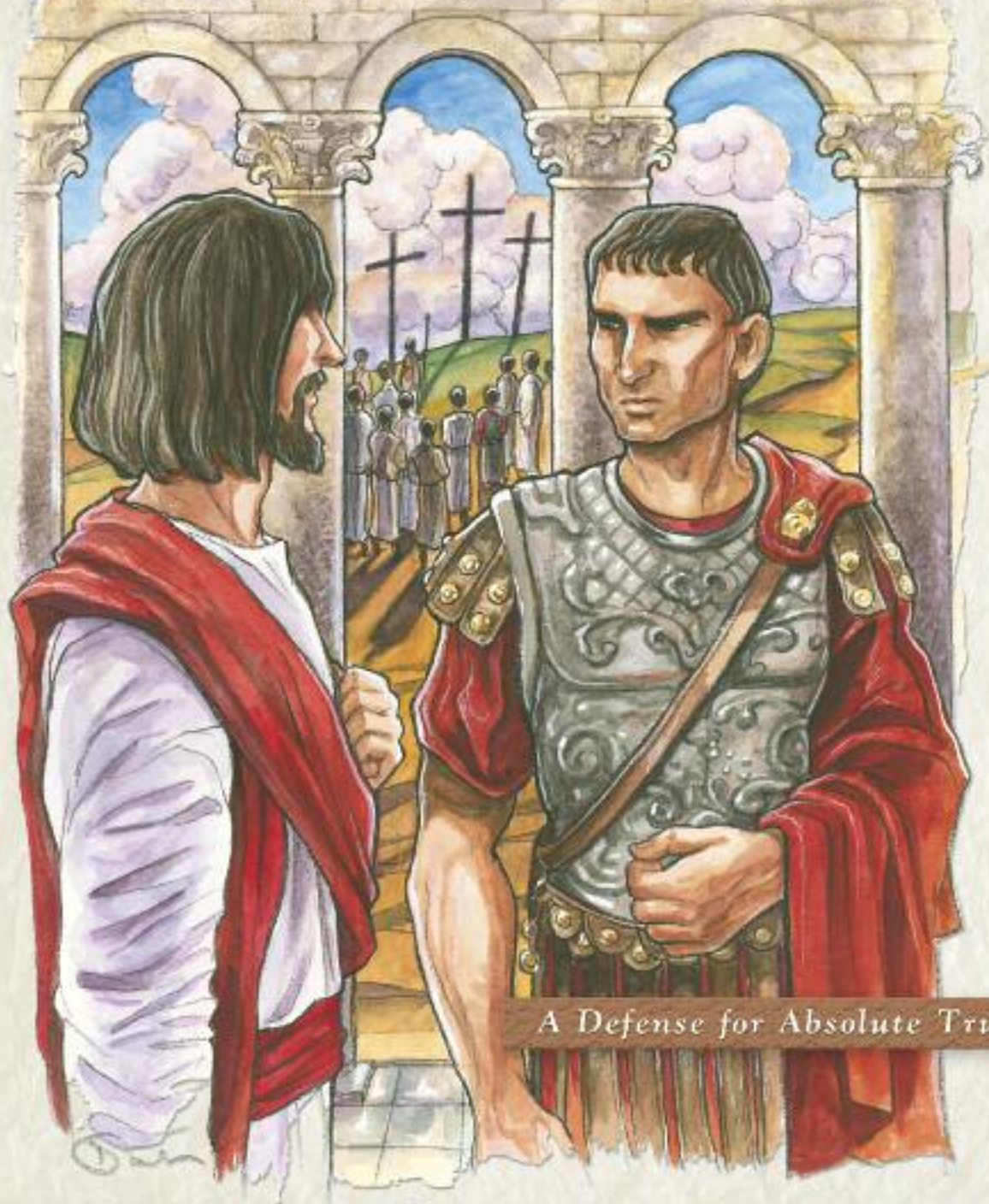


EMMAUS BIBLE COLLEGE • SPRING 2010

# Journey

WHAT IS TRUTH?



*A Defense for Absolute Truth*

# Wealth

**Revelation 3:17-18 (NASB):** *Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.*

Laodicea was located in the Lycus River Valley in southwest Phrygia at the juncture of three important trade routes. It quickly became a great commercial and administrative center. It was the wealthiest city in Phrygia during Roman times. The city was so rich that following the devastating earthquake of A.D. 60, the people of Laodicea demonstrated their pride by spurning the offer of financial aid from Rome. Out of their own pockets they rebuilt the city to be more beautiful than before. Tacitus wrote, "Laodicea arose from the ruins by the strength of her own resources, and with no help from us."

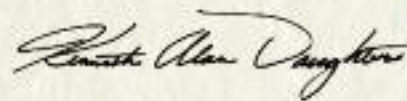
The fertile valley allowed the city to thrive agriculturally, and it became famous for its black wool textile industry. Careful breeding produced soft, glossy black wool to be woven into clothing and carpets.

Laodicea also gained fame from its medical school, which developed a highly prized eye salve for alleviating various eye ailments. The famous Phrygian powder mentioned by Galen and Aristotle as medicine for weak eyes was likely from Laodicea.

