 14:24; Numbers 14:14; Nehemiah 9:12). One day the saints will live in a city illuminated by God and the lamb, but it will not have a sun or moon (Revelation 21:23; 23:5).

6. *What is the firmament (Genesis 1:6-8; 1:17)?*

The original word (raqia) refers to an “expanse” or “something stretched, spread or beaten out” (Difficult Texts From Genesis, p. 15). The ESV reads, “an expanse.” The firmament refers to the atmosphere (Genesis 1:6-8). The firmament refers to outer space (Genesis 1:14-17). God “stretches out the heavens like a curtain” (Isaiah 40:22).

7. *Isn’t there too much activity in Genesis 2:18-25 for a 24-hour day?*

Eric Lyons has answered this point in an Apologetics Press article entitled, “Too Much Activity on Day Six?” In this article he makes the following points: (a) Adam did not have to search for all of the creatures. God brought them to him (Genesis 2:19). (b) Adam did not name all of the animals on earth. He named all cattle, birds of the air, and beasts of the field (Genesis 2:20). Excluded are sea creatures, and creeping things. (c) It is possible that the animals brought to him and named by him were limited to the animals which resided in Eden. God was trying to send a message to Adam. There was no helper comparable to him to be found. He was unique, and he needed a mate. (d) It does not say that he named every species of animals that now exists (for example today there are hundreds of different varieties of dogs, cats, cattle, etc.), or might have then existed. Likely, he was giving names to “kinds”.

CONCLUSION

The book of Genesis is foundational to understanding the rest of the Bible. Henry Morris remarked, “If the Bible were somehow expurgated of the book of Genesis... the rest of the Bible would be incomprehensible. It would be like a building without a ground floor, or a bridge with no support” (The Genesis Record, p. 17). He lists 77 important Biblical words which first appear in Genesis (ibid, p. 687). Genesis tells us of the origin of man, woman, and the home (Genesis 1, 2). Genesis tells us about sin and how God views sin (Genesis 3, 6). It tells us of God’s preserving a seed-line through Abram in order to bless humanity (Genesis 12:1-3, ff.). It should be studied by every Bible student.

We have considered some major criticisms of Genesis one and two, and have shown that these criticisms are not sound. We have provided some concise answers to some common questions about creation. Our hope is that this will spark interest and promote study of this book of origins. Moreover it is our hope that this will help one to answer critics and defend the faith.

Countering the false claims made about the purpose of the “Ten Commandments” and other misunderstandings.

Dan Fredman



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As a note of interest, Dan attended the Barnes church of Christ in 1952 and attended the Schwartz school in the area. Schwartz was one of the last one room schools in the state and Dan was one of three students in the second grade. The family moved to McLoud in 1953.

Introduction

A. What is the purpose of this lesson? What are we talking about in referring to the Ten Commandments?

1. Here they are in brief (Ex. 20:1-17):
 - a. You shall have no other Gods before Me.
 - b. You shall not make any idols.
 - c. You shall not take the name of God in vain.
 - d. Remember the Sabbath, keep it holy.
 - e. Honor your father and your mother.
 - f. You shall not murder.
 - g. You shall not commit adultery.
 - h. You shall not steal.
 - i. You shall not bear false witness.
 - j. You shall not covet.
2. As you are all well aware, there is a huge turmoil in our country right now concerning the Ten Commandments
3. They have been very prominent in TV newscasts and in newspapers all across our country

and especially here in Oklahoma.

4. And, the big issue is huge public debate as to whether or not the Ten Commandments should be posted publicly and especially on government property.

B. This brings up a lot of questions with a lot of people concerning the Ten Commandments. Questions such as:

1. Should we even be concerned about the Ten Commandments today?
2. Are the Ten Commandments in effect today as religious laws? If so, are they separate from the rest of the Law of Moses?
3. Should they or should they not be posted publicly?
4. What about us, where are we as Christians with all this?
5. What should be our stance, for it or against it?

C. Let's think about all of this and, first of all, look at where this puts us as a people, as a nation.

1. We began as a very religious people, a very religious nation.
2. Now we, as a nation, have totally turned away from God.

I. The Religious and Moral State Of The United States.

A. When this country was established some 240 years ago, it was established by men who, as a whole, believed in God and believed in the Bible as God's word.

1. While their understanding of God's word was misguided in many different ways they did believe honoring and respecting Almighty God was vital to success.

B. Here are just a few quotes from some of the men who were involved either in establishing this country or helped care for it shortly after its establishment.

1. "It is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free constitution is pure virtue."

John Adams
Second President of the U.S.

2. "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

Congress, 1789

3. "It is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favors."

George Washington
First President of the United States

4. "The Bible is worth more than all the other books that were ever printed."

Patrick Henry
Governor of Virginia, Patriot.

5. "History will also afford frequent opportunities of showing the necessity of a public religion and the excellency of the Christian religion above all others, ancient or modern."

Benjamin Franklin
Signer of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence

6. “The Bible is the best of all books, for it is the word of God and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and in the next. Continue therefore to read it and to regulate your life by its precepts.”

John Jay
First Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court

7. “Why may not the Bible, and especially the New Testament, without note or comment, be read and taught as a divine revelation in schools? Where can the purest principles of morality be learned so clearly or so perfectly as from the new Testament?”

U.S. Supreme Court, 1844

C. These are just a few out of hundreds of quotes from the men who had a part in establishing this country that tell us where they stood concerning God, Christianity and religion.

1. But, even as late as 1931 these beliefs were strong in this country. Consider the following quote from the Supreme Court of 1931.
2. “We are a Christian people, according to one another the equal right of religious freedom and acknowledging with reverence the duty of obedience to the will of God.”
3. The United States of America was founded on a solid belief in God, the Bible and Christianity.

D. Now, involved in all of this was a belief by many, if not most religious people, that the Ten Commandments of the OT are still in effect today.

1. This is evident in that, at one time, the Ten Commandments were posted nearly everywhere – in our schools, in government buildings (including Federal government buildings), businesses, etc.

E. Now, today, we see the tremendous moral decline in our country in the efforts on every hand to have any and every public display of anything religious, including the Ten Commandments, removed from public view.

F. All of this brings me to my topic for this evening which is countering the false claims, the misunderstandings of the Ten Commandments.

I. How and where do we learn what we need to know about the Ten Commandments?

- A. How do they relate to God and God’s laws for man?***
- B. Where are we to find the answers as to what part the Ten Commandments are to play in our lives today?***
- C. There is only one place for us to look for the truth concerning the Ten Commandments.***
- D. That place is God’s word, the Bible, given to us by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit through those men selected by God through Christ.***
- E. 2 Peter 1:20-21, “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but***

men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

1. We can know that God's word is the truth, the absolute truth because of what Jesus, Himself says in His prayer to His Father in John 17.
2. In this passage Jesus is praying to the Father concerning the apostles and notice what He prays for and says in vs. 17.
3. John 17:17, "*Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.*"

F. Now, what are we to do with the Truth, the Truth of God's word?

1. 2 Timothy 2:15, "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*"
2. We are to handle it accurately, handle it according to what God says and not according to what I want it to say.

II. Do the Ten Commandments apply to us today?

A. That condensed list of the Ten Commandments I gave earlier came from Exodus 20 which is in what we call the O.T.

1. God gave these 10 commandments directly to the people Himself but, God didn't stop there, it was the people who stopped God.
2. Exodus 20:19, "*Then they said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.'*"
3. After this, God called Moses up on the Mountain and gave him the rest of the law – some 600 additional laws and precepts were given over a period of time.
4. But, all the other laws given were means of upholding these "Ten Commandments."

B. Now, to whom were these laws given? Notice what Moses, himself, said to the people in Deut. 5:2-3.

1. Deuteronomy 5:2-3, "*The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. 3 'The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today.'*"
2. The Law of Moses, which includes the Ten Commandments, was given to the nation of Israel and them only.
3. No other people or nation was subject to the Law of Moses.

C. Are the "Ten Commandments" still in effect today, are they still God's law for those who claim to serve God today?

1. Question, if these laws are still in effect today, would not the punishment for breaking these laws also be in effect today?
2. Can you honestly, truly have one without the other? The obvious answer is "NO!"
3. If you read on through Leviticus and Deuteronomy you will learn that the penalty for breaking all but one of the Ten Commandments is death.

4. Also, the scriptures are very plain that if one is going to keep part of the law, he must keep it all.
 - a. Galatians 5:3, *“And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.”*
 - b. James 2:10, *“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.”*
5. If the Ten Commandments are in effect today then we must keep all the law and apply the punishment of the law to those who violate the law.

D. Thankfully, the Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments, is not in effect today!

1. First of all, the old law was never intended to be permanent.
2. It was prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 31:31-34 that God was going to make a new covenant that would replace the old covenant (Law of Moses).
2. Secondly, the scriptures are very clear that by the coming of Jesus Christ as one of us and His death, burial and resurrection that old law was taken away and replaced by His new law.
3. Consider the following passages of scripture.
4. Colossians 2:14, *“having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”*
5. Ephesians 2:15, *“by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,”*
6. Hebrews 8:13, *“When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.”*
7. Hebrews 9:15, *“And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”*
8. All of these passages put together make it very plain that the Law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments, is no longer in effect today.
9. We are under the Law of Christ and it is by His words, not the words of Moses, but the words of Christ we will be judged.
10. John 12:48, *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.”*
11. God’s word is very clear, Christ came and fulfilled, completed the Law of Moses and took it out of the way replacing it with the Law of Christ which is our law for today.

III. Concepts of the Ten Commandments carried over into the Law of Christ.

A. The Ten Commandments contained some very serious things concerning right and wrong

in God's eyes.

1. Some very serious things concerning respect of God, Himself and respect of others.
2. Some very serious things concerning living a true good, moral life in the eyes of God.
3. What we find is that, while the old law has been taken out of the way, the basic concepts of the Ten Commandments have been included in the Law of Christ.

B. Concepts of the Ten Commandments included in the Law of Christ.

1. The first 2 of the Ten Commandments refer to honoring, worshipping God and God only, no idols.
 - a. Listen to Paul's instructions to both the church in Galatia and Corinth referring to sins of the flesh.
 - b. Galatians 5:20, *"idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger; disputes, dissensions, factions,*
 - c. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, *"Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God."*
 - d. Both of these passages refer to idolatry as a sin against God – no god but the one true God as in the first 2 of the Ten Commandments.
2. The Third commandment – not take God's name in vain.
 - a. While this command is not repeated in the N.T., we do have specific commands concerning how one talks, speaks.
 - b. Ephesians 4:29, *"Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear."*
 - c. Colossians 3:8, *"But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth."*
 - d. Colossians 4:6, *"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person."*
 - e. Considering what we just read here, would using God's name in vain, in a useless, worthless way not be "unwholesome" speech? Would that not be abusive, disrespectful speech?
 - f. I think the answer is very clear, using God's name in vain, in a useless, worthless way is just as much a sin under the Law of Christ as it was under the Law of Moses.
3. The 4th Commandment – remember the Sabbath to keep it holy – not repeated, suggested or even referred to in the N.T.
 - a. Many today refer to Sunday as the "Christian Sabbath".
 - b. Wrong! Sabbath refers specifically to the "seventh" day, also it was not a day of worship but a day of no work of any kind in any way.
 - c. Sunday is NOT the 7th day, it is the 1st day and it is a day we come together specifically to remember our Lord's death, burial and resurrection and to worship our God.

4. The 5th Commandment – Honor your father and your mother.
 - a. Specifically commanded under the Law of Christ.
 - b. Ephesians 6:1-3, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.*”
 - c. No question about this one, plainly stated.
5. Commands 6-10 deal with specific sins they were not to commit under the Law of Moses – murder, adultery, stealing, lying and coveting.
 - a. Are these covered under the Law of Christ? Absolutely and most are grouped together.
 - b. Romans 13:9, “*For this, “ YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “ YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.*”
 - c. And, we looked at 1 Cor. 6:9-10 earlier that contains most of this list and those who do these things will lose their souls for eternity.

C. Yes, the Ten Commandments are not in force today but, the concepts taught in them, presented in them are instilled in the Law of Christ which we are subject to today.

1. Nine of the Ten are in force as a part of the Law of Christ not as a part of the Ten Commandments of the Law of Moses.
2. The only one not repeated in any way is to honor the Sabbath day.

Conclusion

A. So, where does all this leave us today concerning our world and its concept of the Ten Commandments?

1. To be honest, I am torn in two different directions with all this.
2. On one hand, I am excited to actually see people who want to publicly post God’s word, people who are fighting to put God’s word in public places.
3. On the other hand, it breaks my heart to see their total misunderstanding of God’s word, to see them want the Ten Commandments posted because they actually believe they are in effect today.
4. The Ten Commandments may be a part of the Old Testament, the Old Law but, it is still a part of God’s Word and we are to learn from all of God’s word including the O.T.
5. Romans 15:4, “*For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*”

B. Brethren, could it be that the Lord is using this to give us an opportunity to reach out to these people?

1. Could it be an opportunity to communicate with them, appreciate their belief in God’s word and encourage them to study it deeper to learn to truth of what it says.

2. We can also use all of this to demonstrate to those around us that God does not change! He changed His law but He did not change.
 - a. What was morally wrong under the Law of Moses is still morally wrong today.
3. We must use whatever means we can to turn this horrible, sinful world back to God.
4. I do know that this will begin with each one of us doing all we can with what we have at the time.

Countering the claim that slavery in the Law of Moses reveals a moral injustice in God?

Marion R. Fox



Marion R. Fox was born August 20, 1943 in Sayre, OK, and graduated from Sweetwater High School. He continued his education at the Elk City School of Preaching (receiving a certificate), and Oklahoma Christian College (studying Greek). He has earned the following degrees: Associate of Science, Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and a Doctorate of Education. He and Cynthia were married in 1966 and they have three children and eight grandchildren.

All of Marion's local work has been in Oklahoma. He has preached over forty years and served the Barnes church of Christ for over thirty years, where he is now serving as an elder. He is the Director of "The Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies" and has served in this for eighteen years. He has had articles appear in the following papers: Gospel Standard, Firm Foundation, Contending for the Faith, One Heart, Gospel Preceptor, Hammer and Tongs, and Think. He has written the following books: A Study of the Biblical Flood, The Work of the Holy Spirit, Vol. I, The Work of the Holy Spirit, Vol. II, The Role of Women, Vol. I, The Role of Women, Vol. II, and The Great Commission. He has also written many outline books for OKCSBS, including: Fundamentals of the Faith, A Study of Angels, Satan, and Demons, and Logic and Debate, Biblical Hermeneutics, Homiletics, and Introduction to the Bible.

As a note of interest, Marion has engaged in six oral debates and two written debates.

Introduction

Skeptics claim that God allowing slavery under the Law of Moses proves that the God of the Bible is morally unjust. This brief article will consider this charge.

The false claim is made that God condoned slavery in the Old Testament. The problem with this claim is that it amounts to comparing apples and oranges. The analogy posited by these skeptics does not establish their claims. The definition of slavery (in most people's minds) does not conform to the practices of Israel (from the Old Testament).

The Word "Slave"

The word "slave" is only found in one verse (Jer. 2:14) and the word "slaves" is only found in one verse (Rev. 18:13) in the KJV. Neither Jer. 2:14 nor Rev. 18:13 constitute God condoning slavery.

Does God Condone Slavery?

The problem with this objection to the Bible is that these objectors are comparing the servant-hood of the Old Testament with slavery in the early United States. Even worse, some compare the slavery (as practiced by Moslems) to the servant-hood of the Old Testament.

Some claim it is inconsistent to have a God who demands that we love our neighbor (Lev. 19:18), but allows slavery. God allowed slavery (servant-hood) in the Old Testament (Exodus 21). We should note that the words: "slavery," "slave," etc. are not used in the various translations. When we study the Old Testament we see why the translators did not translate the Hebrew words as "slave" in the Old

Testament. It is a serious mistake to think of the slavery (servant-hood) in the Old Testament as being like the slavery that existed in the United States. Under the Law of Moses the master was not allowed to mistreat his servant.

God did not Allow a Slave (Servant) to be Abused

Note what Moses wrote:

Ex. 21:20 And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall surely be punished.

Ex. 21:26 And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, and destroy it; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. 27 And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.

Slaves (servants - under the Law of Moses) were essentially hired servants. Servants were treated as family members. Slaves (servants) were freed after serving for six years and were paid. Servants were allowed to have wives and children. If they had the wife prior to the slavery (servant-hood), they were allowed to keep her.

Ex. 21:2 If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. 3 If he come in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he be married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master give him a wife and she bear him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 But if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: 6 then his master shall bring him unto God, and shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever. 7 And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do. 8 If she please not her master, who hath espoused her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a foreign people he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. 9 And if he espouse her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. 10 If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. 11 And if he do not these three things unto her, then shall she go out for nothing, without money. (This [vs. 11] is essentially saying that she did not have to be redeemed to gain her freedom.)

Slaves (Servants) Were Given Wages

Deut. 14:12 If thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. 13 And when thou lettest him go free from thee, thou shalt not let him go empty: 14 thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor; and out of thy winepress; as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. 15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day. 16 And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go out from thee; because he loveth thee and thy house, because he is well with thee; 17 then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door; and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise. 18 It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou lettest him go free from thee; for to the double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee six years: and Jehovah thy God will bless thee in all that thou doest.

God decreed that they should be paid double pay: “double of the hire of a hireling hath he served thee six years.” What we see here is that the slave (better translated “servant”) was to be paid twice what a hired worker was paid.

Slaves (Servants) were not Allowed to Work on the Sabbath Day

Deut. 5:13-14 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; 14 but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou.

Forcing People into Slavery was a Capital Crime

Note that selling people into slavery brought the death penalty. Note also that selling people into slavery is said to be evil.