Jesus Christ's rebuke of the church at Laodicea refers to each of these three accomplishments. The church had taken on many of the characteristics that defined the city. Their wealth, industry, and success had led them to become self-sufficient and complacent. They felt rich and need of nothing. Since their water supply could easily be cut off during a siege, they developed the trait of tolerance, broad-mindedness, and compromise. They were ignorant of their true spiritual condition. He announces that their assets are destroyed, they are destitute, and they deserve to be pitied in their wretched condition. Their only recourse is to buy from Him what they

need: gold refined by fire to become rich; white garments to clothe themselves; and eye salve to regain their sight. This is humbling counsel. They took pride in their accomplishments. They were wealthy from the banking enterprises. They were well-dressed in their black wool clothing. They were famous for their eye salve. Yet Christ says that in spite of these physical assets, they are spiritually bankrupt. They have nothing that has value spiritually. They must buy from Him. They must repent and regain their zeal for personal relationship with Him!

How easy it would be to allow these words of rebuke and instruction to pass us by! How easy it would be to fall into the same complacency and self-reliance that plagued the Laodicean church! How rich we are as a nation, and how proud and self-reliant we have become! Is the church in America much different than the church in Laodicia? Jesus says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt. 6:21). We should not fix our hope on the uncertainty of riches. We should not hoard our resources to ourselves. We should learn to be generous, to use our resources for good, and to further God's work. We should build a good foundation for the future (1 Tim. 6:17-19). May we listen carefully to our Lord's admonition regarding our personal resources.



Kenneth Alan Daughters  
President,  
Emmaus Bible College

# Features/Departments

## 10 Created in His Image

Dr. Stephen Leverentz

*Dr. Stephen Leverentz presents the biblical absolute of the value of the human life in the womb. An issue of Journey devoted to truth must include this basic absolute, even if it is deputed and rejected by the relativistic society in which we live!*

## 16 Proclaiming the Truth

Kenneth Raymond

*Jesus states, "Your Word is Truth". The preacher is to speak as the oracles of God, reflecting all the power of ". . . thus saith the Lord." Be challenged by this article by Kenneth Raymond, from Stratford Park Bible Chapel, Urbana, Illinois as he develops the importance of expository preaching of the Bible in the local church.*

## 20 Intelligent Design, Creation Science, and the Contest of the Age

Rob Sullivan

*Even the scientists are grudgingly admitting to intelligent design in creation. We prefer a better description — God. Rob Sullivan, scientist and biblical apologist, presents that logical connection between intelligent design in creation and an omnipotent, omniscient Creator God.*

## 24 ISI Question and Answer

Dr. Norman Geisler

*"Listen" in to the Question and Answer Session from last year's ISI conference with Dr. Norman Geisler answering the supposed logic of relativism, and rejoice in the logic of the absolute truth!*

## 38 The Penal Substitutionary Atonement of Christ

Alex Strauch

*This foundational doctrine of our salvation continues to be a subject of debate, even among evangelicals. Alex Strauch addresses this primary doctrine of Scripture with his usual precision and conviction. This is an important read to enable us to maintain a biblical stance on the purpose for the death of the Savior!*

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# Travel Guides

## The Basis of the Premillennial Faith

Charles C. Ryrie, ECS Ministries

Although premillennialism continues to be popular today, it is by no means a new doctrine. Rather, because of its solid foundation in biblical truth, premillennialism has been a prominent system of interpretation throughout church history. Dr. Ryrie begins this book by introducing systems of interpretation and their vital importance in studying prophecy. He then proceeds to trace how premillennialism has its basis in history, hermeneutics, the Abrahamic Covenant, Davidic Covenant, New Covenant, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Whether you are new to premillennialist teaching, or whether you are interested in a more systematic understanding of its basis in Scripture, the contents of this book will clarify, instruct, and inspire.

## Understanding the Trinity

John H. Fish III, ECS Ministries

Understanding the Trinity focuses on one major area of Bible doctrine, namely the doctrine of the triune God. What could be more important than the doctrine of God Himself and that He has revealed Himself to us in Scripture as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? It is this view of God as Trinity that distinguishes Christianity not only from all other religions, but also from the other major monotheistic religions, Judaism, and Islam. Christians believe there is only one God. But we also believe there are three distinct and eternal Persons within the godhead who are all equally God. While we do not pretend to understand the Trinity fully, we do desire to understand more of God's revelation of Himself. The essays contained in this book were originally presented orally at a symposium held on the campus of Emmaus Bible College. They were subsequently published in *The Emmaus Journal*, the theological publication of Emmaus Bible College, Dubuque, Iowa.

## Ancient Word, Changing Worlds: The Doctrine of Scripture in a Modern Age

Stephen J Nichols, Crossway Books, 2009

A helpful narrative of the formation of the doctrine of Scripture in the modern age, interspersed with primary source materials. Covers the challenges that face the authority, sufficiency, and interpretation of Scripture.

## He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World

Albert J. Mohler Jr., Moody Publishers, 2008

Is contemporary preaching suffering from an infatuation with technology, a focus on felt needs, an absence of the gospel? Mohler thinks preaching has fallen on hard times! Join him as he examines the public exposition of the Bible and explains why the church can't survive without it. A commanding exhortation and an encouragement to pulpit ministers.

## The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority

G. K. Beale, Crossway Books, 2008

Can the Bible be both inaccurate and irrefutable? No, says Beale, in this examination of the writings of Peter Enns and others who support compromise in the matter of inerrancy. Citing contradictions, dichotomies, oversights, and faulty reasoning in attempts to redefine the traditional evangelical view of scriptural authority, he offers a resounding defense against postmodern attacks.

## The Big Book of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation

Norman L. Geisler and Thomas Howe, Baker Books, 2008

Increase your confidence in God's Word and learn to defend its integrity—even in the face of difficult questions! Geisler and Howe's comprehensive volume offers answers to more than 800 questions often raised by skeptics, critics, and cults that misuse isolated verses. Features an easy-to-use problem/solution format; plus three extensive indexes (topical, scriptural, and doctrinal). *Reprint of When Critics Ask.*

## Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical

Robert Duncan Culver, Christian Focus Publications, 2005

If you respect Dr. Walter Kaiser of Gordon-Conwell Seminary for his academic prowess and commitment to biblical authority, come meet the man for whom he served as a teaching assistant! Dr. Robert Duncan Culver tackles the totality of biblical and historical theology in this important work.

## Who Made God? Searching for a Theory of Everything

Edgar Andrews, EP Books, 2009

All too often books that deal with deep philosophical questions lack connection to the absurdity and humor of every day life. This book, *Who Made God* does not suffer from that problem. While intellectually engaging, the book also tackles the 'new atheism' of philosophers like Richard Dawkins with humor and wit, yet remains highly informative, scholarly precise, and above all, is well-written. Presenting a robust argument for biblical theism as a positive and as an altogether more convincing alternative to atheism, Edgar Andrews' work is as thoughtful and compelling as it is entertaining and witty. Indeed, Robert Strivens, principal of London Theological Seminary, says that Andrews is "devastating in his critique of evolutionary atheism" and that he compellingly shows how a "right understanding of the scientific enterprise poses no threat to biblical Christianity."

This book is perfect for anyone who desires to understand this debate from the lay level, or who is questioning their own faith, and wants to see the arguments framed in a new way. A great read for anyone, especially for those wanting to understand and counteract the 'new atheism.'

## The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog

James W Sire, IVP Academic, 2009

For more than 30 years, *The Universe Next Door* has set the standard for a clear, readable introduction to worldviews. In this new fifth edition, James Sire offers additional student-friendly features to his concise, easily understood introductions to theism, deism, naturalism, Marxism, nihilism, existentialism, Eastern monism, New Age philosophy, and Postmodernism. Included in this expanded format are a new chapter on Islam and informative sidebars throughout. The book continues to build on Sire's refined definition of worldviews from the fourth edition and includes other up-dates as well, keeping this standard text fresh and useful. In a world of ever-increasing diversity, *The Universe Next Door* offers a unique resource for understanding the variety of worldviews that compete with Christianity for the allegiance of minds and hearts. *The Universe Next Door* has been translated into more than a dozen languages and has been used as a text at more than 100 colleges and universities in courses ranging from apologetics and world religions to history and English literature.

## Thy Kingdom Come:

### Tracing God's Kingdom Program and Covenant Promises Throughout History

Dwight J Pentecost, Kregel Publications, 1995

How do interpretations of the "Kingdom of God" differ? How can we distinguish the various covenants of the Old Testament? How does the church relate to the covenants made with Israel? What will the future Kingdom be like? Pentecost traces the history of the Kingdom program and its relationship to the development of the covenant promises.

## So Why Do I Need the BIBLE?

Clayton Dougan, Gospel Folio Press, 2009

The Bible is worth becoming excited about because it is so relevant to everything that happens between Sundays. Leave the mediocrity behind and move into a cutting-edge walk with God. Clayton Dougan shares illustrations from personal experiences to relate the book to real living.

## The Formation of the New Testament

Chuck Gianotti, ECS Ministries, 2010

The Christian faith rises or falls on the historical credibility of the Bible, particularly the New Testament documents. In today's postmodern culture, Christians and those searching for answers face numerous questions including:

- Are the New Testament writings historically reliable?
- How do we know those books are authoritative?
- Who decided which documents to include?
- What about the apocryphal or deuterocanonical writings?
- Can we know for certain that the Bible is accurate and complete?

This book reduces the large volume of available (yet very technical) information on the subject by providing a concise analysis of the facts to help you gain confidence in the credibility of the New Testament canon.

## 2010 Assembly Address Book & Commended Workers Directory

ECS Ministries

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([jrush@emmaus.edu](mailto:jrush@emmaus.edu) or 563-588-8000 ext. 1003)



# MUSIC AND WORSHIP

By Lisa Beatty

part 2

## TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY Nº10

*Worship is the continuous act of showing what we consider to be most worthy, that which, by consequence, masters and shapes us.* — Dr. Harold Best, former dean, Wheaton Conservatory

“Music and Worship, Part 1,” in the Winter 2010 edition of *Journey*, focused on the development of a biblical perspective of worship. To review, *music* and *worship* are not synonyms. The Scriptures emphasize two aspects of worship, the worshiper’s position (*proskuneo*, to bow down in complete submission) and the worshiper’s actions (*latreuo*, to serve). Neither focuses specifically on the act of singing. The article also discussed God’s expectations for our worship:

- God commands our worship. (Deuteronomy 6:13-15; Matthew 4:10)
- Worship is about God, not about us. (Ephesians 1; Psalm 27:4)
- True worship requires that we have an accurate view of God and of ourselves. (Isaiah 6; Romans 5:6; 1 Peter 2:24)

- God expects personal holiness of His worshipers. (Psalm 24:3-4)
- Worship should be a priority of the New Testament church. (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34)
- God’s people should worship Him individually and corporately. (John 12:1-8; Psalm 95:6-7; Hebrews 10:24-25)
- Our worship is directed to God first. Our fellow worshipers are only “listening in” as we worship Him. (Psalm 68:4; Colossians 3:16)
- God seeks worshipers who worship Him “in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23-24)
- God considers both the actions and the attitudes of His worshipers. (Genesis 4:4-5; Matthew 15:7-9)
- God calls us to a lifestyle of worship. (Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 13:15-16)

While these reflections should not be viewed as a comprehensive theology

of worship, they do provide a biblical perspective on worship that can serve as a foundation for the planning of effective and God-honoring music ministry in the church. Music can, and should, be used to further God’s purpose for worship within the local body.