Deut. 24:7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and he deal with him as a slave, or sell him; then that thief shall die: so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee.

Slaves (Servants) had the Same Rights as Family Members

Ex. 12:43 And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: there shall no foreigner eat thereof; 44 but every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof.

Slavery (Servant-hood) Functioned as a Form of Benevolence

Lev. 25:39-55 And if thy brother be waxed poor with thee, and sell himself unto thee; thou shalt not make him to serve as a bond-servant. 40 As a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee; he shall serve with thee unto the year of jubilee: 41 then shall he go out from thee, he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. 42 For they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. 43 Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear thy God. 44 And as for thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, whom thou shalt have; of the nations that are round about you, of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. 45 Moreover of the children of the strangers that sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they have begotten in your land: and they shall be your possession. 46 And ye shall make them an inheritance for your children after you, to hold for a possession; of them shall ye take your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel ye shall not rule, one over another, with rigor.

Those who became servants, because of being destitute, were freed and returned to their property in the year of Jubilee. What was allowed under the Law of Moses is not even remotely related to what was practiced in the United States (prior to the War Between the States) and what is practiced by Muslims.

What About Slavery Under Islam?

Slavery under Islam is completely different than it was under the Law of Moses. Slavery under Islam is comparable to the worst form of slavery in the United States.

The Koran permits sex with slave girls (23:1-6, 70:29-30, etc).

Surah 23.1 YUSUF ALI: The believers must (eventually) win through,- 23.2 Those who humble themselves in their prayers; 23.3 Who avoid vain talk; 23.4 Who are active in deeds of charity; 23.5 Who abstain from sex, 23.6 Except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives)

whom their right hands possess,- for (in their case) they are free from blame,

Surah 70.29 YUSUF ALI: And those who guard their chastity, 70.30 Except with their wives and the (captives) whom their right hands possess,- for (then) they are not to be blamed,

The Law of Moses does not permit the raping of captive women and or slaves. Islam is quite different than the Law of Moses. Islam has no limits on the treatment of slaves, whereas the Law of Moses placed stringent limits on how slaves (servants) were to be treated. In fact, if a servant were mistreated (under the Law of Moses), he was to be freed.

SUMMARY

Note the following:

- (1) God required humane treatment of servants.
- (2) Servants were freed after six years.
- (3) Servants were paid for the six years of work (twice the wages of a hired servant).
- (4) Servants were treated as family.
- (5) Selling people into slavery was a capital crime (it brought the death penalty).
- (6) The Children of Israel were not to make slaves of their fellow Jews.
- (7) Fellow Jews were essentially made into hired servants.
- (8) It appears that these rules also applied to non-Jews.

There is no comparison between Islamic slavery and slavery (servant-hood) under the Law of Moses. In addition, there is no comparison between slavery in the United States (prior to The Civil War) and slavery (servant-hood) under the Law of Moses. The argument of the skeptic is specious.

Countering the claims that the God of the Bible is a moral monster that restricts human freedom?

Gary Rollins



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Gary started his preaching in 1967 and his first full-time work was in Lexington, OK. He is graduate of Oklahoma Christian University. He has done local preaching at the following places: Lexington, OK; Sallisaw, OK; Simsbury, CT; Plymouth, MI; Cushing and Hobart, OK.

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Abraham Lincoln said our nation was “conceived in liberty”. The Declaration of Independence states that “men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights: that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. The preamble of the Constitution of the United States declares that the purpose of the document includes securing “the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity”. President Lincoln closed his famous Gettysburg Address, delivered in the midst of civil war, calling on the nation to resolve “that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom”. Truly, freedom is the massive foundation stone upon which our great country has been built.

After two centuries of growth, however, we are sadly discovering that this cherished freedom is subject to great abuse. The original intent of our founding fathers has been misconstrued by many. Ever since our country won its independence, the trend of her people has been to move toward a desire for more and more freedom. It is good to seek freedom from the kind of tyranny from which our infant nation was able to break loose; but the freedom many Americans now claim is an immunity from all restraint, from any hardship, from discipline, from duty and self-sacrifice. Rampant throughout the land is the idea that freedom means the right to do or say as we please when or where we please. Look at our society now, the chaos. Every conceivable silly, subversive or lewd thing has sought justification under the slogan, “Well, it’s a free country, isn’t it?”

We have clamored for and largely gotten total freedom. Unhappily, it turns out that we are only free in the sense that a ship is free without compass or rudder. We are discovering that having flung off one restraint after another, we have not learned to restrain ourselves. Epictetus observed long ago, “No man is free who is not master of himself.” We have created a mind of thinking in our country that permits children to defy parents, students to challenge administrative authority, criminals to flaunt their rights in court and workers of all levels to do their jobs “in the way of eyeservice” and as “menpleasers.” There is something distorted about a freedom which leaves men free to be lazy, free to be undignified, and free to be selfish. Something is wrong when the primary attention of a free people is directed to what they may get instead of what they may give. We need to get our bearings again.

To begin with, every important truth that concerns humanity can be traced ultimately back to the Bible. It is in the pages of this great book that we find a definition of true freedom. One of the first things we learn from the Bible about freedom is that, for the most part it is freedom from, rather than freedom to! Jesus said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). There is probably no passage in the Bible relating to the subject of freedom that is quoted more often than this one, and probably no passage that has been more misapplied. It should be obvious from the context that

Jesus is not offering us freedom to act a certain way, but rather a freedom to escape a certain condition. The truth he speaks of is that men are in the shackles of sin (verse 34), and the freedom he promises is deliverance from sin (verse 36). To be free of the degrading and destructive power of sin is to be free indeed. As Paul said *“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject to a yoke of slavery.”* Galatians 5:1.

Does the Bible offer at the same time certain liberties or rights to those who have been liberated or set free? Yes, but they are all enjoyed in a new relationship with Christ and in Him. Paul said, *“But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification and the outcome, eternal life.”* Romans 6:22. The only free actions that are truly free are those done under law. Free action without law is chaos, and only generates a new, degrading bondage (Galatians 5:1). As one writer has put it, “No man can always do just as he chooses until he always chooses to do God’s will.” When one does, he is the Lord’s bondservant, but he is also “the Lord’s freeman” (1 Corinthians 7:22). Freedom in Christ demands service, but the end is life eternal.

We also learn from the Bible that freedom requires restraint at the personal level. Liberty or freedom is not to be equated with license. *“For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another”* Galatians 5:13. Or as Peter put it *“As free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness”* 1 Peter 2:16. We do not continue in sin that grace may abound (Romans 6:1). It is apparent that some conceive of liberty or freedom as being the individual’s right to do what he wants to do, when he wants to do, how he wants to do, and to whom he wants to do it. Such is a perverted concept of liberty or freedom. The reason freedom demands personal discipline or responsibility is because freedom is not really personal; it is social. It is always limited by the fact that we must live together. Real freedom is not only a negative freedom from, but also a dynamic freedom to! Freedom is an atmosphere highly prized because it gives us the privilege of serving others, and working with them to solve the problems of mankind.

Another consideration about freedom is that true freedom is in Christ, and it is in Christ that the problems of mankind find their only effective solution. Man’s problems basically stem from sin *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* Romans 3:23. *“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people”* Proverbs 14:34. Freedom from sin is found only in Christ. When one believes in Christ (John 3:16), repents of his sins (Acts 17:30, 31), confesses the belief of his heart (Romans 10:9, 10), he is then baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27). At this point, he has been delivered from the bondage of sin (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:17-18). When all has been said and done, the only hope there is for a free world, is for the world to be free in Christ. It was for this reason that Jesus instructed his disciples to go *“and make disciples of all the nations”* Matthew 28:19. This is the only hope for our nation, or any nation.

Also consider, liberty of freedom – whether political, individual or spiritual – is a precious possession. We all share in the sentiment expressed by the fiery Patrick Henry in Richmond years ago, “Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? I know not what course others may pursue, but as for me, give liberty or give me death.” We must understand that absolute freedom is not possible. If we are not servants of righteousness then we are servants of sin. But servants we are! Romans 6:16. Though we are free from the law of Moses (Galatians 2:4; 4:9, 21 – 31; 5:1; Romans 7: 1-4; 8:2), we are still under the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:20, 21). But, under the law we are! So, consequently, the question is not whether or not we are free; but, rather, whose servants will we be.

TRUTH AND FREEDOM ARE INSEPARABLE

Jesus said in John 8:32 *“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* He’s having a debate with some of the religious leaders of His day. He said, *“You shall know the truth”* That word “shall” could be translated “must.” You must know the truth if you’re to be free. In this verse to the end of the chapter, Jesus discusses two personalities. He discussed God on the one hand, who is

truth, and Satan on the other, who is a liar and the author of lies. He was pretty rough in some of the things He said. He turned to these religious leaders and said, *“You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do: he was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.”* In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 we are told a great delusion will sweep over the people that they will believe a lie and they will reject the truth.

Romans chapter 1 has been described as the darkest page in human history. Three times God turns them over. In verse 24, *“Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them.”* In verse 26, for this reason God gave them over to degrading passions, because they exchanged the natural function of the body for the unnatural. And in verse 28, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper. They had changed the truth of God into a lie. Many in America today are rejecting the truth of this Book. They are rejecting the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount as the basis for morality. They are changing it for a lie. They are saying that it’s all right if it’s meaningful. You can go any city of America and see that the moral dam has broken in the theater, literature, movies, television, in life period. We’ve exchanged the truth of God for a lie and the end is going to be judgement.

Not only do we exchange the truth of God for a lie, but Paul said in Romans 1:18, that they hold or suppress the truth in unrighteousness. In other words, you can know the truth and not live it. This is holding the truth of God in unrighteousness. The Bible says the wrath of God is against such people, and that’s why Christ was so bitter in His denunciation of the hypocrites. You hold the truth intellectually, but you don’t live it. God said, *“You serve me with your lips but your heart is far from me.”*

And then Paul said, *“...judgment according to truth...”* In Romans 2:2 *“but we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth...”* In other words, some day God is going to judge the world. Yes there’s a day of judgment coming. Just as certain as we are here this morning, a day of judgment is coming and God is going to judge us according to “The Truth.” Did we live by “The Truth”? Did we believe “The Truth”? Did we accept “The Truth”? Are we obeying “The Truth”? What is our attitude toward “The Truth”? Are we exchanging The Truth for a lie, or did we hold The Truth in unrighteousness? God will hold us accountable. Jesus said, “You must know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

THE TRUTH – PERIOD!

In the beginning - who - God - did what – created the heavens and the earth, Genesis 1:1. Death and the infirmities and miseries of this life are the consequences of that original sentence on Adam and Eve.

- The flood - Genesis 6
- Sodom & Gomorrah – Genesis 18:20
- Earthquake that swallowed up Korah and his followers – Numbers 16:30
- The plagues of Egypt – Exodus 6:6; 12:12
- Evil that came upon the oppressors of Israel – Ezekiel 25: 11; 28:22

These are just a small example and we’ll look at these in more detail later.

God has always existed as judge over His creation. But we need to understand how He judges, when He judges, and why He judges. Knowing how, when and why He judges helps us understand the kinds of judgment described in the Bible. When God determined to punish Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins, Abraham recognized that God is the judge of man’s actions (Genesis 18: 20-25). In this case, God passed judgment, issued a verdict and carried out the sentence. To say that God does not have the right to judge us is to also say that children can tell their parents that they no longer have the right to judge and punish their offspring for bad behavior, and if God does not have the right to set the rules then parents do not have the right to influence their children with their values or their idea of what is right

and what is wrong. As for the severe nature of God's judgment there are forces at work that can only be stopped by God.

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20). The evidence in nature (planets, plants, animals, humans, etc.) that points to a Creator is clear and consistent (Psalm 19:1). Ignoring it is indefensible, and only a fool continues to believe the non-existence of God (Psalm 14:1). The most important question which any human being can address is a two-fold one: (1) Does God exist? And (2) What is His will for man? This question is of paramount importance because, if He does exist, then being in right relationship with Him becomes a supreme obligation of every person, Every. If God does not exist, we are free to choose how we will live since neither beliefs nor actions have any significance. But if God does exist, every man and woman is amenable to Him and must seek His will to secure the promised eternal life. Equipping ourselves to fight the evils of atheism and agnosticism is not an impossible task. We have all the evidence we need to prove our case, to strengthen our faith, and to save misguided and lost souls.

FREEDOM AND MORALITY ARE INSEPARABLE

"Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; and they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight?' Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them." But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him and said, "Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. 'Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, insasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.'" Genesis 19: 4 – 8. The level of evil expressed here is beyond my ability to even imagine. The immoral elements within our society are taking their personal freedom to the extreme. They are pressing hard on the people of God to accept ungodly practices.

Examples of such efforts by the GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) are evident all around us. On August 4, 2010, an openly gay federal judge, "overturned California's gay-marriage ban." It is troubling that one federal judge with an acknowledged bias can overturn what a majority of California voters had determined against "the traditional understanding of marriage and responsible childbearing." Second Peter 2:6 says, *"And if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter."* What should we learn from two cities reduced to cinders and ashes because of their immorality? God did not tolerate an immoral lifestyle then nor will He now. Christians are being surrounded by immorality, and things could get much worse before it gets better (if it does). This does not set well for the future of a nation in the hands of a righteous and just God. Why should an immoral nation today expect their fate to be any better than that of Sodom and Gomorrah?

The flood and Noah. *"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."* Matthew 24: 37 – 39. *"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.'" "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. And the Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them. But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.'" Genesis 6: 3, 5-8.* For 120 years, Noah, a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) and a grandson of Methuselah (Genesis 5:25-29), issued warnings about an impending cataclysm as he constructed a

huge ark on dry land. It was a period of worldly unconcern, without any thinking of the impending catastrophe. The world had a sense of carnal security, yet man's unbelief changed no truth. A flood of immense proportions was coming. God said so; Noah preached it so. Exactly so shall be the second coming; warnings enough and more than enough, but ears deaf, hearts hardened, every sign being explained away 'naturally,' 'reasonably,' even 'scientifically' until the fatal day arrives. It is not the wickedness of immorality that Jesus stresses but this ungodly, guilty, and damnable blindness. The successors of Noah's day are with us now. The world is infested with multitudes wholly unconcerned about spiritual matters. Today our generation is going about the normal social, business and family matters, but who is paying attention to the story of Noah? These events were "*written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come*" (1 Corinthians 10:11). God has graciously recorded such events "*for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope*" (Romans 15:4). In Noah's day, the people were so worldly that God could no longer tolerate them. Using Noah, God evidently warned them for 120 years, but they did not listen. Jesus has warned us now for over 2,000 years. Who is listening? It has been estimated that 20 million died.

Let's look at some other examples of God exercising His moral judgment.

- Genesis 38:7 "*But Er, Judah's first-born, was evil in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord took his life.*"
- Genesis 38: 8 – 10 "*Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother. And Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so it came about that when he went to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed of the ground, in order not to give offspring to his brother. But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord; so He took his life also."*"
- The firstborn of Egypt; the last Plague; Exodus 12: 27 – 30 "*It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes. And the people bowed low and worshiped. Then the sons Israel went and did so; just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. Now it came about at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead."*"
- The Egyptian army – Exodus 14:23; 26 – 30 "*Then the Egyptians took up the pursuit, and all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen went in after them into the midst of the sea."* "*Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen.'* So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained. But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore."
- Nadab and Abihu – Leviticus 10: 1-3 "*Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord, and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, 'It is what the Lord spoke saying, By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'*" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent."
- An undisclosed number of Israelites who complained against God and those who complained about the food and wanting to go back to Egypt for an easier life. Numbers 11

- An undisclosed number of Israelites who wandered for 40 years. Numbers 14: 27-33.
- Ten of the twelve spies died by a plague. Numbers 14:36-37
- Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their respective families. They claimed to be as holy as Moses and Aaron. The earth opened up and swallowed them – burying them alive. Numbers 16: 27 – 32.
- 250 Israelites who were followers of Korah. They were burnt to death by fire from God. Numbers 16:35
- 14,700 Israelites who complained about the previous two incidents. Numbers 16: 41 -50
- An undisclosed number of Israelites who complained about the quality of bread. They were bitten to death by divinely summoned fiery serpents, although casting a bronze snake and looking upon it would have prevented them from dying. Numbers 21:4 – 9
- 24,000 Israelites because of sexual immorality with Moabite women and worshiping Baal. Numbers 25: 1 – 9
- 50,700 Israelites for looking into the Ark of the Covenant. 1 Samuel 6:19
- 185,000 soldiers at war with Israel. They were killed by the angel of the Lord while they slept. 2 Kings 19:35. This is also the equivalent of 9/11 every single day for two months.

These are just a few, a hem of the garment, of so many more examples. God ways and His thoughts are far above ours. Or we may be like Job; inn Job 40:1 – 8 *“Then the Lord said to Job, will the fault-finder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it. Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold, I am insignificant: what can I reply to Thee? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add no more. Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm, and said, Now gird up your loins like a man; I will ask you, and you instruct Me. Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified? Or do you have an arm like God, And can you thunder with a voice like His?”*

THE CHURCH OR KINGDOM WILL SURVIVE

Rome fell for multiple reasons, but one of the major causes was its emphasis on the practice of lavish entertainment and carnality. They took up cruel amusement. The Roman Empire unashamedly practiced and promoted fleshly and materialistic activities.

America must take warning about the strong emphasis on pleasure. It is apparent that this nation, as well as many nations, are “sports crazy.” Entertainment is the god of this country. But the kingdom of God is different. Christians should constantly thank the Lord for His divine body. Instead of being carnal and fleshly, it is spiritual and righteous. Paul makes us happy and hopeful about the church when he penned, “Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify one another” (Romans 14:19).