Although the concepts of *worship* and *music* are not synonymous, music often plays a role in biblical worship. The dedication of the Temple in 2 Chronicles 5 provides a compelling picture of the use of music in worship. And though some elements of the scene are unique to the old covenant, the passage reinforces several of the principles of worship noted above. Additionally, the passage provides some insights into the appropriate use of music for worship.

Following the installation of the Ark of the Covenant, the children of Israel joined together to worship the Lord God:

<sup>11</sup>When the priests came forth from the holy place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to divisions), <sup>12</sup>and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps and lyres, standing east of the altar, and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets <sup>13</sup>in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the LORD saying, "He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting," then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, <sup>14</sup>so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God. (2 Chronicles 5:11-14, NASB)

Verse 11 reinforces the truth that God requires personal

holiness of His worshipers. "All the priests who were present had sanctified themselves." Before they served in music ministry in the Temple, the musicians made certain they were clean before God.

Verse 12 demonstrates that music played a central role in the worship of the Lord that day. In fact, the description of the event is almost entirely a description of the musical expression. All of the Levitical singers, including the designated leaders, were present for this important event. Additionally, 120 priests played trumpets.

The role of musician was an honored one at this time. First Chronicles 23:5 tells us that 4,000 men (more than 10 per cent of the Levitical priesthood of 38,000 men) were designated as musicians, "praising the Lord with the instruments which David made for giving praise." First Chronicles 25:1 indicates that the leaders were appointed by David himself. King David and his military commanders set apart musicians under the direction of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. First Chronicles 25:6 describes the roles and responsibilities of the musicians: "All these were under the direction of their father to sing in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, harps and lyres, for the service of the house of God." The end of the verse tells us that the three chief musicians answered directly to the king.

Verse 13 emphasizes the unity of the priest musicians. The trumpeters played "in unison"; the trumpeters and singers made themselves heard "with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD." The verse also focuses on the worship song's content: "He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting." The song text focuses on the Person of God, His goodness, and the eternal nature of His grace.

In verse 14, we see God approve their worship with a manifestation of His glory. In fact, there appears to be a cause-and-effect relationship between the worship of God in song and the presence of the Lord manifested in the

cloud. Verse 11: "and when the priests came forth..." Verse 13: "and when they lifted up their voice..." Again in verse 13: "and when they praised the LORD, ... then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God."

This passage is a beautiful example of the use of music for worship. Let's turn now to some practical applications for music ministry from this and other key passages.

**Music should be integral to the life of the local church, including its corporate worship.**

Music should be employed to further the purposes of God for His church, including worship. First Corinthians 14:26 affirms that music should be part of the meetings of the church: "When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." Musical expression should not be viewed as an afterthought or an enhancement; in fact the psalm is mentioned first. God calls us to worship Him in song (Ps. 81:1-4).

**Those who serve in music ministry in the local church should strive for personal holiness.**

Just as God required the Levitical priest-musicians to sanctify themselves, He calls New Testament worshipers to personal holiness. First Corinthians 11:28 exhorts us to examine ourselves before eating the bread or drinking the cup, in case some unconfessed sin should cause us "to eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner." We are to worship Him "with clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps. 24:3-4).

**Unity is an important element of musical expression for worship.**

This is not to say that we should only sing in unison! However, it is clear that God values unity of mind and purpose. "Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on

one purpose" (Phil. 2:2). The sad truth is that in many local churches, there is no unity of mind and purpose regarding musical expression. Sincere believers differ on issues of musical preference and conscience. Nevertheless, God is honored when we worship Him in unity. Let us strive to make Him central to our worship, and not focus inappropriately on the vehicle for worship.

**Music for worship should focus on God's Person and works.**

The book of Psalms includes many worship songs. These songs focus specifically on God's Person and work. Psalm 95:6-7: "Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand." Psalm 96:1, 3-4: "Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth. Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples. For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods." Psalm 99:5: "Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at His footstool; Holy is He. Colossians 3:16 has the same emphasis: "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you... singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

**Music for worship should be presented in a skillful and orderly manner.**

Psalm 33:3 calls us to "play skillfully." First Chronicles 25:7 tells us that David's appointed musicians were trained and skillful. The focus here is not on skill for its own sake. Instead, the focus should be on bringing our musical skills and laying them on the altar in worship to Him. Hebrews 13:15 calls worshipers to "continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." We should bring our best sacrifice of praise. Further support for this principle is found in 1 Corinthians 14:40: "Let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner." Our musical expression should not distract from worship. Wrong notes, poor intonation, or unclear dic-

tion have the immediate effect of calling attention to the music, rather than the Person and work of God.

In order to support skillful and orderly musical expression in the local church, it may be necessary to intentionally develop the musical skills of those serving in music ministry. This can be accomplished by mentoring young musicians as they grow in their musical skill and providing them with appropriate opportunities to minister. Some young musicians may even benefit from formal study of music at the collegiate level. Emmaus offers a program in Biblical Studies and Music Ministry that may be a good option for young adults seeking to develop their musical abilities for use in the local church and other settings.

One final thought regarding skill and orderliness. The language of 1 Corinthians 14:26 implies preparation for participation: "When you assemble, each one has a psalm." It appears from a literal reading of the text that participants had prepared a contribution to the meeting ahead of time. Preparation does not limit the Spirit's leading. When directing the Emmaus Ensemble, I often made song choices a full eight months before the music was performed. In spite of the long separation between choosing songs and performing them, audience members often shared with me that various selections spoke to their immediate spiritual needs. The Spirit of God led in my preparations for His ultimate glory eight months later!

**Music for worship should be familiar and intelligible.**

Music for worship should focus on God's Person and work. The musical expression should not distract from that purpose. Thus, an argument can be made that music for worship should be familiar. Struggling to learn a new song while striving to focus on God in worship is difficult, if not impossible. Instead one is compelled to concentrate on the unfamiliar tune or text. A better approach might be to learn new songs for worship in a different context, perhaps in another service or

during a fellowship time.

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul makes an argument for the superiority of prophecy over tongues. Central to his argument is the idea that in order to be edified, one must have understanding. If the text is obscured by the musical accompaniment when singing in worship, it is difficult to see how true communication can take place. Without true communication, edification does not occur. Paul uses a number of musical examples in the passage to support his case. In particular, he emphasizes that both the spirit and intellect should be engaged when singing.

Music provides a wonderful vehicle for worship, but it should not distract from the object of our worship. Music can engage both our spirits and our minds, allowing us to worship Him "in spirit and in truth." Let us seek His face more than our own musical preferences. Let us worship Him in unity of spirit, love, and purpose. In our local churches, let us echo the words of David in Psalm 34:

*I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear it and rejoice. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together! (vv. 1-3). †*



Lisa Beatty is the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Emmaus Bible College and has been a faculty member in the Music Ministry department since 1992. Lisa and her husband, Kevin have two daughters.



# WHAT IS TRUTH?



## ABSOLUTELY TRUE David Glock

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:31-32, NKJV).

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.

He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God" (Jn. 8:42-47).

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to

the Father except through Me" (Jn. 14:6).

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth (Jn. 17:16-17).

If there is absolute truth, there must be an absolute mind, because truth is an idea, and ideas only exist in minds. And if there is absolute truth, there must be an absolute mind in which the truth resides. And that is God!

God is truth. Therefore, His Word

is truth. Therefore, a Christian world view based on that truthful revelation is the only valid and consistent world view! All other world views come from the source of counterfeit world views - Satan the father of lies, the greatest of which is, "The creature is God"—the summary statement of humanism.

When Jesus prays for His disciples of that day and those to come in our day, He prays that we be delivered from the influence of the world in our lives. We are to live a life for the glory of God. This is made possible through obedience to the truthful Word of God.

*I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth (Jn. 17:14-19).*

From the beginning of the Bible to the end, it is full of absolutes—from Genesis to Revelation.

*Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Gen. 2:15-17).*

The two ate, and billions have died. It is appointed unto man once to die and after death, the judgment.

That's an absolute that can't be denied!

The Bible concludes on a similar note.

*For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).*

This is a future absolute stated by the same God of the previous statement in Eden. That's an absolute that no one will be able to deny any more than the first!

Between Genesis and Revelation the Bible is full of absolutes from the mind of the Absolute God: the Ten Commandments; in all 613 commands for Israel; more than 500 imperatives, commands, in the New Testament epistles for those of us of the church era. But also included in the great revelation of God are manifestations of His great grace and mercy. This is seen most clearly in the provision of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. "The Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17).

But even this grace is set forth in absolute terms. Jesus states a very narrow and absolute requirement to salvation.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn. 14:6).

Jesus said that!

The absolutes of the Bible come into conflict with the relativism of the world in which we live. The fear is that the believer in Christ be influ-

enced by the relativism that surrounds us. It touches us in the means of salvation, the inspiration of Scripture, the nature of the atonement, the practices of church life, the sanctity of human life, the sanctity of marriage, gender distinctions and alternate life styles, and in routine faithfulness and holiness.

Jesus gives the solution in His prayer, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17).

The apostle Paul states this principle as well:

*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. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom. 12:1,2)*