To enjoy the kingdom, one can hear, believe and obey the gospel as about 3,000 did on the day the church was established (Acts 2: 38 – 47). And, in spite of its enemies, the church survives. It will be on earth until the end of time. Amen!

Countering the claims that the Bible is full of errors in the fields of science, archaeology and history.

Bob Smee



Bob Smee was born in Buffalo WY on October 22, 1941. On January 1, he and Sharon were married January 1, 1993. They have four children: Brenda, Benita, Brandon, and Randall.

Bob started preaching in 1967 in McCune, KS. He attended the following schools: Denver CAS, Oklahoma Southwestern, Oklahoma Southeastern, York College, sunset Extension, Independence Junior College, SOTC.

He has done local work at the following places: McCune, KS; Independence, KS; Waurika, OK; Ardmore, OK; Meade, KS; Colby, KS; Powell, OK; Quartz Mountain Christian Camp; and Hobart, OK. While serving in these locations, he was also involved in gospel meetings and lectureship in the following places: York College, Geneva, NE; Columbus, KS; McCune, KS; Wichita, KS; Canon City, CO; Waurika, OK; Gordonville, TX; National Christian Camp Lectureships in Arkansas and Florida; Altus, OK; Liberal, KS; Wichita Falls, TX.

As a note of interest, Bob worked for eleven years in radio and T.V., and was Deputy Sheriff, Security Officer, coach in boxing and basketball in a Christian school (Basketball State Champs), Substitute teacher, and Director, Co-Director, and Teacher in over seventy Christian Camps.

I read a lot, a book a day, sometimes more. I am constantly amazed at how the overwhelming majority of today's writers accept the "hypothesis" of evolution as being a proven fact, and how they almost always assume that science has proven the foolishness of the "fables" in the Bible.

Take resurrection from the dead for example. Absolutely impossible, they say, but a few years ago, I, myself, died on an operating table. A doctor with the help of electric shock, after several failed efforts, "resurrected" me.

Wonderful, we say, what medical science can do! Yet, the same people who scoff that A Creator who made the very brain power that medical minds have, could do the same thing.

We are made from dirt. All scientists agree we are composed of the elements, minerals, etc. found in dirt and water. (Valued by various computations from \$.79 to \$37.00 worth of dirt.)

God took dirt, added water and made that dirt live. The dirt was organized into brain cells that can think, remember and reason. That same dirt was also organized into a heart muscle that in my lifetime, has pumped blood continually for the 74 years I've been alive. The cells that make up my nervous system which regulates all bodily functions also has the same dirt components as does my eyes which can see, my ears with their hearing functions, as does my ability to put thoughts into words, and say them, etc.

I think you get the point.

I look at the sun and question science has all the answers. There are uncounted billions of stars like our sun. In the Milky Way Galaxy, there are over 400 billion stars according to Garnish. A million planets the size of our earth could fit inside the sun if it were hollow. Our sun has a temperature of 5,5000 Celsius. It takes about 8 minutes for sunlight to reach earth. During the time it takes for that light to reach earth, the sun moves 5,000 miles forward in its orbit, hurtling through space at 44,000 miles per hour.



In one second, the sun can emit more atomic explosion energy than humans have used in the last 10,000 years. (Please take note of the following picture.)

Do the math. In 74 years, I have followed the sun through space over 71 billion, 306 million, 400 thousand miles, and I don't know where I've been or where I am going.

In all this time, the earth has been making a complete circuit on its axis one time per 24 hour day, which translates into the earth spinning at approximately 800 miles per hour. Therefore from where we are standing at this precise moment, we are traveling at 66,000 miles per hour around the sun. Our total speed at any given moment is approximately 110,000 miles per

hour...and we don't fall off. This phenomenon has been happening for thousands of years and it hasn't broken down. My plumbing breaks down. My fences break down. I break down, but God's universe hasn't ever broken down. Accident? No! I think not.

A great deal has been written about numerical differences in various accounts of how many men were in the army, number of casualties and so forth, but we must consider these various manuscripts were written on inferior paper, using fibrous ink and often by men of limited education, as well as being very old, sometimes centuries old. They did not have printing presses, copy machines, computers with word processor programs and spell checks. These things we take for granted to use continuously in today's everyday world and assume accuracy, but sometimes even then, we end up with typo's or jumps in content from computer to computer transfers.

ANCIENT NUMBER SYSTEMS								
AMERICAN	SUMERIAN	EARLY EGYPTIAN (HIEROGLYPHIC)	LATER EGYPTIAN (HIERATIC)	CANAANITE (and PHOENICIAN)	POST-EXILIC HEBREW	EARLY GREEK	LATER GREEK (IONIC)	ANCIENT ROMAN (LATIN)
1	𐎶 (or 𐎵)	I	I	/	א	Ι	Α	I
2	𐎶𐎶 (or 𐎵𐎵)	II	4	//	ב	ΙΙ	Β	II
3	𐎶𐎶𐎶 (or 𐎵𐎵𐎵)	III	𐎠	///	ג	ΙΙΙ	Γ	III
4	𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 (or 𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵)	IIII	𐎠𐎠	////	ד	ΙΙΙΙ	Δ	IIII (or IV)
5	𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 (or 𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵)	IIIII	𐎠𐎠𐎠	// III	ה	ΙΙΙΙΙ	Ε	V
6	𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 (or 𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵)	IIIII	𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠	/// III	ו	ΙΙΙΙΙΙ	Ζ	VI
7	𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 (or 𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵)	IIIII	2	/ III III	ז	ΙΙΙΙΙΙΙ	Ζ	VII
8	𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 (or 𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵)	IIIII	𐎠𐎠𐎠	// III III	ח	ΙΙΙΙΙΙΙ	Η	VIII
9	𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶 (or 𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵𐎵)	IIIII	𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠	/// III III	ט	ΙΙΙΙΙΙΙ	Θ	VIII (or IX)
10	𐎠 (or 𐎡)	𐎡	𐎡	↵	י	Δ	Ι	X
20	𐎠𐎠 (or 𐎡𐎡)	𐎡𐎡	𐎡𐎡	↶	כ	ΔΔ	Κ	XX
50			𐎡𐎠		ל		Ν	L
100		𐎡𐎡𐎡	𐎡𐎠𐎠		מ	Η	Ρ	C
200		𐎡𐎡𐎡𐎡			נ	ΗΗ	Σ	CC
1,000		𐎡𐎡𐎡𐎡𐎡	𐎡𐎠𐎠𐎠			Χ	Α	M

Most importantly, we need to think about the primitive number systems used, and especially the variety and crudeness of their systems. Look with me at the following picture .

Obviously a fly speck, faded inkspot, or stain sustained to an ancient manuscript during the years could, and probably did, dramatically change the appearance of the numbers. I really don't think one can attack the inspiration of scriptures on the basis of number variations—at least not without any other form of proof than saying it is not correct.

Let us take a brief look at science compared to the Bible:

⇒ Bible isn't a book of science, but it is scientifically correct.

⇒ Bible isn't a book of history, but it is historically correct.

The apostle Peter states in 2 Peter *“that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”*

As stated previously, the Bible is not a book of science or history. It was written to be a guide for our lives. It gives us both good and bad examples of what can happen, depending on the choices we make.

History is difficult.

History depends on humans to accurately present it after ascertaining their resources are true and if they have interpreted said resources correctly without prejudice or personal viewpoint interjections. Look at current newspaper and TV reports. Can you say they are stated fairly and without discrimination?

I have several books on “Old Hickory” or better known as Colonel Andrew Jackson. Some view him as a hero; some as a villain; some wrote he was completely evil; others presented him as an almost God-like person.

In the seven books I've read on “Billy the Kid,” the biographers didn't agree on his age, his correct name at birth, or even if he was right or left handed; and those men have lived in fairly recent history.

So while some think history is undisputed fact, much is obscure.

For instance, who was the first president of the United States of America? George Washington. Right? Nope, wrong. In 1774, the United States in congress assembled, and selected, under the Articles of Confederation, John Hanson as first President, followed by 6 other men including Richard Henry Lee and John Hancock. All these men had the title of President of the United States and came before George Washington, who was the first president under The United States Constitution

Next, let's take the witch burnings in Salem, Massachusetts. How many witches were burned? Zero. Actual statistics state 100 were accused, 13 women and seven men were hanged, but none were burned.

The Catholic Saint Patrick is said to be an Irishman. In actuality, he was born in Scotland to Scottish parents.

It is reported that the War of 1812 was over before the Battle of New Orleans, in both book and movie, but the war was not over until after Parliament ratified the treaty. They delayed a decision until after the battle was fought and a clear victory was apparent.

Science is questionable and constantly changing.

One supposedly proven theory I was taught in science class was that the amount of matter did not change. It was always the same, no difference what various form it was in, whether gas, solid, or liquid. The same principle was taught about energy. It was constant. It didn't change. It stayed the same. Then came Einstein who proved you could change matter to energy by splitting the atom...and scientific law

“changed.” Think about how many scientific proven theories have been disproved.

In my lifetime some of scientific health proofs that have changed:

Eggs bad for you.	They have Choline— (good for the heart)
Coffee—bad, bad, bad	Now, drink it
chocolate—no way	Eat dark chocolate

I was taught as an absolute that the atom was the smallest particle in the universe. Now we know better. Each atom is a little solar system with neutrons and protons and electrons flying around a nucleus, with space in between. We are currently being told if you remove all the space between particles, a 200 lb man would fit on the head of a pin. Science is not exact as some scientists would say. It changes and always has changed as we learn more about God’s creation.

Paul said in Hebrews 11:3 that things we see are made up of things we don’t see. Do you suppose he was talking about electrons, protons, and neutrons?

I also remember studying the solar system in school. We had to know the names of all the planets, make a chart in class from memory, take several tests before we could get a final grade. Now, there is some controversy over whether or not one of the planets is really a planet or just a moon to another planet. Recently, the newspapers ran an article that two new planets had been discovered. So, who was right? Science, then? Or science now?

Since I can remember, people who believe in evolution have always said, men evolved from monkeys. A recent Denver paper suggested that monkeys hadn’t progressed into man, but that man has evolutionized into monkeys. After all, monkeys have better eyesight than man. They have healthier habits than man. They have greater athletic abilities. They have better hearing and they definitely eat a more natural, organic diet. So if you believe in evolution, which belief do you follow?

Let’s take the Big Bang hypothesis. They say a rock turned into gas and exploded into billions of stars, the solar system and life as we know it. Everything came from that explosion, which was an accident. Question: Where did the rock come from? Or was it always there? I have a choice. I can believe in an intelligent, wise, eternal Creator or in an inanimate, brainless eternal rock.

There are eternal things. Eternity is something I believe. Everybody does. Take time as an example of eternal things. Think about it. The way we measure time is by the sun and by clocks. Time as we think about it can be measured from a starting point, but not time as a whole. If time started at a certain point, what about one minute before that?

Space is the same concept. You can talk about circles and figure 8 timelines, but it is still eternal.

Great fun and derision has been written about Jonah and the whale “myth.” Some say: 1. A whale is not big enough; 2. Stomach acids would kill a man; and 3. With no oxygen, a man would die...but wait! “God” (creator of all things) prepared a great fish, a fish for the purpose of swallowing Jonah. It could have been furnished with a ventilation system, a microwave, a refrigerator, air conditioning, and a CD player complete with discs.

This great fish was prepared for one purpose and as God determined, it could have been equipped with whatever it took to help Jonah survive his days in its belly.

People say Noah is only one of over 500 flood myths. The Aztecs had a legend about a global flood, with surprising similarities to the Bible account. The Toltecs told of a flood that destroyed the “first world”. Asian cultures have many stories about a boat with eight people on it. Quite possibly the most famous flood epic came from ancient Babylon mythology. It was written on eight tablets of clay dating back to the seventh century BC. The hero, Gilgamesh, was granted eternal life because he saved a great

boat load of animals and people.

It is my opinion that the many flood stories in so many cultures is a result of the fact that history has not always been in written form. It was passed along verbally to the next generation and as people will, changes entered into the narrative.

2 Peter 3:5-7 (NIV) reads,

5 But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

6 By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

Eighty-five per cent of earth's rock is sedimentary. It seems an adequate fact to prove that at one time water covered the earth and the settled sediment makes up most of the world as we know it.

One of the truly amazing facts about the Bible is the accuracy with which its predictions happen in historical accounts, accounted as coincidence to those who do not believe in God and His Word.

Let us take a glance at the prophecy concerning a man named Cyrus. The prophet Isaiah writing in approximately 738 BC said that King Cyrus would tell the city of Jerusalem that it should be built and that the Temple foundation would be laid (Isaiah 44:28).

Cyrus would not be born for more than a hundred years after this had been written. Not only that, but at the time of Isaiah's writing, Jerusalem was a fully functioning city and Solomon's Temple was still standing.

In approximately 586 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar overtook Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. The Persians conquered Jerusalem in about 539 BC. Shortly after that, a Persian King by the name of Cyrus gave a decree to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. This was approximately 160 years after God's prophecy through Isaiah.

The fulfillment of this pronouncement is incredible but there are hundreds of other Bible prophecies which predict future events.

In Ezekiel 26, forecasts regarding the evil city of Tyre is written:

1. Babylon King, Nebuchadnezzar, would be responsible for that city's destruction. (26:7)
2. Many nations would be brought against Tyre. (26:3)
3. The city itself would be scraped down to bare rock and the dust of the city would be scraped into the water (sea). (26:4,12)
4. Fishermen would spread their nets to dry there. (26:5)

Here is the Historical fulfillment of God's predictions against Tyre:

1. Nebuchadnezzar did destroy the old city of Tyre.
2. A succession of invaders beat against Tyre which extended over a prolonged time of history.
3. Alexander the Great scraped the old site of Tyre down to bedrock when he pushed it into the sea to make the causeway out to the island.
4. Visitors to the site have made written comments about the nets drying on the rocks.

The Septuagint (Latin Septuaginta) means seventy (70)—hence the familiar abbreviation in Roman Numerals of LXX) was the work of 70 (though some say 72) Jewish elders who translated the Old Testament from ancient Hebrew (already a dead language) into Greek in the years 284-247 B.C.

Take note: All three hundred plus prophecies about the coming Messiah were written and translated

into Greek 250 years before Christ was born and cannot be a faked prophecy.

PROPHECY: (More than 500 years before CHRIST)

12 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver.
Zech 11:12 (ASV)

FULFILLMENT:

15 and said, What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver.
Matt 26:15 (ASV)

3 Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,
Matt 27:3 (ASV)

PROPHECY: (More than 500 years before CHRIST)

13 And Jehovah said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; the goodly price that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver; and cast them unto the potter, in the house of Jehovah.
Zech 11:13 (ASV)

FULFILLMENT:

6 And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood. 7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.
Matt 27:6-7

PROPHECY: (More than 800 years before CHRIST)

16 For dogs have compassed me: A company of evil-doers have inclosed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.
Psalms 22:16 (ASV)

PROPHECY: (More than 500 years before CHRIST)

10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.
Zech 12:10 (ASV)

FULFILLMENT:

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.
John 20:25 (ASV)

PROPHECY: (More than 800 years before CHRIST)

18 They part my garments among them, And upon my vesture do they cast lots.
Psalms 22:18 (ASV)

FULFILLMENT:

23 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24 They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my garments among

them, And upon my vesture did they cast lots.

John 19:23-24 (ASV)

PROPHECY: (More than 800 years before CHRIST)

1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my groaning? Psalms 22:1 (ASV)

FULFILLMENT:

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matt 27:46 (ASV)

PROPHECY: (More than 500 years before CHRIST)

9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day. Amos 8:9 (ASV)

FULFILLMENT:

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. Matt 27:45 (ASV)

More interesting facts in the Bible:

Job 26:7- He stretches out the north over empty space

Job 26:7 – and hangs the earth on nothing

Heb 11:3 – Atoms? Neutrons? Electrons? (Popular science says 200 lb man with all the air released from his body can fit on the head of a pin.)

Job 38:12,14 – earth turning

Job 38:16 – springs in the sea

Ps 8:8 – paths in the sea – ocean currents

Job 38:35 – cell phones

Health mind and body – Prov 14:30/15:30/16:24/17:22

Gen 17:12- 8th day; immune system, and coagulation is at its peak

Lev 7:22-24 – no fat

Lev 13:46 – quarantine against sickness

Lev 15:13 – Running water (Civil War)

Lev 17:11 – Life is in the blood

Ps 19:6 – Circuit of sun

Job 38:22 – Value of snow

All the Bible facts aside, a little girl tells the story: “Eve made clothes in the Garden out of animal skins. I know because my Sunday school teacher told me so.” Truth to us is sometimes what someone “tells” us. So what do we conclude from that?

Countering what appears to be a moral contradiction, with Jephthah sacrificing his daughter in Judges 11 and God's rejection of human sacrifice?

Michael VonTungeln



MICHAEL VONTUNGELN, was born at Clark AFB, in the Philippine Islands on February 27, 1949. He and Connie married November 25, 1970 and they have two children: John and Amy.

Mike attended Panhandle State University, Pepperdine University, Hawaii Pacific University and received the following degrees: BS in Chemistry, MA in Education, and MS in Information Systems. Mike also attended at the Oklahoma School of Biblical Studies.

He was not a full time preacher, but he shared the pulpit in Kailua, HI, for about three and half years, from 1996 -2000. He is a member of the Ridgecrest church of Christ in Midwest City, OK, where he has served as an elder since October, 2001. Mike has preached in the following states: Hawaii, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Virginia. He has spoken on the Oklahoma City Lectures number of times.

Mike has been one of the instructors at the "Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies" He has also written articles appearing our Journal, "One Heart."

Mike has served this nation in the United States Marine Corps, from 1971 – 1991.

My topic for the lectureship is, "How do we explain what appears to be moral contradiction with Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter in Judges 11 and the rejection of human sacrifice?" Answering this question, I will address the following additional issues.

1. Did Jephthah really give her as a human sacrifice as animal sacrifices were given, or did he give her in service to God like Samuel was given?
2. Does the word "sacrifice: always mean putting to death as a sacrifice?
3. What about our bodies as living sacrifices in Romans 12:1?
4. What about our spiritual sacrifices referring to our worship in 1 Peter 2:5?
5. Compare the pagan religions and their human "sacrifices of human bodies" to God forbidding such in the Old Testament time.
6. Compare the pagan religions at the time of Christ and apostles their human bodies sacrifices with Christianity.

In order for this paper to have a logical flow, the questions will be discussed in an order different than that in which they are listed above.

First, let's quickly summarize the account of Jephthah as found in Judges 11. Jephthah was a mighty warrior, but since he was the son of a harlot his half-brothers, Gilead's other sons, had driven him away. When the Ammonites came to make war against Israel, Jephthah's brothers asked him to be their leader. They agreed that if the Lord give him victory over the Ammonites, he would be their leader. Jephthah tried to reason with the Ammonites by recounting Israel's history coming out of Egypt and explaining that the Lord had not allowed Israel to take any land belonging to either Ammon or to Moab. Jephthah offered them an interesting choice. In Judges 11:24 he asked them, "*Why don't you just possess whatever Chemosh, your god, gives you to possess. We will possess what the Lord gives us.*" Jephthah also

asked them why they had waited so long to try to recover what they thought was theirs. On his way to fight the Ammonites, Jephthah made a rash vow. In Judges 11:30-31, he said, *“If you will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.* Jephthah returned victorious and the first thing out of his house was his only child, a daughter. Some critics of God and of the Bible use the account of Jephthah to charge that God and the Bible are guilty of a moral contradiction.

COMPARE THE PAGAN RELIGIONS AND THEIR HUMAN “SACRIFICES OF HUMAN BODIES” TO GOD FORBIDDING SUCH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TIME.

Pagan gods worshiped by men, whether in Old Testament times or today are the products of man’s imagination. In the Garden, God spoke directly to Adam. God spoke directly to Jonah. When men were scattered around the earth after the flood, most men abandoned the true God and made gods for themselves. Think about the “The Telephone Game” that is often used as an icebreaker. The leader whispers a phrase or sentence to the first person who then whispers it to the next person who whispers it to the next person and so on until it gets to the last person. When the message gets to the last person it is compared to what was given to the first person. The results are usually pretty amusing. Now if we count the generations from Boaz (We know from the book of Ruth that he lived in the time of the Judges.) to Shem in the genealogy listed in Luke 3, we get twenty-one—assuming I counted correctly. By this time, men had perverted the knowledge of the true god until they were in the state described in Romans 1:18-25, *“ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,[19] because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.[20] For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,[21] because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.[22] Professing to be wise, they became fools,[23] and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. [24] Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,[25] who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”*

There were several pagan gods and goddesses worshiped by the people in the land of Canaan. We will briefly discuss Baal, Chemosh, Dagon, Moloch, Asherah, and Ashtoreth

“Baal . Baal the most significant male deity of the Canaanites and his consort Asherah were the most alluring deities confronting Israel in the promised land following the conquest. The numerous references to Baal in the Old Testament indicate his attractiveness and influence on the Israelites. The Book of Judges chronicles the numerous times the people fell to the temptation to worship Baal. During the time of Ahab and Jezebel Baal was declared the official national deity. A temple and hundreds of officiants were established for Baal’s worship in Samaria (1 Kings 16:29-34). A final chapter concerning Baal worship was written during the reigns of Jehu and Josiah, when the southern kingdom and its capital were purged of the worship of Baal (2 Kings 10; 23:1-30).

Baal’s name derives from the Semitic word ba’lu, meaning “lord.” He was assumed to fulfill several significant roles by the peoples who worshiped him. As god of the storm the roar of his voice in the heavens was the thunder of the sky. He was the god who both created and granted fertility. He was the deity slain by enemies who thus fell into the hands of Death. During the time that Baal was under the control of Death, the vegetation wilted or ceased and procreation stopped. He was the god of justice, feared by evildoers.

The Book of Kings recounts that Jezebel used the plan of the Baal temple in Sidon for the construc-

tion of a similar temple in Samaria. Ahab agreed with her to make Baal worship the royal religion of the northern kingdom (1 Kings 16:29-31). Baal, like Asherah, was also worshiped at high places.

The cult of Baal involved the offering of many animal sacrifices. Priests would officiate on behalf of the persons presenting sacrificial animals to the god. Some of the northern kingdom rulers even “made their sons pass through fire” offering their own sons as sacrifices to Baal. “Holy prostitutes” both male and female were available to worshipers, encouraging the fertility of both land and people.

Chemosh . Chemosh was the primary national god of the Moabites and Ammonites. The Moabites are called the “people of Chemosh” in the passage of Scripture that details the travels of the Israelites through Edom, Moab, and Ammon, (Numbers 21:21-32). During the reign of Solomon worship of Chemosh, along with that of other pagan gods, was established and promoted in the city of Jerusalem. Jeremiah specifically condemns the worship of Chemosh (chap. 38). The prophet focuses on the god’s impotence by showing him going into captivity with his priests and people.

Dagon . Dagon was the highly venerated national deity of the Philistines. Each city of the Philistine pentapolis had its temple for the worship of this god. The temple statuary portraying Dagon was characterized by an upper human torso, with the lower torso of a fish. The major cultic rite in Dagon’s worship was human sacrifice.

Molech . Molech or Moloch was another “abomination” of the Ammonites. Solomon also built a high place for this god in Jerusalem. The worship of this god was particularly odious, as it required human sacrifice

Asherah was one of the three chief consort-goddesses within the Canaanite pantheon, along with Astarte (or Ashtaroth) and Anath. These three goddesses were jealous rivals. In the mythology, Asherah is portrayed as the consort of both El and Baal. In the Ugaritic myths she clearly emerges as the consort of El, the chief high god of the west Semitic pantheon. The Canaanite myths associated El with the source of fresh water, located in the distant west or north. On this basis El’s consort was identified mainly as a sea-goddess. During the kingdom period of Israel’s history she was the goddess at the side of Baal. On some occasions, however, she comes across as a fierce opponent of Baal—particularly when she thought she would lose her authority or influence among other members of the pantheon or when Baal preferred Anath instead of Asherah as his sexual intimate. The conflict and enmity between Baal and Asherah provided an explanation for the alternating two-climate season each year in the Mediterranean region.

Ashtoreth . Ashtoreth was a popular goddess in several cultures. Her worship attracted the Israelites shortly after their settlement in Canaan. At the heart of this pagan religion was the worship of the fertility or fecundity “forces/features” that characterized the animate aspects of the created world. Ashtoreth’s popularity among the Phoenicians and other northwest Semitic peoples was long-standing.

COMPARE THE PAGAN RELIGIONS AT THE TIME OF CHRIST AND APOSTLES THEIR HUMAN BODIES SACRIFICES WITH CHRISTIANITY.

The pagan gods worshiped during the time of Christ and His Apostles were mainly Greek and Roman gods. The Greek and Roman gods were mostly the same entities with different names. We will discuss Artemis (Diana), Zeus, and Hermes.

“Artemis . Greek goddess (K. J. V. Diana) of fertility worshiped at Ephesus and elsewhere during the New Testament era. Her worship combined Greek, Roman, and Anatolian elements and dates back to ca. 1000 b.c. In Ephesus a temple was built in the third century b.c. to replace an earlier one that burned down and became known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. A well-known statue of Artemis emphasizes fertility. Paul’s preaching directly challenged her worship and precipitated a riot that only official interaction could quell (Acts 19:23-41). In the end the worship of Christ prevailed and the cult of Artemis disappeared from history.”²

“Zeus was the sky and thunder god in ancient Greek religion, who ruled as king of the gods of Mount Olympus. His name is cognate with the first element of his Roman equivalent Jupiter.

Zeus is the child of Cronus and Rhea, the youngest of his siblings to be born, though sometimes reckoned the eldest as the others required disgorging from Cronus’s stomach. In most traditions, he is married to Hera, by whom he is usually said to have fathered Ares, Hebe, and Hephaestus.[5] At the oracle of Dodona, his consort was said to be Dione, by whom the Iliad states that he fathered Aphrodite.[8] Zeus was also infamous for his erotic escapades. These resulted in many godly and heroic offspring, including Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Hermes, Persephone, Dionysus, Perseus, Heracles, Helen of Troy, Minos, and the Muses.[5]

He was respected as an allfather who was chief of the gods [9] and assigned the others to their roles:[10] “Even the gods who are not his natural children address him as Father, and all the gods rise in his presence.”[11][12] He was equated with many foreign weather gods, permitting Pausanias to observe “That Zeus is king in heaven is a saying common to all men”.[13] His symbols are the thunderbolt, eagle, bull, and oak. In addition to his Indo-European inheritance, the classical “cloud-gatherer” (Greek: Νεφεληγερέτα, Nephelēgereta)[14] also derives certain iconographic traits from the cultures of the Ancient Near East, such as the scepter. Zeus is frequently depicted by Greek artists in one of two poses: standing, striding forward with a thunderbolt leveled in his raised right hand, or seated in majesty.”

Hermes (/ˈhɜːrmiːz/; Greek: Ἑρμῆς) is an Olympian god in Greek religion and mythology, the son of Zeus and the Pleiad Maia, and the second youngest of the Olympian gods.

“Hermes is considered a god of transitions and boundaries. He is described as quick and cunning, moving freely between the worlds of the mortal and divine. He is also portrayed as an emissary and messenger of the gods;[1] an intercessor between mortals and the divine, and conductor of souls into the afterlife. He has been viewed as the protector and patron of herdsmen, thieves,[2] oratory and wit, literature and poetry, athletics and sports, invention and trade,[3] roads, boundaries and travelers.[4]

In some myths, he is a trickster and outwits other gods for his own satisfaction or for the sake of humankind. His attributes and symbols include the herma, the rooster, the tortoise, purse or pouch, winged sandals, and winged cap. His main symbol is the Greek kerykeion or Latin caduceus, which appears in a form of two snakes wrapped around a winged staff.[5]

In the Roman adaptation of the Greek pantheon (see interpretatio romana), Hermes is identified with the Roman god Mercury,[6] who, though inherited from the Etruscans, developed many similar characteristics such as being the patron of commerce.”

Christianity stands in stark contrast to pagan religions. While the pagan gods were capricious, and their worshipers were never really sure what they might have done to offend them, our God has set forth plainly in His word what we need to do to serve Him. In addition, He has given His own son to give His life to buy our salvation.

WHAT ABOUT OUR BODIES AS LIVING SACRIFICES IN ROMANS 12:1?

Romans 12:1 states, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*” I believe this is the type of sacrifice God has always desired. As Psalm 51:17 states, “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-- These, O God, You will not despise.*” In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus contrasted the rule-oriented, checklist mentality of the Jews with the religion of the heart that God desires. God wants us to present ourselves to Him as living sacrifices.

WHAT ABOUT OUR SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES REFERRING TO OUR WORSHIP IN 1 PETER 2:5?

1 Peter 2:5 states, “*you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*” The old testament priests offered animal sacrifices in a manner and at times designated by God in the Law of Moses. Under the New Testament, all Christians are priests. We offer spiritual sacrifices to God. The animal sacrifices offered under the Mosaic Law were a picture of the spiritual sacrifices we offer today. We offer our hearts and minds in praise and obedience to God, and we our bodies in service to God.

DOES THE WORD “SACRIFICE: ALWAYS MEAN PUTTING TO DEATH AS A SACRIFICE?

From our use of the English language, we can see that “sacrifice” does not always mean putting someone or something to death. For example we might sacrifice some of our daily pleasures to save for something we feel is necessary. The Hebrew word used in Judges 11:31 is קָלוּעַ. The Brown-Driver-Briggs definition is:

1. whole burnt offering
2. ascent, stairway, steps ²

There is considerable discussion in the following paragraphs as to whether or not this word is always used to refer to a burnt offering.

DID JEPHTHAH OFFER HIS DAUGHTER AS A BURNT OFFERING?

This brings us to the first question, did Jephthah offer his daughter as a burnt offering? Many prominent Bible scholars disagree on this issue. I will list the comments of several scholars and allow you to make your own choice. It is interesting to note that earlier scholars like Josephus and Albert Barnes believe that Jephthah did actually offer her as a burnt sacrifice while later scholars such as Adam Clarke, Keil & Delitzsch, James Burton Coffman and Stanley Morris believe that Jephthah devoted her to God as Hannah did with her son, Samuel.

Flavius Josephus: “But as he came back, he fell into a calamity no way correspondent to the great actions he had done; for it was his daughter that came to meet him; she was also an only child and a virgin: upon this Jephthah heavily lamented the greatness of his affliction and blamed his daughter for being so forward in meeting him, so he had vowed to sacrifice her to God. However this action that was to befall her was not ungrateful to her, since she should die upon occasion of her father’s victory, and the liberty of her fellow-citizens: she only desired her father to give her leave for two months to bewail her youth with her fellow-citizens; and then she agreed, that at the fore-mentioned time he might do with her according to his vow. Accordingly, when that time was over, he sacrificed his daughter as a burnt-offering such an oblation as was neither conformable to the law nor acceptable to God, not weighing with himself what opinion the hearers would have of such a practice.”³

Albert Barnes: The words of this verse (Judges 11:31) prove conclusively that Jephthah intended his vow to apply to human beings, not animals: for only one of his household could be expected to come forth from the door of his house to meet him. They also preclude any other meaning than that Jephthah contemplated a human sacrifice. This need not, however, surprise us, when we recollect his Syrian birth and long residence in a Syrian city, where such fierce rites were probably common. The Syrians and Phoenicians were conspicuous among the ancient pagan nations for human sacrifices, and the transfer, under such circumstances, to Yahweh of the rites with which the false gods were honored, is just what one might expect. The circumstance of the Spirit of the Lord coming on Jephthah Judges 11:29 is no difficulty; as it by no means follows that because the Spirit of God endued him with supernatural valor and energy for vanquishing the Ammonites, He therefore also endued him with spiritual knowledge and

wisdom. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, but that did not prevent his erring in the utter of the ephod Judges 8:27. Compare 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Galatians 2:11-14.4

Keil & Delitzsch: Even at that time human sacrifices were regarded by the Israelites as so revolting an abomination, that the two kings of Israel who besieged the king of the Moabites - not only the godly Jehoshaphat, but Jehoram the son of Ahab and Jezebel - withdrew at once and relinquished the continuance of the war, when the king of the Moabites, in the extremity of his distress, sacrificed his son as a burnt-offering upon the wall (2 Kings 3:26-27). With such an attitude as this on the part of the Israelites towards human sacrifices before the time of Ahaz and Manasseh, who introduced the worship of Moloch into Jerusalem, we cannot, without further evidence, impute to Jephthah the offering of a bloody human sacrifice, the more especially as it is inconceivable, with the diametrical opposition between the worship of Jehovah and the worship of Moloch, that God should have chosen a worshipper of Moloch to carry out His work, or a man who was capable of vowing and offering a human-being sacrifice. The men whom God chose as the recipients of His revelation of mercy and the executors of His will, and whom He endowed with His Spirit as judges and leaders of His people, were no doubt affected with infirmities, faults, and sins of many kinds, so that they could fall to a very great depth; but nowhere is it stated that the Spirit of God came upon a worshipper of Moloch and endowed him with His own power, that he might be the helper and saviour of Israel. We cannot therefore regard Jephthah as a servant of Moloch, especially when we consider that, in addition to what has already been said, the account of the actual fulfilment of his vow is apparently irreconcilable with the literal interpretation of the words וְהִיתָ לְעֶהָרָה הַלֹּוֹעַ, as signifying a bleeding burnt-offering. We cannot infer anything with certainty as to the mode of the sacrifice, from the grief which Jephthah felt and expressed when his only daughter came to meet him. For this is quite as intelligible, as even the supporters of the literal view of these words admit, on the supposition that Jephthah was compelled by his vow to dedicate his daughter to Jehovah in a lifelong virginity, as it would be if he had been obliged to put her to death and burn her upon the altar as a burnt-offering. But the entreaty of the daughter, that he would grant her two months' time, in order that she might lament her virginity upon the mountains with her friends, would have been marvelously out of keeping with the account that she was to be put to death as a sacrifice. To mourn one's virginity does not mean to mourn because one has to die a virgin, but because one has to live and remain a virgin. But even if we were to assume that mourning her virginity was equivalent to mourning on account of her youth (which is quite untenable, as מִלִּוְתָב is not synonymous with מִיָּרֵוֶנָּה), "it would be impossible to understand why this should take place upon the mountains. It would be altogether opposed to human nature, that a child who had so soon to die should make use of a temporary respite to forsake her father altogether. It would no doubt be a reasonable thing that she should ask permission to enjoy life for two months longer before she was put to death; but that she should only think of bewailing her virginity, when a sacrificial death was in prospect, which would rob her father of his only child, would be contrary to all the ordinary feelings of the human heart. Yet, inasmuch as the history lays special emphasis upon her bewailing her virginity, this must have stood in some peculiar relation to the nature of the vow. When a maiden bewails her virginity, the reason for this can only be that she will have to remain a bud that has not been allowed to unfold itself, prevented, too, not by death, but by life" (P. Cassel, p. 473). And this is confirmed by the expression, to bewail her virginity "upon the mountains." "If life had been in question, the same tears might have been shed at home. But her lamentations were devoted to her virginity, and such lamentations could not be uttered in the town, and in the presence of men. Modesty required the solitude of the mountains for these. The virtuous heart of the maiden does not open itself in the ears of all; but only in sacred silence does it pour out its lamentations of love" (P. Cassel, p. 476).