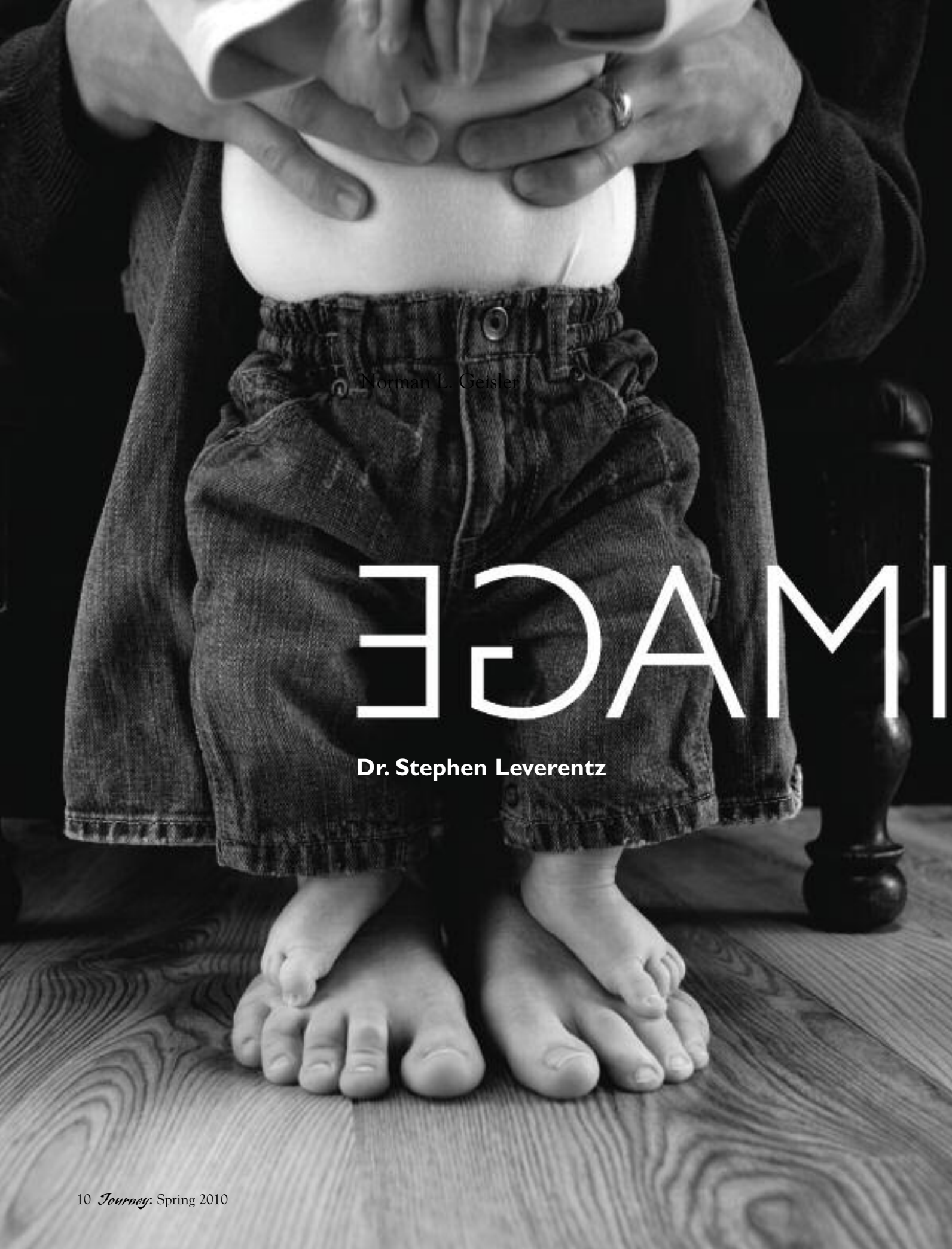
Jesus, the Truth, stood before Pilate. Truth confronts relativism!

Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:37-38).

And remember, Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). †



Dave Glock  
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Norman L. Geisler

# EGGAMINE CREATED IN HIS IMAGE

**Dr. Stephen Leverenz**

Those of us who have lived through the last half of the 20th century and into the 21st have witnessed a sea of change in beliefs regarding the meaning, value, and sanctity of human life. Eugenics, abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research and cloning—concepts and practices that previously had been rejected, outlawed and viewed with horror by our society—are being embraced, promoted, legalized, and sometimes mandated by modern society.

Most of us grew up in an atmosphere in which special value and protection were given to human life in all its phases. While religious teaching formed the basis for most of that valuation, society as a whole functioned with a belief that there is a difference between human and all other forms of life.

Belief in the basic scriptural concepts of the sanctity of human life has essentially evaporated from scientific, medical, governmental, and many religious circles. Sadly due to our neglect, those truths are being replaced in the hearts of our young people by the plausible fallacies of evolutionary dogma.

### A Way That Seems Right to Man

The arguments that deny the sanctity of human life aren't new. They are merely resurgent expressions of the "way that seems right to a man."

Solomon, the world's wisest carnal man came to the conclusion that man has no more value than an animal. Summing up the best human wisdom the "preacher" states,

*Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth? (Eccl. 3:19-21, NKJV).*

Critically analyzing the results of human choices and reasoning, Solomon comes to the conclusion,

*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death (Prov. 14:12).*

Observing the evil and vanity of human existence, his choice is to praise...the dead who were already dead, more than the living who are still alive. Yet, better than both is he who has never existed (Eccl. 4:2-3).

What a man believes about the value and sanctity of life emanates from what he believes about God.

The way of man demeans the sanctity of human life. It begins in denial of the existence and sovereignty of God and secondarily rejects a group of God-revealed truths that relate to the origins, nature, value and destiny of man.

### God Is the Source of Sanctity

*God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let*

*them have dominion..." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them (Gen. 1:26-27).*

### What a man believes about the value and sanctity of life emanates from what he believes about God.

Later the incarnate Lord assures us, "Are not two sparrows sold for one copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Mt. 10:29, 30-31).

He also promises, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

The meaning of sanctity is based on being "sacred," that is, being "consecrated to or belonging to a god."