And so, again, the still further clause in the account of the fulfilment of the vow, "and she knew no man," is not in harmony with the assumption of a sacrificial death. This clause would add nothing to the description in that case, since it was already known that she was a virgin. The words only gain their proper sense if we connect them with the previous clause, he "did with her according to the vow which he had vowed," and understand them as describing what the daughter did in fulfilment of the vow. The father fulfilled his vow upon her, and she knew no man; i.e., he fulfilled the vow through the fact that she knew no man, but dedicated her life to the Lord, as a spiritual burnt-offering, in a lifelong chastity. It was this willingness of the daughter to sacrifice herself which the daughters of Israel went

every year to celebrate-namely, upon the mountains whither her friends had gone with her to lament her virginity, and which they commemorated there four days in the year. And the idea of a spiritual sacrifice is supported not only by the words, but also most decisively by the fact that the historian describes the fulfilment of the vow in the words “he did to her according to his vow,” in such a manner as to lead to the conclusion that he regarded the act itself as laudable and good. But a prophetic historian could never have approved of a human sacrifice; and it is evident that the author of the book of Judges does not conceal what was blameable even in the judges themselves, from his remarks concerning the conduct of Gideon (Judges 8:27), which was only a very small offence in comparison with the abomination of a human sacrifice. To this we have to add the difficulties connected with such an act. The words “*he did to her according to his vow*” presuppose undoubtedly that Jephthah offered his daughter as הלוניע to Jehovah. But burnt-offerings, that is to say bleeding burnt-offerings, in which the victim was slaughtered and burnt upon the altar, could only be offered upon the lawful altar at the tabernacle, or before the ark, through the medium of the Levitical priests, unless the sacrifice itself had been occasioned by some extraordinary manifestation of God; and that we cannot for a moment think of here. But is it credible that a priest or the priesthood should have consented to offer a sacrifice upon the altar of Jehovah which was denounced in the law as the greatest abomination of the heathen? This difficulty cannot be set aside by assuming that Jephthah put his daughter to death, and burned her upon some secret altar, without the assistance and mediation of a priest; for such an act would not have been described by the prophetic historian as a fulfilment of the vow that he would offer a burnt-offering to the Lord, simply because it would not have been a sacrifice offered to Jehovah at all, but a sacrifice slaughtered to Moloch.⁵

Adam Clarke: “From Judges 11:39; it appears evident that Jephthah’s daughter was not Sacrificed to God, but consecrated to him in a state of perpetual virginity; for the text says, She knew no man, for this was a statute in Israel. יהתו קח לארשיב vattehi chok beyishrael ; viz., that persons thus dedicated or consecrated to God, should live in a state of unchangeable celibacy. Thus this celebrated place is, without violence to any part of the text, or to any proper rule of construction, cleared of all difficulty, and caused to speak a language consistent with itself, and with the nature of God.”

Those who assert that Jephthah did sacrifice his daughter, attempt to justify the opinion from the barbarous usages of those times: but in answer to this it may be justly observed, that Jephthah was now under the influence of the Spirit of God, Judges 11:29; and that Spirit could not permit him to imbrue his hands in the blood of his own child; and especially under the pretense of offering a pleasing sacrifice to that God who is the Father of mankind, and the Fountain of love, mercy, and compassion.⁶

James Burton Coffman: “We are very aware of the dogmatic assertions of many commentators that Jephthah offered his daughter as a burnt-offering, but we simply cannot accept such assertions as truth. We shall not bother to cite that type of comments. Those who prefer that interpretation are welcome to seek out those comments for themselves. We shall be content with stating our reasons for the conviction that Jephthah’s fulfillment of this vow was not that of offering her up as a burnt-offering, but a dedication of her to the service of God in the tabernacle located in those days at Shiloh.

- (1) Jephthah was a man who had the Spirit of God, and that alone would never have allowed him to offer his daughter as a burnt-offering.
- (2) Jephthah was thoroughly familiar with the Book of the Law of Moses and the laws governing sacrifices. In that Law, the first-born, who were required to be “offered” to Jehovah, were never offered as a burnt-offering, but they were “redeemed” by the offering of a lamb instead. This applied even to the first-born of a donkey! It is simply inconceivable that Jephthah would have been ignorant of this principle, or that he would have failed to take advantage of it on behalf of his daughter.
- (3) “*It shall be Jehovah’s*” (Judges 11:31). “This should be understood in terms of what Hannah meant when she said of her unborn child, “*I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life* (1 Samuel 1:11). Hannah gave up Samuel for temple services under Eli the High Priest.

- (4) The Hebrew word for burnt-offering does not carry with it the idea of death, but of something offered completely unto God. Of course, this was carried out in animal sacrifice, but the word would also accurately describe a young woman giving herself completely to the Lord as a temple servant.
- (5) *"Let me alone for two months ... that I may bewail my virginity"* (Judges 11:37). This cannot mean, "Let me bewail my untimely death." It was her dedication to the tabernacle as a life-long servant, during which she would not be permitted to marry. That is what she bewailed, not her death. Those who want to affirm that she was offered as a burnt-offering will have to find it somewhere else; it is not in the text.
- (6) *"He did with her according to his vow"* (Judges 11:39). And what was that? The same verses tell us what it was:
"And she knew not a man." Does that mean that she became a burnt-offering? Certainly not. She was dedicated as a perpetual virgin servant of the tabernacle.
- (7) *"The daughters of Israel went yearly to celebrate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite"* (Judges 11:40). Where did those daughters of Israel go? To the tabernacle, of course. Why? That is where Jephthah's daughter was. If she had become a burnt-offering, the yearly celebration would not have involved any "going" at all.
- (8) We have already noted that Jephthah's name is listed in the roster of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, along with David and Samuel, and due to the fact of human sacrifice having been forever and always an abomination to the Lord, it is impossible to believe that Jephthah would have been so favorably mentioned in the N.T. if indeed he had offered up a human sacrifice in the person of his daughter. Such a thing simply cannot fit what is written.
- (9) Let it be supposed, for a moment, that Jephthah would have attempted to offer his daughter as a burnt-offering. No priest would have allowed it; the people of Israel would simply not have tolerated it.
- (10) There is not a word in this narrative that declares any "burnt-offering" to have been offered. Furthermore, if Jephthah had actually intended to offer up a human being as a burnt-offering, as a number of commentators affirm, can we believe that God would have allowed the victory to go to a man thus in open rebellion against what is everywhere revealed in the Bible as God's will?

This writer is fully convinced that Jephthah's loving daughter was dedicated to a life of service in the tabernacle and that that action was indeed the complete fulfillment of his vow.

The grief of Jephthah was not because his daughter would become a burnt-offering, but because ... as she was his only child, it was the end of his posterity upon the earth. In the thinking of the people of his day, this was more than enough to break his heart.

"I have opened my mouth unto Jehovah, and I cannot go back" (Judges 11:37). We dare not close this discussion without taking note of this magnificent line. The nobility of Jephthah is enshrined in this attitude. What a pity it is that countless alleged "Christians" today entertain no such thoughts of loyalty to promises made to God.

When one is baptized into Christ, that sacred ceremony is, in fact, a pledge of fidelity and loyalty to God, not for a few days, but for a lifetime, not merely for times of prosperity, but for times of suffering and hardship as well.

All of those who forsake their Christian duty, who deny the claims of holy religion, or backslide into the ways of carnal man are spiritual pigmies contrasted with Jephthah, one of the giants of faith."⁷

The last scholar I will cite is Dr. Stanley Morris. Many of you might not be familiar with Doctor Morris. When the Ridgecrest congregation was still meeting at Marshall and Douglas in Midwest City, Dr. Morris was an associate minister under Dr. Hugo McCord. Dr. Morris is the principal translator of the International English Bible. It is interesting to note that he enlisted the aid of one of the Ridgecrest

deacons, Gerald Hayes, to help him proof-read the International English Bible.

Stanley Morris: *“Since Jephthah was a man who had the Spirit of God within him (Judges 11:29), and Jephthah was thoroughly familiar with the Law of Moses, Jephthah knew that human sacrifice was wrong. (See Genesis 22:1; Lev. 18:21; 20:2; Deut 12:31. Compare 2 Kings 3:27; 16:3; 23:10; 2 Chr 28:3; Mid 6:6-8; Jer 19:5). The Torah stated that the firstborn were to be “redeemed”. We believe that Jephthah’s daughter was solemnly dedicated to God’s service at the tabernacle in Shiloh for the rest of her life. Compare the actions of Hannah in 1 Sam 1:11 with regard to young Samuel.”*⁸

Decide for yourself whether or not Jephthah offered his daughter as a burnt offering. The fact that Jephthah did or did not offer his daughter as a human sacrifice has no bearing on the accuracy of the Bible. If Jephthah indeed carried out a rash vow which violated God’s will, he would not have been the first Israelite to do so. Joshua 9 recounts how the the people of Gibeon deceived the people of Israel into making a covenant with them. God had commanded the Israelites to drive out all the nations from the land He was giving them. Joshua, however, because of the oath he had sworn, allowed the people of Gibeon to stay in the land. The fact that the Bible records sins and mistakes committed by men does not reflect on it’s accuracy or inspiration.

CONCLUSIONS

God neither approves nor accepts human sacrifice. The passages below are given to support this statement.

Deuteronomy 12:29-31 - “When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land,[30] take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, “How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’[31] You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

2 Kings 16:1-3 - In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign.[2] Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David had done.[3] But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel.

Jeremiah 19:3-5 - and say, “Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle. [4] “Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents[5] (they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind),

Finally, those who would argue against the truth of the Bible based on anything a human being, either in or out of the Bible, does are committing an error logic known as Non-Sequitur. In Latin this term translates to “doesn’t follow”. This refers to an argument in which the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises. In other words, a logical connection is implied where none exists.⁹

END NOTES

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Countering the claims of a few so-called contradictions.

Chris Hill



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He has preached in gospel meetings and lectureships at Oklahoma Christian University and the "Annual Oklahoma City Lecture" at the Barnes church of Christ. This is Chris' second time to speak on our lectureship.

Chris traveled to the Philippines in 2012 and 2013 to assist missionaries there with preaching and conducting auto repair seminars at the Mactan church of Christ and at Camp Arapal in Cebu.

People love to point out contradictions, and our world is full of them. An "oxymoron" is a figure of speech in which contradictory words are paired together, such as a small crowd, an exact estimate, original copies, only choice, crazy wisdom, deafening silence. Many of our sayings seem helpful until we learn there is just as good a saying that contradicts the first one we heard. Examples include:

You're never too old to learn, but you can't teach an old dog new tricks.

Don't judge a book by its cover, but clothes make the man.

Winners never quit, but quit while you're ahead.

Actions speak louder than words, but the pen is mightier than the sword.

The bigger, the better, but the best things come in small packages.

Seek and you shall find, but curiosity killed the cat.

The early bird gets the worm, but it is the second mouse that gets the cheese.

Practice makes perfect, but no one is perfect.

Contradictions are a part of our lives. We expect to see contradictions in advice we receive. We expect to see them in people's lives. Often our own lives are full of contradictions. But many so-called contradictions are really not contradictions at all.

We might ask people all around the world a very simple question, such as **"What color is the sun?"** We might expect everyone to answer the same way we would answer. The truth is that the answer varies widely. If I were to ask someone from Japan to tell us the color of the sun, he would likely answer "red." Japan is known as the "Land of the Rising Sun" and the



nation's flag has a large red disc in the center that represents the sun.¹

If I were to ask someone early in the morning to tell me the color of the sun, the person would likely say “yellow” because that is how it appears early in the morning in a clear blue sky. If I were to ask someone near sunset to describe the color of the sun, he would probably say “orange” because the sun is near the horizon and has to shine horizontally through hundreds of miles of the lowest, thickest layer of Earth's atmosphere.² If I were to ask an astronaut on the international space station the color of the sun, he would answer “white,” because at that perspective the sun's light is not filtered through the atmosphere. There can be different answers to the same simple question. I could make the case that since the answers seem contradictory, one or all of the people were mistaken when answering the question about the color of the sun. But we know better. There is no contradiction here at all. We know that each of these answers throws light on understanding the other answers that were given. The answers can help us understand the time of day the person saw the sun and his or her location at the time. The answer given to the color of the sun could even give us cultural clues as to the person's background.

When it comes to finding contradictions in the Bible, many people expect to find them because contradictions are found almost everywhere else. When people look at the Bible as merely a book written by people, just like themselves, they expect errors and contradictions. There are many who are quick to point out so-called “factual contradictions” in the Bible and some who will think they are true without examining the evidence. In addition, there are some very dishonest people in the world who want to discredit our belief in God with so-called “factual contradictions” from the Bible. Some enter college as “Bible believing Christians” and leave later as “enlightened sceptics” because they couldn't answer so-called “factual contradictions” presented by unbelieving students and professors. In a recent survey of 1000 young adults who had left the church, 44 percent of them said that they did not believe the accounts in the Bible were factual and true. When asked what made them answer this way, 15 percent answered that the Bible contradicts itself.³ “By far the most common source of allegations of contradiction occur from very intentional misrepresentations of Scripture.”

Faithful Christians should see the Bible as the very Word of God without error or contradiction. Some people have come to a belief that the Bible contains contradictions and inaccuracies; they use that belief as an excuse for not believing in Jesus as the Son of God and for not obeying the teachings of the Scriptures. Many such people have not actually read the Bible for themselves nor investigated any of



Figure 3. NASA astronaut Terry Virts captured this view of the sun over Earth on his last day in space as he prepared to leave the International Space Station on June 11, 2015. Credit: NASA

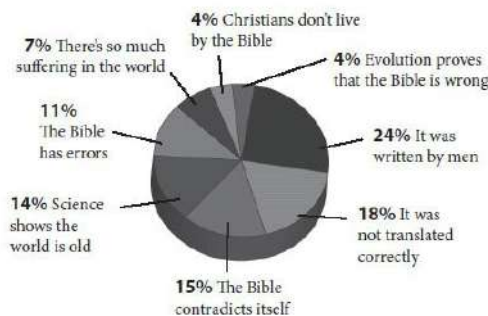


Figure 4. In a survey of 1000 young adults who had left the church, 44 percent of them said that they did not believe the accounts in the Bible were factual and true. This chart shows the reasons given for that response. Note that of this group, 15% believed the Bible contradicts itself. Credit: answersingenesis.org/is-the-bible-true/wasnt-the-bible-written-by-mere-men/

1 <http://japanflag.facts.co/japaneseflagof/japanflag.php>

2 <http://astrobob.areavoices.com/2012/08/26/what-color-is-the-sun/>

3 Ken Ham and Britt Beemer, *Already Gone* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2009), 107

these so-called “factual contradictions.”⁴

On the other hand, Christians look at the Bible from the belief that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God. Although the 66 books and letters of the Bible were written by around 40 different human authors in differing styles and languages over 1500 years, it is our belief that the Bible actually has only one author—God. There is a common theme running through all these books and letters without any contradictions. Theologian James Montgomery Boice writes: “If the Bible is truly from God, and if God is a God of truth (as He is), then . . . if two parts seem to be in opposition or in contradiction to each other, our interpretation of one or both of these parts must be in error.”⁵ In the Apostle Paul’s writing to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-16, he encourages Timothy to stick with what he knows is true about the entirety of God’s Word.

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

The Apostle Paul declares that “all Scripture” is God-breathed; that it had a supernatural source. Since God is the ultimate author of the Bible, and God is all-knowing, and “*God is not a God of confusion*”⁶ there can be no contradictions. Deuteronomy 32:4 reads, “*The Rock! His work is perfect...*” The Bible is one of God’s perfect works. Psalm 12:6 confirms that “*The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.*” Instead of assuming that there are factual contradictions in the Bible, let’s first see if one scripture, in fact, helps us to more clearly understand another. Let’s examine a few examples of so-called “factual contradictions” from the Bible:

The first so-called “contradiction” we will examine is found in John 1:18. “No one has ever seen God,” but Jesus was God in the flesh (John 1:14), and people did see him.

There are several Scriptures that seem to indicate people actually saw God. It seems that the Patriarch Jacob saw God. Genesis 32:30 reads, “*So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, ‘I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.’*” It also appears that Moses saw God on several occasions. Exodus 3:6 reads, “*Then he said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’ At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.*” Later, in Exodus 33:11, the Bible declares, “*The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.*” This is restated in Deuteronomy 34:10: “*Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.*” The Prophet Isaiah chronicles himself seeing God in Isaiah 6:1: “*In the year of King Uzziah’s death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.*”

Did these people really see God? “What these people saw was not the essence of God but a physical representation of Him. As spirit, God is invisible to humanity. No one can see Him directly.”⁷ In Colossians 1:15 Paul, in describing Jesus, also reveals a key characteristic of God: “*He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*” God, in His essence, is invisible—and cannot be seen with physical eyes, but He has taken a physical form on occasions to communicate with mankind. John 1:18 declares that “*No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*”

The Apostle Paul confirms John the Apostle’s writing in 1 Timothy 6:16. In writing of God, Paul

4 Stinnett, Chris. The 26th Annual Oklahoma City Lectureship, April 23-26 2015, God’s Word by Harmony, p. 55

5 James M. Boice, Foundations of the Christian Faith (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), p. 91.

6 1 Corinthians 14:33. All Scriptures are from the NASB unless otherwise stated.

7 Stewart, Don: Doesn’t the Bible Say People Actually Saw God?

declares by inspiration: “[God] who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.” People saw the holiness and the character of God in the person of Jesus. At other times, God appeared to certain people in a physical form. This form was not the essence of God but rather a physical representation of God for the benefit of those to whom He was speaking. Nobody has seen God or can see God for, by his nature, He is an invisible spirit. What appears to be a contradiction is actually not, but in fact, when the scriptures are looked at together, they give us clarity on the character and essence of God and His love for mankind.

The second so-called “contradiction” we will examine is found in James 1:13: “God cannot be tempted by evil,” but Jesus is God in the flesh; and Hebrews 4:15 declares that Jesus was tempted in all points as we are.

Let’s first study Hebrews 4:15, which states, “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.” When the author of Hebrews writes that Jesus was tempted, our thoughts go back to the temptation in the wilderness by Satan himself. But, the Hebrew writer emphasizes something even greater than just the temptations in the wilderness, where Jesus was tempted in every respect as we are. In Hebrews 2:17 we learn that Jesus was “made like” man. The writer of Hebrews makes a very practical application with this knowledge; God in the flesh, which is Jesus, was tempted in every respect as we are, but unlike us, he overcame every temptation.

Under the Old Testament, the Levitical high priest, offered sacrifices for his own sins and sins of the people. Jesus did not need to offer such sacrifices for his own sin because he lived without sinning.⁸ “Hebrews’ unique contribution to New Testament thought about Christ is most apparent in its view of Christ as the high priest.”⁹ In Hebrews 5:1-10 the author’s purpose is to state Jesus’ credentials for being our high priest. Christ’s priesthood is superior to the priesthood of Aaron. The author begins with the universal qualifications of every high priest. The high priest’s role is that of mediator between man and God. In order to be a mediator, he must be chosen among men. The mediator is to act on behalf of men in their relation to God. Only by being man can the high priest represent man. An essential qualification for Christ to become high priest was for him to become man. Hebrews 2:17-18 states, “Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.” Hebrews 5:9-10 explains the benefits of having Jesus as our high priest; “And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.” If Jesus had not become “man,” then he could not be our high priest; if he had not become our high priest, he would not be the source of our eternal salvation.

In Paul’s letter to the Philippians, he describes what lengths Jesus went through to be our savior. Paul writes in Philippians 2:6-8 “[Jesus] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” While on Earth in the flesh, Jesus was voluntarily in a subordinate position to the Father. Jesus humbled Himself and obediently accepted the role of a servant. The apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 2:21-25 about Jesus’ sinless life and the suffering He endured for our benefit.

“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in

⁸ Hebrews 7:26

⁹ Thompson, James, The Letter to the Hebrews, p.73

His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

Since Jesus was tempted to sin, but did not succumb to it, we have an example to follow. James, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declares in James 1:13, *“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.”* Temptation and falling to temptation is a universal struggle. Wouldn’t it be nice to explain away our failures to overcome temptation by blaming someone else? Some Jews blamed God for sin because they observed an evil tendency in man. Some argued that Satan put the tendency in man (“The devil made me do it.”); others said man alone was responsible. “But it was boldly reasoned by some that God created all things and so he must have created the evil in man. If true, this would make God responsible for mankind’s sin.”¹⁰ The word “temptation” here means “seduction to do evil.” God’s nature is such that he is not susceptible to evil or sin. Our God is holy.¹¹

The Bible’s portrayal of Jesus as God incarnate is not a contradiction. When the Word put on flesh, He was still by nature God,¹² though He willingly “humbled Himself” in order to become like mankind and face temptations. *“God made him who had no sin to be sin {Or <be a sin offering>} for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*¹³

The third so-called contradiction we will examine is found in Matthew 26:39 when Jesus prays in the garden; “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

Why is Jesus submitting to God’s will if Jesus’ and God’s wills are the same? Do God’s will and Jesus’ will contradict each other? Is this a contradiction in Scripture? No. Jesus, who said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father,”¹⁴ did not lose any of his divinity even while suffering the shame of torture and death on a cross. The very purpose of Christ’s coming into the world and taking on flesh was to make an atonement, through his death for mankind’s sin.

Jesus was fully human and fully God at the same time. The picture the gospel writers give us of Jesus is one of someone that is distinctly human. He became flesh.¹⁵ He suffered from hunger, and was tempted like we are.¹⁶ Jesus became fully human to be that perfect, sinless sacrifice for our collective sins. His prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane give us the full meaning of what he is about to do. And the Father’s answer, in turn, reveals that the world could be saved in no other way. In Matthew 26:39 Jesus prays, *“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”* In Matthew 26:42 we read that *“He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.’”*

The suffering that Christ was to go through would be very painful. The prophet Isaiah writes of the cup of the Lord’s anger in Isaiah 51:17, and the prophet Jeremiah writes of God’s wrath in this way in Jeremiah 25:15 as a *“cup of the wine of wrath from My hand.”* Besides the great physical suffering and death Jesus is facing, he will also bear the total cup of God’s wrath because of mankind’s sin. *“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘MY God, MY God, why have You forsaken ME?’”* This cry recorded in Matthew 27:46 is a fulfillment of Psalm 22:1, one of many parallels between that psalm and the events of the crucifixion.

10 Roberts, J.W. Letter to James p. 48

11 1 Peter 1:15

12 John 10:30

13 2 Corinthians 5:21 (New International Version, 1984).

14 John 14:9

15 John 1:14

16 Luke 4:1-13

Isaiah tells us that *“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.”*¹⁷ He redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.¹⁸ He was made a sin-offering, and He died in our place, on our account, that He might bring us near to God. It was the manifestation of God’s hatred of sin, which Jesus experienced in that hour. It was suffering endured by Him that was due to us, and suffering by which, and by which alone, we can be saved from eternal death.

In those awful moments, Jesus expressed His feelings of abandonment as God placed the sins of the world on Him. As Jesus felt that weight of sin, He experienced separation from God. It was at this time that what the Apostle Paul recorded 2 Corinthians 5:21 occurred, *“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* Jesus became sin for us, so He felt the loneliness and abandonment that sin always produces, except that in His case, it was not His sin – it was ours. The “cup” that Jesus would figuratively drink was paying the price for our sins.

Jesus’ death on the cross is an atoning sacrifice for sinners who could not pay their own debt. Hebrews 9:22 explains that *“without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”* Later in the chapter, the Hebrew writer remarks that Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.¹⁹ The prophet Isaiah prophesied about the purpose of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection in Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-12:

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.... But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

In 1 John 2:2, John describes that Christ’s sacrifice was for all of mankind; *“He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”* The cost was great, but so were the benefits. When Jesus prays in the garden, *“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will,”* He knows the great cost his flesh will bear and the anguish to come. He also knows that there is no other way for us to be saved. His Father’s divine will must come before his fleshly will. There is no contradiction here, only a wonderful description of Jesus’ love for us all and the enormous cost he paid to save us.

The fourth so-called “contradiction” we will examine is found in Matthew 27:5 in the description of the Apostle Judas’ death. Matthew records that “...he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.” Luke records in Acts 1:18 that Judas: “falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out.”

Could Judas have died more than one time? Could we be reading the account of two different people who died? Could this be an actual contradiction? No!--on all counts. Both statements can be entirely accurate without any contradictions at all.

¹⁷ Isaiah 53:4-5

¹⁸ Galatians 3:13

¹⁹ Hebrews 9:28

The description of Judas Iscariot's death has been one of the most popular so-called "contradictions" of the Bible. "It seems as if every skeptical book or web site that questions the integrity of the Bible lists Judas' death as one of the most obvious inconsistencies in Scripture."²⁰

These two verses do not contradict each other, but complement each other. It is not an either/or scenario. Yes, Judas "hanged himself," and sometime later, his body fell headfirst, causing his intestines to spill out of him. Eric Lyons describes the decomposition process and an actual case of its results when a dead whale accumulated more gases than its carcass could hold:

When a person or animal dies, the body begins to decompose. Bacteria soon begin to break down various tissues. As a result, gases are released within the body, which in turn cause it to swell. A few years ago, the news media reported how a 50-ton sperm whale had beached itself on the shores of Taiwan and died. While on its way to being transported through a Taiwanese city to a particular research center, the swollen whale literally exploded and soaked pedestrians and motorists in blood and entrails. According to one Taiwanese scientist, "Because of the natural decomposing process, a lot of gases accumulated, and when the pressure build-up was too great, the whale's belly exploded" ("Whale Explodes...", 2004). In light of such events, it certainly is not difficult to imagine that a dead human body, could have fallen from wherever it was hanging, and burst open when hitting the ground.²¹

There is no contradiction between the Scriptures. A contradiction occurs when one statement excludes the possibility of another. The Second Law of Logic, the Law of Non-Contradiction, says that something cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same sense. It is not a contradiction to describe something in a different way: Judas was hanged, and he fell down. Both are possible since neither disproves the possibility of the other being true. A contradiction occurs when one statement makes another statement impossible, but both are said to be true. So, what happened here is that Judas went out and hanged himself in a tree. Likely enough time passed for gasses to build up in his body. Later the rope or branch of the tree probably broke due to the bodyweight, and his body fell down, causing his intestines to spill on the ground. Matthew's account in Matthew 27:3-8 tells us specifically how Judas died--by hanging.



Figure 5 Taiwan Apple Daily via Reuters. Blood and guts litter this street in Tainan, Taiwan, after decomposing organs in the sperm whale in the background caused it to explode.

Luke's account in Acts 1:16-19 merely tells us that he fell headlong and his bowels gushed out. Luke does not tell us that this is the means of his death whereas Matthew specifies that Judas died by hanging. These two accounts of Judas' death cannot be considered contradictory since neither disprove the accuracy of the other statement.

According to tradition, Judas hanged himself above the Valley of Hinnom on the edge of a cliff. Eventually the rope snapped or was cut or untied, consequently causing his body to fall headfirst into the field below, as Luke describes in the book of Acts.²² Matthew does not deny that Judas fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out; and Luke does not deny that Judas hanged himself. Matthew records the method in which Judas attempted his death. Luke reports the end result. These two Scriptures do not conflict with each other, but rather provide greater detail of what took place.

²⁰ Lyons, Eric. "Did Judas Die Twice?"

²¹ Ibid.

²² Lyons, Eric. "Did Judas Die Twice?"

Conclusion

Contradictions are a part of our lives. We expect to see contradictions in advice we receive. We expect to see contradictions in people's lives. Often our own lives are full of contradictions, but many so-called contradictions are really not contradictions at all. The Bible is a holy book made up of sixty-six books written by approximately 40 authors over a span of fifteen hundred years. The Bible tells one basic story — a story that begins with the creation and ends with eternity. Every part of the Bible should be understood as a part of this one great story. The Bible declares itself to be inspired by God and archaeological, historical, scientific, and internal evidence demonstrates that claim to be absolutely true.

This is important for us to know because the Bible is our primary source for most of what we know about Jesus the Christ and our salvation through Him. James writes in James 1:21 that the Word of God should be accepted because it has the power to change our lives and save our souls. He writes, "...putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."

The most common source of claims of contradiction in the Bible occur from very deliberate misrepresentations of Scripture. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the church in Corinth encourages the church not to be swayed away from the gospel of Christ. He writes, "*Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you...*"²³ The world is full of contradictions, but there is not one factual contradiction in the Bible because God is the ultimate author of the Bible. The Bible is a book we can fully trust, so let's trust it to be our guide.

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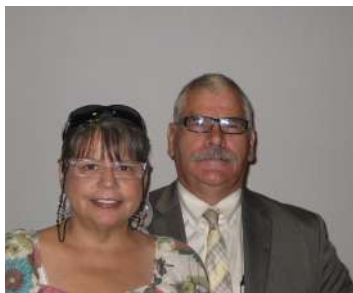
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Countering the claim that the church is full of hypocrites.

Jeff Hendrix



JEFF HENDRIX was born in Los Angeles, CA on May 7, 1961. Jeff enlisted in the Marine Corp in 1978. His family moved to Oklahoma in 1981. He and Gloria were married November 13, 1985 and they have one child, Farrah Shalah. The last 13 years, Jeff has worked for Oklahoma Freight Liner as a Master Journeyman Technician.

Jeff started preaching in 2002 and has done local work with Grand Boulevard church of Christ and has preached at the following congregations: Nicoma Park, Wellston, and the Barnes church. He has preached on the “Annual Oklahoma City Lectures” and this will be his second time to do so.

He has been attending the “Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies” for a number of years and is prepared to graduate at the end of this year.

Jeff has served in the United States Marine Corps.

1- *It is very true that hypocrisy is alive and well into days world, in the world today when one speaks of that of a hypocrite it is almost always associated with religion.*

2- *What is a hypocrite ?*

A- from where did the word originate?

B- **Vine’s Dictionary**, Defines hypocrite as to mean a ‘stage actor.’ It says, “It was a custom for Greek and Roman actors to speak in large masks with mechanical devices for augmenting the force of the voice,” as we just said. “Hence, the word became used metaphorically as a ‘dissembler...’

C- One of the archeological finds at the city of Corinth was a Greek theater. In the town of Ephesus, as archeologists did their diggings, they found, built into a hillside, a theater with the seating capacity of at least 24,000. Now here we are in the year 2016; if we have a location with a seating capacity of 24,000, that still would be significant today. But those years and years ago, they had an important part in their society, these theaters as a place and source of entertainment.

But in these theaters, without the benefit of the microphones and sound systems that we enjoy today, masks were used to help magnify the actors’ voices. It seems that these masks were built in such a fashion to work similar to that of a megaphone, that it would amplify the actor’s voice and help those who were in attendance to hear. Since the actors’ faces then were hidden or covered by these masks, one actor could actually play more than one role. That actor could come out, hold up a mask in front of his face and play a particular part and then could exit the stage, lay down that mask, pick up another mask and go out on stage and play another character.

2- *The first time we see the word used within the Bible is found*

a- Job 13:16

He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him -KJV

b- The new American standard reads:

“This also will be my salvation, For a godless man may not come before His presence.

In the Hebrew this word hypocrite refers to one who is hypocritical

a-godless

b-profane

c-hypocrite

d-irreligious

3- In Today’s one might say, “They are just putting on an act.”

a- In other words, a hypocrite is an actor.

b- People put on an act for a variety of reasons

- 1) Usually it is because their heart just is not into whatever they happen to be involved in
- 2) Some do this for the act of politeness
- 3) One might say to a new parent “Wow isn’t he or she cute!” while thinking “something completely different .”
- 4) The miser at a meal who says “Eat!”, but wishes you would curb your appetite - Proverbs 23:6-8

A- Solomon wrote this of one who has the disposition of hypocrisy

Pro 26:24 He who hates, disguises it with his lips, And lays up deceit within himself;

Pro 26:25 When he speaks kindly, do not believe him, For there are seven abominations in his heart;

Pro 26:26 Though his hatred is covered by deceit, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.

Pro 26:27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.

Pro 26:28 A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it And a flattering mouth works ruin.

1- Those who had such a dispositions were the Pharisees

a- Pharisees

- 1- separatists (Heb. persahin, from parash, “to separate”). They were probably the successors of the Assideans (i.e., the “pious”),
- 2- a party that originated in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes in revolt against his heathenizing policy.
- 3- The first mention of them is in a description by Josephus of the three sects or schools into which the Jews were divided (B.C. 145).
- 4- The other two sects were the Essenes and the Sadducees. In the time of our Lord they were the popular party (John 7:48).
- 5- The Pharisees were extremely accurate and minute in all matters appertaining to the law of Moses (Matt. 9:14; 23:15; Luke 11:39; 18:12). Paul, when brought before the council of Jerusalem, professed himself a Pharisee (Acts 23:6-8; 26:4, 5).

- 6- There was much that was sound in their creed, yet their system of religion was a form and nothing more.
- 7- Theirs was a very lax morality (Matt. 5:20; 15:4, 8; 23:3, 14, 23, 25; John 8:7). On the first notice of them in the New Testament (Matt. 3:7), they are ranked by our Lord with the Sadducees as a “generation of vipers.”
- 8- They were noted for their self-righteousness and their pride (Matt. 9:11; Luke 7:39; 18:11, 12).
- 9- They were frequently rebuked by our Lord (Matt. 12:39; 16:1-4).

From the very beginning of his ministry the Pharisees showed themselves bitter and persistent enemies of our Lord.

- a. They were among the more religiously conservative of that time
- b. Yet some of the harshest words Jesus ever spoke were directed toward them
- c. In just one speech, he called them...
 - 1) Hypocrites (seven times) - Mt 23:13-15,23,25,27,29
 - 2) Fools (twice) and blind guides (five times) - Mt 23:16-17,19, 24,26

B- In His scathing denunciation of the Pharisees, Jesus said, “But all of their works they do to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments...” (Matthew 23:5).

- 1- Our Lord spent the entire chapter of Matthew condemning the Pharisees for what they had done to the word of God and what they had done to the people
 - a- The Pharisees utilized phylacteries which were boxes with straps attached in which they placed Old Testament scriptures and strapped them to their heads like headbands.
 - b- This practice was derived from Deuteronomy 6:1-8
 - c- This kind of “phylactery religion” is alive and well and flourishing in our time.
 - 1) Instead of applying the law of God to their lives and practicing it from the heart, the Pharisees chose to make an outward display of their religion to receive men’s approval.
- 2- It has always been God’s will that devotion to Him must originate in the heart manifest itself in a changed life.
- 3- God is not served by slogans and cute sayings, but by faithful hearts who walk in the steps of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21).
- 4- 1Pe 2:21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:
- 5- True religion is not something one “gets” or “shows,”
- 6- but something practiced in one’s life
- 7- Jam 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, [and] to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

C- HYPOCRISY IN THE CHURCH

1- I do not for one minute believe that hypocrisy is an act that is only premeditated, but if one is not careful they can unintentionally find themselves in predicaments they thought they would never put themselves in.