Sanctity refers to "the quality of being regarded as sacred" and includes the concept of "inviolability" (Webster's New World Dictionary).

In common use "sanctity" has been stripped of its relation to sacredness. The concept of inviolability of human life has been separated from a basis of belonging to God. Man instead of God bestows or denies inviolability.

Reasoning as men "under the sun," some hold that all life forms, from the "simplest" microbe to most highly developed human, are equally sacred. Some grade the value of life based on the degree of evolutionary development. Others might reserve the word "sacred" to describe only human life but insist that society has the right and responsibility to determine if and when that life should come into exist-

tence, how it can be used and when it should end.

After men reject the words of God, "they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

If we listen to human teachers we will hear fables, e.g. evolution; we must turn to the Word of God for "sound doctrine."

We don't find the phrase "sanctity of life" in the Word, but we do find a group of truths that teach us that human life is sacred, describe what it means to be sacred, and most importantly, reveal that God is the source of sanctity.

This group of revealed truths includes the origin of man, the qualities and nature of man and most significantly, the pre-existence of God and His sovereignty over life. In varying degrees, each one of these truths has been denied, rejected or ignored by man in bringing our society to its present beliefs and practices in the areas of eugenics, abortion, euthanasia, ethnic cleansing, cloning, and embryonic stem cell research and therapy.

A first critical teaching of Scripture is that God created man.

*So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them (Gen. 1:27).*

Genesis 1:31 reveals the exact day God created man:

*So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

Genesis 2:7 describes how we were created:

*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

Verses 21 and 22 recount how God created woman:

*And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.*

Many argue that these passages are simply allegorical. Evolutionists consider them merely an intriguing myth of an ancient culture.

Scripture contains both allegorical and documentary passages, each written with distinctive syntax. These passages were written

in narrative, documentary language. For example, in Scripture whenever Yom, the Hebrew word translated "day," is coupled with ordinal words, (first, second, third, et cetera) it is used to indicate literal, 24-hour earth rotation days, not eras or long periods of time. Genesis is written with language that tells us that God created man near the end of a week of seven literal days.

The Lord Jesus, in Matthew 19:4, confirms the literality of the creation account.

*Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female?*

The documentary nature of Genesis is critical to our understanding the sanctity of human life.

If the Genesis account of creation were an allegory, then God would be an allegorical creation of man and not man's Creator. Man would be the highly developed result of some godless evolutionary process and there could be no sacredness in the sanctity of man.

Secular education rejects, actively prohibits, and punishes the teaching that man is a created being. Popular belief mocks it.

More harmfully, many Christian teachers are willing to allegorize or spiritualize various narrative sections of Genesis, such as the six days of creation, in an attempt to harmonize Scripture to ever-changing evolutionary speculations about man's origin. In doing so they sacrifice the validity of other narrative teachings of Scripture including the causal relationship between Adam's rebellion and death and the unique nature of man.

### In the Image of God

Defining a second key component of the sanctity of man, the Scriptures describe the essence, the unique attribute that

God chose to place in man.

*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him (Gen. 1:27).*

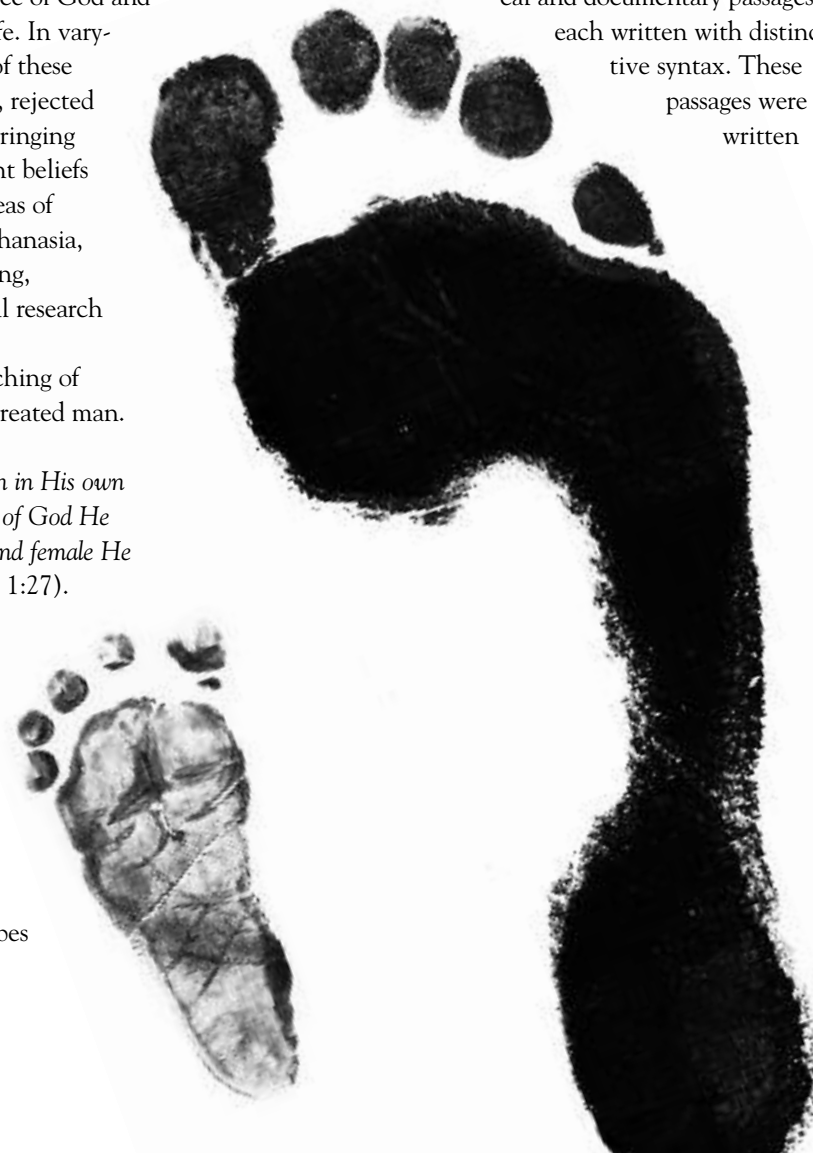
God doesn't say this about any other of His creation. Man was a special act of creation, not an evolutionary enhancement on previous versions. God didn't create any other animals "in His own image," or call any other animals "children of God."