A- Within the word of God we are repeatedly warned to beware where we trod as a child of God

2- The Hebrew writer warns of an unbelieving heart and what it leads to

a- *Heb 3:12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God*

b- The apostle Paul warns to take heed where we stand

c- *1Co 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

1- Just because we are a Christian does not mean we cannot fall

a- A good example of this is found in Galatians 2:11-21

II. PETER'S VISIT TO ANTIOCH

1. Peter played the hypocrite - Ga 2:11-13

a. We need to remember that it was Peter who first preached the word to the Jew and then to Gentile world (Acts chapters 2&10)

b. We see his excitement when recounting what happened when the word was preached to Cornelius and his family (Acts 11:15-18)

c. We need to remember who this apostle Peter is and what he has been referred to as Paul had just wrote of Peter as being a pillar in the church at Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9)

d. Yet if we get a full look at what is happening we see that Peter had no ill thought of what he was doing

1- He was eating a meal with the gentiles of the church vs. 12

2- We see that certain men came from James

a- Acts 15 tells of these that Paul writes about

b- These men had no authority (Acts 15:24)

c- It appears this sect of the Pharisees who had accepted the gospel, but were unwilling to give up the customs and ceremonies of Judaism.

d- Peter gives in to fear and this fear turns to hypocrisy

e- Is it possible that Peter knew his actions would cause other to stumble?

1- I believe what we see unfold in this particular event is how easy it is for us to be caught in the moment where we may say or do something that is so far from our character that when it is over and we have time to rethink on the event we then realize what has occurred

2- We must remember what Paul instructed the church at Ephesus

3- We must learn not to be deceived - Eph. 4:14-15

4- We cannot afford to be got up in those sins that cost us our eternity

III - ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

A- *We have many more examples of hypocrisy in the Bible, yet the same act perpetrated by those involved had a completely different objective and conclusion for the act of hypocrisy*

(Acts 4:34-15:11)

1- unlike Peter, Ananias and Sapphira had got caught in an act of deceit

B- *Our Lord spoke of deceit and He listed it with such acts as evil thoughts, murder, fornications...etc.*

1- Mar 7:20 *And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man.*

2- Mar 7:21 *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,*

3- Mar 7:22 *"thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.*

4- Mar 7:23 *"All these evil things come from within and defile a man."*

C- *The Apostle Paul called one who was full of deceit the "the son of the devil"*

(Acts 13:10)

1- In Paul's writing to the church in Rome he lists one with deceit among those who practiced such things as homosexuality

(Romans 1:18-32)

2- This act of sin (hypocrisy) which caused the death of this husband and wife could have been avoided if repentance had been made on their part.

3- Just like those who had obeyed the gospel on the day of Pentacost, those who had, gave to the brethren in need.

4- What is seen in (Acts 2:41-47)

a- Is those we have the ability to give, gave to those we had need in the church

b- The same action is seen by the congregation mentioned (Acts 4:32-5:11)

IV-THE SELLING OF PROPERTY

1- *We see one mention of selling land (Acts 4:36)*

a- we see what was done with the monies it was laid at the feet of the apostles (vs. 37)

b- In Acts 5 we are introduced to Ananias and Sapphira and they like Barabas sold some property (5:1)

c- (vs.2) Tells us that they held back a portion of what was intended to be given

d- Peter ask Ananias this question "why has satan filled your heart?"

2- John writes in 1st John

- a- 1 Jo 2:16 *For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.*
- b- Just like Peter it could be that Ananias and Sapphira got caught up in a moment, or could it be that they saw the gratefulness that was shown to Barnabas? It was this attention from others that they desired

1. We cannot afford to be deceived - Eph. 4:14-15

- a. we must be well-grounded in the truth so we can recognize falsehoods
- b. No actor is perfect. Eventually, their deeds show who they really are - Titus 1:16

2. We must avoid encouraging deception - 2 John 7-11

- a. we can't let the false teacher or others think we approve of his teachings.
- b. Remember the hypocrite who does things solely because they are polite?

3. We must live honestly with ourselves and others - Eph. 4:25

C. Remember God's words - Psalm 101:7

1. Are there hypocrites in the church?

- A. Of course there are! Where else would you find them?

2. If a wicked person wishes to pretend to be righteous, then of course he will attend services.

It is our duty to trust and obey.

Willard Cox



WILLARD COX was born in Florence, AL, August 10, 1929. He and Yvonne were married on December 21, 1951 and they have five children: Ronald, Donald, Gerald, Sharon (Smith), and Curtis.

Willard has preached over 60 years. More than any other speaker on our lectureship! He has preached in the following states: Alabama, Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and North Carolina. He has had meetings and spoke on lectureships in the following states: New Mexico, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Colorado, and Oklahoma. He retired from local preaching a few years ago. Willard also served the Barnes church of Christ from 1994 - 1999, sharing the peaching with Marion Fox for a number of years. While here he taught in the "Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies" while working with the Barnes church. He and Yvonne are dearly loved by the members of the Barnes church! He has written articles appearing in "House to House, Heart to Heart."

NOTE OF INTEREST: Willard taught 55 lessons on the Life of Christ, teaching nearly every week for 14 months.

(All scriptures are from the King James Version, unless otherwise stated)

Introduction:

Jeremiah 17:7: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord..."

Deuteronomy 27:10: "Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do His commandments which I command you this day."

Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

I. God is our Creator

A. Genesis 2:7: "The Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

1. Man has dominion over land animals and the fish of the sea and the fowls of the air, and all creeping things on the earth (1:26)
2. Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

B. God exists

1. Daniel 2:28: "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets."
2. God has revealed to man that He created man. Mankind did not evolve from a monkey or any other animal.

C. God is eternal. He has always existed.

1. Psalm 90:2: "...from everlasting to everlasting thou art God."

2. Isaiah 43:3,7: *“For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour....I have created him for my glory I have formed him: I have made him.”*
 - a) God wants people to know who He is: that He is our Creator, and God created us humans so we could give God glory, honor, praise for His goodness, creation, provisions, help, protection and salvation from sin.
 - b) Exodus 20:5: *“Thou shalt not bow down to them for the Lord thy God is a jealous God.”*
3. God is worthy of our praise, honor, gratitude, worship that we give to Him.
 - a) We must seek first: God’s righteousness, God’s kingdom (Matthew 6:33).
 - b) Isaiah 55:6: *“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.”*

II. Mankind, in general, forgets God

A. Ecclesiastes 12:1: “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh....”

1. Let God come into your life first, now and throughout your whole life.
2. 2 Timothy 3:15: *“And that from a child, thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*
3. God says in Jeremiah 2:32: *“Can a maid forget her ornaments or a bride, her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number.”*

B. It is our duty today to remember God, keep His words in our hearts, trust God, obey God, and give God the glory, which He deserves.

1. Revelation 4:11: *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”*
2. It is very sad that mankind has generally failed to glorify, honor, praise or worship God.

C. Isaiah tells us it is not God’s fault, but that it is man’s fault due to his sins.

1. Isaiah 59:1,2: *“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”*
2. Luke 10:27: Jesus taught: *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.”*

III. The Bible has much to say about sin

A. Adam and Eve ate fruit from the tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden, which God had told them not to eat. They disobeyed God, became guilty of sin, and God sent them out of the beautiful Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:2-7,23). They were the first to sin.

B. Cain killed his brother, Abel (Genesis 4:8) when Abel’s sacrifice was more excellent than Cain’s sacrifice, because Abel’s sacrifice was offered by faith (Hebrews 11:4).

C. As time passed, people forgot God and became more guilty of sin.

Genesis 6:5-6: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”

D. Noah, his job and family, sin, and the world-wide flood

1. Genesis 6:8 “But Noah found grace in the eyes of God.”
2. Genesis 7:1: “Then the Lord said unto Noah, ‘Come into the ark, you and all your household because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.’”
3. Genesis 6:9: “Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walk with God.”
4. Noah is in the tenth generation from Adam and Eve.
5. God told Noah to build an ark: the kind of wood to use, the size, structure, etc.
6. Noah’s family of eight, entered the ark.
7. Both clean and unclean animals entered the ark.
8. Rain came down. The fountains of the great deep were broken up. The ark floated with Noah’s family, animals, and food.
9. As the water covered the whole earth, Noah, his family, the animals, fowls and creeping things were safe in the ark, while all other people and animals died in the flood. (Genesis 7:20-24)
10. It is sad. Sin is to blame. Men will reap what he sows (Galatians 6:8). Only Noah’s family and the animals with him in the ark were saved (Genesis 7:23).
11. Man has the duty to trust God, and to obey what God teaches

E. Man’s idea of a city and the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9)

1. Later in time, some men started to build a city, and a tower that would reach to heaven, “lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” (v.4).
2. They wanted to be strong and big. They said, “Let us make a name for ourselves.” (v.4, NKJV). God then confounded man’s language that caused the people to stop their work on building a city and tower and it motivated them to scatter with groups who spoke the same language.
3. God wanted man to “be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth.” (Genesis 1:28; 9:1).

F. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:20-24,31,32)

1. God said, “their sin is very grievous” (Genesis 18:20).
2. Not even ten righteous people were found in them. God destroys these cities when He caused fire and brimstone to rain upon them (Genesis 19:24-29).

G. Another serious time of sins came soon after the death of King Solomon (1 Kings 11:41-43).

1. When Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, became king, he forsook the counsel of the old men,

and took the counsel of the young men and made the people's yoke harder and more grievous (1 Kings 12:1-15).

2. There were ten tribes that took Jeroboam as their king of Israel, the northern part of Canaan.
3. Two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, kept Rehoboam as their king in Judah, the southern part of Canaan, where Jerusalem was.
4. Jeroboam was afraid his people in the northern part of Canaan would return to Jerusalem, where the temple was located, to engage in worshipping God on their holy days, sacrificing to God, etc.
5. Jeroboam then decided to set up two calves of gold – one in Dan, at the extreme northern Israel, the northern kingdom, and one in Bethel in Israel, on the border of Judah nearer Jerusalem, in Judah, the southern kingdom (1 Kings 12:28-33).
6. Jeroboam told his people: *"It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."* (These words and actions did not give any glory to God.)
7. *"And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship the one even unto Dan."* (1 Kings 12:30).
 - a) Isn't it a shame? God helped Israel mightily to escape from Egypt, but, now (at that time) they gave the glory to dumb, man-made idols (golden calves).
 - b) God is our Creator, our Provider, and Helper, and His people disrespected God, and gave glory to idols! It's sad!
 - c) But God still loves us, is patient, and wants us to be saved from sin. We must do our part. It is our duty to trust God and obey Him.

H. A few more occasions of sin could be seen in more books of the Old Testament, and they are sad times, too. People fail to give God the glory for His goodness to us.

IV. God has done His part for man to be saved

A. It is a plan of love that God has for us.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

B. It is a plan of grace that God extended to us.

1. Titus 2:11: *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men..."*
2. 1 Peter 2:3: *"...the Lord is gracious."*

C. God's plan is a plan of forgiveness of man's sins.

1. It gives man the opportunity to turn from sin to obey God to be saved from his past sins.
2. Ephesians 1:4: *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."*
3. Romans 5:8: *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

4. Jesus was crucified, died, was “forsaken” by God for a little while (Mark 15:34).
5. 1 Timothy 1:15: *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...”*
6. Titus 2:11-14: *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*
 - a) Grace is that unmerited favor that God has provided for us all.
 - b) It is our duty to trust and obey God.

D. Jesus, our Savior

1. John 6:38: Jesus said, *“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.”*
2. Philippians 3:20,21: *“For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body....”*
3. 1 Peter 2:21,22: *“For even here unto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”*
4. Hebrews 4:15: *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”* (See also Matthew 4:1-10).
5. Jesus had no sin, and He was, therefore, qualified in God’s plan to die for the sins of human beings.
6. Romans 6:23: *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*
7. Hebrews 10:9,10: *“Then said he, Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”*
 - a) The crucifixion of Jesus for our sins, is done once for all. No more sacrificial deaths for sin are needed.
 - b) Jesus arose from the dead, and is now at the right hand of God with all authority to tell man what to do to be saved.

V. Now, what is man’s part in his salvation?

A. Man (every accountable person) must hear, study, learn by reading God’s Word, the Bible, and honestly accept it. Each individual must learn God’s plan of salvation.

B. Next, a person must believe God, have faith in God.

1. The one who wants to be saved from his sins must then put his/her faith in Jesus.

2. Romans 10:17: *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*
3. 2 Timothy 2:15,16: *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, but shun profane and vain babblings for they will increase unto more ungodliness."*
4. John 8:32: *"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."*
5. Hebrews 11:6: *"But without faith, it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

C. *Third, repent of your sins. Stop doing immoral things and start doing good, moral, and faithful obedience of God's Word.*

1. Luke 13:3: Jesus taught, *"I tell you, Nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."*
2. 2 Corinthians 7:10: *"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."*
3. Matthew 3:10: Jesus taught, *"Bring forth fruits therefore meet for repentance."*
4. Acts 17:30: *"The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."*
5. Acts 3:19: *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."*
6. Acts 26:20: *"...Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."*
7. It is our duty (the duty of mankind) to do as God tells us to do: trust God, have faith and confidence in God. Obey God, do what God tells us to do.

D. *Publicly confess your belief that Jesus is the Son of God.*

1. Matthew 10:32: *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."*
2. Romans 10:9,10: *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*
3. 1 John 4:15: *"Whosoever therefore shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."*
4. After Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, and they came to a certain water; he asked Philip: *"...what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."* (Acts 8: 35-37). Philip stopped the chariot, and they went down both into the water, and Philip baptized him."(v. 38).

E. *Baptism for forgiveness of sins*

1. Acts 2:38: *"...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

2. Galatians 3:27: *“For as many of you have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”*
3. Mark 16:16: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*
4. 1 Peter 3:21: *“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...”*
5. 1 Corinthians 12:13: *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”*
6. Acts 22:16: *“And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”*

Conclusion

Think about it.

God created man for His glory (Isaiah 43:7). God wanted His creation to honor Him, praise Him, appreciate and obey Him. God provides, helps, watches us, and He wants us to glorify Him for who He is, and what He does for us. But man, generally forgets God, fails to honor and to thank n disobeys God, sins against God.

But God still loves us, and sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to save us from His having to separate us from Him because of our sins, and failing to honor and glorify Him. Remember, it is our duty to trust God, put your faith in Him, give Him the glory by obeying His plan of salvation, and living a good, pure, faithful life in obedience so you and the rest of us will live with Him in heaven.” Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. (Revelation 2:10). It is our duty to trust and obey God, our Creator and Provider.

Prove all those living after the gospel was given to both the Hebrews and the Gentiles; therefore, all mankind have been amenable to the last will and testament of Christ.

Brian L. Berry



BRIAN BERRY was born November 11, 1962, in Hobart, OK. He has attended Oklahoma Christian University from which he graduated and Bear Valley Bible Institute, Denver, CO, from which he also graduated.

Brian and Susan were married December 20, 2014 and between them they have five children: Brandon, McKennah, Ethan, Micah, and Dylan.

He started preaching in 1991 and has done local work with the following congregations: Moore, OK; Paden, OK; Erick, OK; and is now working the Sycamore church of Christ in Cookeville, TN. He has preached in gospel meetings and lectureships with the Edmond church of Christ Vacation Bible School Adult Series Lectures; Bear Valley Institute Homecoming Lectures, Denver, CO; Edmond church of Christ; Prague, OK; Leedey, OK Summer Series; Erick, OK; Carnegie, OK Summer Youth Series; Mountain View, OK church growth Seminar. He has written articles appearing in the local newspaper in Sayre, Oklahoma Record.

This is Brian's first time to speak on our lectureship.

Introduction

On a dramatic day unmatched in the annals of history, fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ the Son of God from the grave of Joseph of Arimathea, Christianity burst onto the scene. Across the rugged terrain of the Roman empire it swept with staggering speed and precision. For this phenomenon there is absolutely no natural explanation; clearly the Christian era was orchestrated by the mighty hand of God on the great day of Pentecost.

Though possessing no official title, the sacred document known as the Book of Acts depicts precisely the phenomenal growth of this amazing movement from Jerusalem to Rome. Luke, moved by the Holy Spirit, but also no doubt one of the most talented historians to ever wield the pen, unfolds for the reader a thrilling adventure that finds no rival in human documents. Through the pages of this masterpiece, it's as if we are present to witness God's wonderful plan of redemption for mankind, which began in Genesis and crescendos to its zenith in this inspired treatise. It's the culmination of that plan in the gospel of Christ through the writings of the New Testament that will determine the destination of all mankind, for better or for worse, for heaven or for hell, for all eternity. Why? Because all, Christian or not, are accountable to Him.

Acts 17:30-31 – The Sacred Text

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30-31).

In his towering address to a band of heathen intellectuals atop Mars Hill, overlooking the marketplace of the ancient, once-great city of Athens, the inimitable apostle Paul passionately tried to persuade men with the truth of the gospel (Acts 17:22-31). His message: Acknowledge your Maker instead of worshiping myths. As he crescendos to a dramatic conclusion, it's very intriguing that He refers to Jesus for the first time (v. 31), though he doesn't refer to Him by name. In Luke's record of this account, what is emphasized about our wonderful Savior is not His incomparable love for man.

Nor is it His atoning death that is highlighted. There's no mention of His perfect example, His self-emptying mission, His sinless life, His humble service, or even His being the Savior. Rather, the point Paul accentuates regarding Jesus is that He will eventually "judge the world in righteousness," and the guarantee of that event is this undeniable, unchangeable, and indisputable fact: Jesus, Himself, was raised by God from the dead.

An Analysis Of Acts 17:30-31

Perhaps one of the most controversial issues among brethren today is that which arises concerning ignorance – that lack of knowledge or information. And nothing in the world is more deadly than sincere ignorance. In this passage, Paul refers to eras previous to this monumental first century discussion in Athens as not just ignorance, but "the times of ignorance." Thus, these previous eras in the history of God's plan to redeem man were characterized by a time when divine revelation was not complete. However, in God's perfect timing the arrival of Christ on the scene heralded a new and more responsible era for all mankind. Jehovah God had not "overlooked" man's sins in a sense that He ignored them; otherwise, there would have been no need for the Savior's divine mission. Rather, God patiently bore with those of these previous eras. There is an interesting and frenetic scene where this very fact is reiterated. While in Lystra, Paul and Barnabas healed a man who was lame. Because of this miracle, God's tandem had to brought to a halt the headlong rush of an adoring crowd by refusing to be worshipped as gods. They accomplished this by identifying with the crowd as being themselves just mere men and pleading with the crowd to turn to the true God and to take note: "*In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways;*" (Acts 14:16). God had refrained from administering the full penalty that sin justly deserved during those eras. However, with the arrival of Christianity, a new day had dawned. Something better was here. Something better was expected.

Ignorance Is No Excuse

There is an incident in In Luke 12:47-48 where Jesus makes a clear distinction in the punishment to be meted out to the man who sins against his knowledge, in contrast to the man who sins in ignorance. According to the text, the man who sins against his knowledge will "receive many lashes," while the man who sins through ignorance will receive, "but few." It is noteworthy that the man who sinned through ignorance was still accountable for his sins.

When Jesus willingly gave His life on that fatal day so many years ago in a darkness the world has not known since that day, He poured out His heart to the Father when He prayed, "*Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing*" (Luke 23:34). Peter acknowledged in Acts 3:17 that these very people crucified Jesus in ignorance. Thus, these same people who committed murder were commanded to "*repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...*" (Acts 2:38). Only when they met God's conditions for forgiveness were their sins forgiven as Jesus had petitioned.

It was very common for the Israelites of Paul's day to display the admirable characteristic of zeal-ousness. In Romans 10:1-3, however, we learn that this zeal was also characterized by a lethal ignorance of the righteousness of God, i.e., (the gospel; power unto salvation - Romans 1:16-17). Thus, instead of God's righteousness they established their own – in ignorance. Yet, even in this ignorance characterized by tremendous zeal they were still lost and in dire need of salvation. They too were given the solution that if they would just meet God's conditions of pardon they would be forgiven (Romans 10:9-10).

In his letter to the churches of Galatia, Paul gives an extensive listing of some of the works of the flesh: "...immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these..." and then

he states that *“those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God”* (Galatians 5:19-21). The law of God will never be changed by ignorance. The violation of the law of God will not go unpunished even in ignorance either (Hebrews 2:2).

In I John 1:5, the apostle of love, John, wrote, *“...God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”* Thus, whenever a child of God sins by walking in darkness, even in ignorance, it is still darkness – he is not in fellowship with God. However, a wonderful change of direction can happen. Here are God’s conditions: *“but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin; If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:7,9). John makes it plain and simple.

Not one passage in the Bible teaches that God forgives sins of ignorance unconditionally !

All People Must Repent

Repentance doesn’t mean anything if we keep practicing what we’re sorry for. When the Greek’s spoke of repentance they used a word, *metanoeo*, that literally meant “after thought” (bibletools.com). It carried with it the idea of thinking about a deed after committing it. Where sin is concerned, the idea would be a retrospection of the act, and a subsequent feeling of sorrow for having committed the sin.

Yet, repentance involves more than just a mere “sorrow” for the wrongful act. This is beyond dispute. It also entails a resolve to cease the wrongful action, and replace it with holy living. Renowned scholar, J.H. Thayer, commented that repentance is: “the change of mind of those who have begun to abhor their errors and misdeeds, and have determined to enter upon a better course of life, so that it embraces both a recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment, the tokens and effects of which are good deeds” (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1958, p. 406).

Thus for one’s past conduct repentance clearly entails more than mere remorse. On the great day of Pentecost, Peter pointedly charged the Jews in the crowd to “repent” (Acts 2:38). By his previous message, however, they had already been “pierced to the heart” (v. 37); thus “repent” obviously demanded more than mere regret, but required a change of life.

Sometime later the apostle Paul would write that *“godly sorrow leads to repentance”* (2 Corinthians 7:10). So since this “godly sorrow leads to repentance” then it must, therefore, be more than a mere act of grief. In reality it’s a reformed life.

All People Are Accountable To Christ

When we ask the eternal question, “Are all people accountable to the law of Christ ?” we need to be clear what is meant. By “all people” it includes Christians and non – Christians. By “accountable to” it includes “subject to,” or “under,” or “responsible to keep.” By “Christ’s law” it includes the New Testament or the New Covenant, or as Paul wrote that we are under the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21). The question and the answer are eternally important because either all people are accountable, only some people are accountable, or no people are accountable.

What is a covenant? In English the word usually means an “agreement” or “a written contract.” But what did the word mean specifically when it was used in the original Greek New Testament ?

When Paul and others wrote about God’s covenant with man, there were two Greek words from which to choose: *suntheke* (soon THAY kay) and *diatheke* (dee ah THAY kay). As you can see, both words are built on the same stem. The first word, *suntheke*, meant “something that is arranged jointly” (biblestudy.info). It was the word used when two equal parties formed an agreement. Both parties expected to get their fair share from the deal. The second word, *diatheke*, meant “something arranged

according to one's own wishes" (biblestudy.info). It was the word used when one party set the terms for disposing of property when giving it to another.

This second word, *diatheke*, was always the word used for making a legal will. The one who makes the will has complete authority over the disposition of any property, it can be given to whomever, and can also establish whatever terms desired. The one who makes the "arrangement" has total power; the one who receives the "arrangement" may accept it or reject it, but cannot alter it.

Luke 22 provides a perfect example of each word. The verb form of *suntheke* is used when Judas and the priests discussed how he might betray Jesus and they "agreed" to give him money (v. 5). They were delighted with this evil, Judas mutually consented, and an agreement was struck. Later in the chapter the verb form of *diatheke* appears, translated as the word "grant." To the apostles whom he had chosen, Jesus said, "*And just as My Father has granted me a kingdom, I grant you*" (v. 29).

One word, *suntheke*, is a reciprocal agreement: "Let's make a deal !" The other word, *diatheke*, is a one-way grant carrying with it this force: "This is the way it is—take it or leave it !" Every time God's covenant with man is mentioned in the New Testament it is *diatheke*. In His own authority the Father made the *diatheke* possible and set the terms.

The conclusion: In humble gratitude all people are required to submit and accept the law of Christ, because all people will be held accountable to it whether all people agree to accept it or not.

This is the reason for Jesus, when He was about to conclude His earthly ministry after His resurrection from the dead, saying, "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*" (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus confirms that there is no doubt that He has absolute authority not only in heaven, but also on earth. After undoubtedly establishing this fact, He then gives the "great commission" to His disciples. This commission is to encompass "all nations," "making disciples" by "baptizing them," and "teaching them to observe all" His commands. Not only does Jesus rightfully claim to have "all authority...in heaven and on earth," there is more. Regarding whether they will obey His rule and be saved or refuse His rule and be condemned, He wants all people to make a decision as to which path to follow. "*And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned'*" (Mark 16:15-16). He with all authority in heaven and on earth wishes to test His subjects and eternity in heaven or hell hangs in the balance.

Since He has all authority, He is the sovereign ruler through His covenant. It is undeniable that His covenant is found in His words. As plainly as He can He says, "*He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day*" (John 12:48). Here is a critical question: Would the righteous judge of all the earth expect the non-Christian to be accountable to laws to which allegedly they were not accountable to ? No. In fact, how is it possible to ever break a law to which one is not accountable ? It isn't possible. However, since all are going to be judged in this manner, then it follows that all are accountable to these laws. Where are these laws to be found ? They are only in one place: the New Testament, i.e., the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15-17), the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21).

There's A Great Day Coming
There's a great day coming,
A great day coming,
There's a great day coming by and by;
When the saints and the sinners shall be parted right and left,
Are you ready for that day to come ?
There's a bright day coming,

A bright day coming,
 There's a bright day coming by and by;
 But its brightness shall only come to them that love the Lord,
 Are you ready for that day to come ?
 There's a sad day coming,
 A sad day coming,
 There's a sad day coming by and by;
 When the sinner shall hear his doom, "Depart, I know ye not,"
 Are you ready for that day to come ?
 Are you ready ?
 Are you ready ?
 Are you ready for the judgment day ?
 Are you ready ?
 Are you ready ?
 For the judgment day ?
 (Will L. Thompson)

The words of a song never rang truer. "The deeds we do, the words we say, into the still air they seem to fleet, we count them ever past; but they shall last, in the dread judgment they and we shall meet" (John Keeble). The words of a quote never rang truer. Preachers of yesteryear were fond of calling judgment, "the great meeting all will attend." No one cancels; no one postpones the date; no one is exempt.

The event will not go unnoticed. It will be a day unlike any other. On judgment day the Lord shall descend from heaven "*with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God*" (I Thessalonians 4:16), and all the dead shall be raised first and all the living shall be changed (John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15:51-53). The wailing will be universal (Revelation 1:7; 6:16,17). All nations will be gathered before the great Judge of all (Matthew 25:32). No one will be exempt. As anxious mankind awaits Jesus will separate the sheep (righteous) from the goats (unrighteous). Jesus will separate the wheat (righteous) from the chaff (unrighteous). Let that sink in. The great Judge will welcome the righteous home, "...Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" and He will condemn the wicked to everlasting punishment, "*...Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;*" (Matthew 25:34,41). Judgment will be individual and according to each individual's works (II Corinthians 5:10). We will stand alone. Judgment will be complete, including: our thoughts and our words (Matthew 12:36,37). Nothing we have done, good or evil, will escape that day. There will be no more secrets. There will be no more skeletons in the closet. All will be laid bare as we stand there before the great Judge (Revelation 20:12-14). Judgment will be final (Matthew 25:41-46). There will be no procrastination on that day. There will be absolutely no second chances. Today is our second chance. Today is our day of salvation. When He returns we are where we are, in whatever condition He see us, forever. Forever ! Do we understand this ? I can hardly write this without being moved - without realizing how heavy this is. Unless He is my Savior (John 3:16)

Will there be surprises at judgment ? With all the theories today surrounding judgment and the second coming of Christ, there is no doubt there will be surprises. Many will be surprised to find that judgment actually is real. It is not some kind of mystical dream that preachers have conjured up from nowhere. Today we may have a hard time realizing the reality of judgment. We can get "caught up." We live confidently that since we have the present we will have tomorrow. We may and we may not, but to feel that since today is here tomorrow will be also could be a lethal mistake. In judgment there will be no mistake about reality and certainty. Since the days of old some of mankind has mocked God's word. It's been that way and it will always be. Many will mock as they did in Noah's day. "*Know this*

first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming ? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation" (II Peter 3:3). However, all the mocking will come to an abrupt halt then and it will come to an abrupt halt on the judgment day. These same folks did not stop the flood and will not stop the judgment. Imagine how they must have felt as the rains came down, and the flood water rose, and they must have gasped for their very last breath with a blood-curdling scream "Let us in ! Let us in !" one last time before drowning in the waters of the flood. I wonder if they at last realized that judgment was real ? It was real then and it will be real again.

Many are going to be shocked. Even though in the days of Noah, the warning was being heralded about the judgment to come, the masses turned a deaf ear. It's no different today. Mockers hear the passionate pleas of being prepared for judgment and they reason within themselves, "I was here yesterday, I will be here tomorrow. What's the big deal ?" It can be eternally tragic to develop this false sense of security. God, although He may appear to be long in executing His judgment, will never impose on His grace. What's taking Him so long ? The reason He waits is so that all may have the opportunity to come to repentance and avoid the awfulness of disobedience. Hear Him: *"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9). People worry about when He will return. Men have guessed and men have missed and it will always be this way (Matthew 24:36). If we know He is coming, when makes no difference. Judgment will be sudden to people who have not been watching. Judgment will be sudden to people who are not ready. It's not so with the child of God. The child of God is always preparing for the coming judgment – waiting, watching when the Lord shall come.

Many people are going to be surprised by the purpose of judgment. Judgment will not be a trial. Judgment will be the day of sentencing or the day of the vindication of God's justice. Judgment will be a day of separating forever the righteous and unrighteous (Matthew 25:32). On judgment day all people will come face to face with personal responsibility - it will be myself and the Judge. The elders, the preacher, parents, spouses, best friends – no one will be able to help us. We will face an Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient one and only true and living God. We will face Him with terror if we have not been pleasing to Him. He will be our Judge and not our Savior. On that day *"ever knee will bow"* before Him and *"every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father"* (Philippians 2:9,10). God's verdict will be right (Genesis 18:25). His justice will be vindicated. Think about this: we are making the decision for the Judge each day that we live. Judgment day will be a day of indescribable terror for some and a day of indescribable blessing for others (II Thessalonians 1:6-9). The dividing line will be obedience or disobedience. If it is to be it is up to me. If we love Him we will follow Him (John 14:15).

Judgment day will reveal a shocking standard to many. All the man-made religious creeds or traditions of this life, all of man's own personal thoughts or feelings that violate God's word will have no power to save. Honesty is great, sincerity is wonderful, and moral excellence is to be admired, but this will not be the standard on that day. The standard will be God's Word. *"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day"* (John 12:48). We might argue with God's Word today, but there will be no arguing on that day. The voice of the Judge will thunder loud and clear. There will be no mistaking His message. His Word is flawless.

The most surprised group of all will be those bound by false religion. On that day the "church of your choice" will be no choice. A "better felt than told" religion will have no feeling on that day. There will be no such thing as "one doctrine is as good as another." "We're all going to heaven just a different route" will be exposed. All those who were sporadic participants in religion will be in mandatory attendance on that day. There will be no vacations or sick leave from judgment. All pretend, "fake it 'til you make it," Christians will be surprised that it really does matter how we live. The practice of

such sins as pride, drugs, alcohol, gambling, lust, misplaced priorities, idolatry, jealousy, uncontrolled anger, sexual immorality, adulterous marriages, sins of the tongue and so many others will all make a difference. All who have taught biblical error and given false hope to others will realize truth does matter. Truth is the only thing that will set us free from false teaching, from the devil's ownership, and from hell itself (John 8:31-32). How tragic to pretend to "know" Him all of our lives only to hear Jesus emphatically declare, *"Depart from Me, I never knew you"* (Matthew 7:21-23). How tragic to be thoroughly convinced that I am right with God only to come to judgment and suddenly realize it was all a lie. And to find out it's too late (Matthew 15:13). John Greenleaf Whittier once quipped, "Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, 'It might have been.'"

Because He Lives

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. They were saying to one another, *"Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"* Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, *"Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here;"* (Mark 16:1-6).

Conclusion

These unbelieving Athenians needed to feel the undeniable pressure of the concept of coming judgment weighing on their minds, and Paul wanted them to feel this discomfort. None of us have a permanent home here. There's a day that's drawing near when this darkness fades to light, and the shadows disappear, and our faith shall be our eyes. Steeped in sin, they had no right to ease, comfort, happiness or a clear conscience. What they needed was the threat of hell and the painful knowledge they were rapidly headed there without repentance. There was then and is now no other alternative, but to repent or be condemned forever. It's either heaven or hell.

Paul knew those outside of Christ are not merely disadvantaged; they are condemned. It is no different today. Given human nature and the serious nature of sin, the message of salvation is most effectively delivered in a deep-down, gut-level honest, soul-penetrating way, provoking a humble and immediate response. As J. W. McGarvey so appropriately wrote in his 1892 Commentary on Acts (p. 129): "The soul-stirring fact that God has 'appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness,' is a powerful motive to repentance, because a judgment in righteousness must inevitably involve the condemnation of all the unrighteous; and Paul's hearers could now see the unrighteousness of their idolatry. In thus presenting the final judgment as the first and foremost motive to bring men to repentance, Paul was but following the example of Jesus, and proceeding according to the demands of human nature. The terrors of that great day, and of the awful fate awaiting those who shall then be condemned, constitute the heavy artillery of the gospel, by which the fortification that sin has constructed about the hearts of wicked men must be battered down, ere the tenderer motives of the gospel can be brought to bear. The wicked man must be made afraid to continue in sin, before the goodness of God can lead him to repentance; and the preacher of the gospel who neglects to employ the thunders of this heavenly artillery not only fails to preach according to the divine model, but he will preach a feeble gospel that can never work deep seated repentance."

What about us? In view of the reality of all that will happen on judgment day will, we be condemned? Will we be celebrating? The most marvelous aspect of God's love is He has warned all people about this coming day. And we have all the built in advantages to get to heaven. We can realize judgment is real, judgment is sure, we can be watchful for it, and we can know His will. He has given us His standard solely because He wants us to come be with Him forever, but if we choose of our own

free will not to, death and destruction eternally is ours. Someone might say or think, “When you talk about judgment it just scares me to death.” I’m sorry it does, it ought to thrill us, because if we are right with Him, He comes back and we go home. There is nothing to fear because, “*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear*” (I John 4:18).

Some glad morning we shall see, Jesus in the air
Coming after you and me, joy is ours to share
What rejoicing there will be, when the saints shall rise
Headed for that jubilee, yonder in the skies
Oh what singing, oh what shouting
On that happy morning when we all shall rise
Oh what glory, Hallelujah
When we meet our blessed Savior in the skies

God has so willingly given all people His amazing grace in His Son Jesus. Why ? So that we can avoid the awfulness of judgment and enjoy all the rich bounties of heaven. He has done all He can do to help us. He does not want a single one of us to perish in judgment (I Timothy 2:3,4). How bad do we want heaven ? This and this only will determine what will happen at that “great meeting that all will attend”. Amen ! ~Brian L. Berry~