### Secular education rejects, actively prohibits, and punishes the teaching that man is a created being. Popular belief mocks it.

Even though God makes statements that identify man as distinct from other animals, it can be confusing to observe that many species, especially the primates, resemble humans very closely, even to the point of sharing most of our DNA. And the term, "living soul," which man became when God breathed into him the "breath of life," is also applied to the animal creation in Genesis 1:20-30. We can be confused when we see that the words "nephesh" and "ruach"—which are often translated "soul" and "spirit" and which are used commonly in reference to man—are also used in Scripture in reference to animals (e.g. Ecclesiastes 3:21).

The clear, stated difference is that God created man in His own image. But what does that phrase mean? To understand that concept we need to examine the nature of God.

God reveals that "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24).





God exists as an eternal, rational, moral, and spiritual being. While man doesn't possess His omniscience, omnipotence, or omnipresence or the perfections of His holiness and righteousness of His existence, and while our physical existence is similar to that of animals, by creation we do possess a God-given spiritual nature that the animal, plant, and non-living creations don't share.

Man's ability to comprehend or describe what it means to be created in the "image of God" is very limited, but Scripture reveals several features of man that are part of that image.

**So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him (Gen. 1:27).**

**God doesn't say this about any other of His creation. Man was a special act of creation, not an evolutionary enhancement on previous versions.**

### Man's Uniqueness in Creation

We have the ability to commune and fellowship with God and hear His voice and speak to Him and even to accuse Him (Gen. 3:8-13). Man has a "heart" that is aware and capable of responding to God (Isa. 26:8-9; Jer. 12:3; Lk. 10:27). We have a moral nature, we have a sense of right and wrong; we are capable of perceiving His commandments (Gen. 3:7; Ps. 119:73). We have a sense of reverence for God (Gen. 3:10) and a desire to worship Him and seek His approval (Gen. 4:3-4). We were given subdominion over the animal world and

the earth (Gen. 1:26-30), and we retain vestiges of that today. Beyond a secondary, temporal, material existence, God has made us eternal, spiritual beings and has placed in us an awareness of our eternality (Lk. 12:22-34; Eccl. 3:11). We exhibit rational thought centered on God (Ps. 139:17) not seen in other animals. We can interact with Him as a friend or a child (Ex. 33:11; Jn. 15:13-15; 2 Chr. 20:7; Rom. 8:15). We can be His "brethren" (Heb. 2:9-13).

These things are not true of animals. We are unique. Man was separately created by God and in God's own image. Of all the animals, we alone can interact with God.

But is that spiritual nature enough to make human life uniquely sacred?

Not to man. The evolutionist or the atheist would likely respond, "So you think you were created in the image of God and that makes your life particularly sacred. I reject that whole concept. You're just another animal on the evolutionary tree. Man may be more intellectually evolved and may even have some type of spirituality, whatever that means, and man is a wonderful, valuable evolution, but his existence is governed by the same laws of nature that apply to everything else."

In evolutionary reasoning, sanctity of life is only relative. It is not absolute. Stripped of its relationship to God, it is based on a human assessment of relative worth to society and to nature.

In contrast, from the view of Scripture, sanctity of life has nothing to do with the reasoning or choices or philosophic pronouncements of man. The sanctity of human life is mandated and emanates from the sovereignty of God.

### Created for God

This is the third key element of the sanctity of human life. Simply put, human life is sacred because God chose to make it sacred. The Scriptures declare God's sovereign, proprietary interest in life.

Not only does God create us; we were created for Him (Col. 1:16). He claims ownership of us (Ps. 100:3-4; Rom. 14:8). He knows and controls every detail of our pre-birth existence and knows every thought and motive of our thoughts (Ps. 139). We are precious to Him (Ps. 72:11-14; 116:15). Our continued existence is dependent on Him (Job 34:14-15; Acts 14: 28). He kills and makes alive (Dt. 32:39). He makes the deaf and mute and the blind as well as the sighted (Ex 4:11). He demands an accounting for unborn life (Ex. 21:22-23), and views children as a gift, a blessing and reward from Himself (Gen. 33:5; Ps. 127:3-5). He controls that process from its beginning (Gen. 30:2).

Ultimately, He loves us enough to die for us (Rom. 5:9). Life is sacred

because it is precious to God. He claims ownership of it. He creates it for

Himself and continues to sustain and control it and pre-appoints our beginning and end (Acts 17:24-28).

Life is sacred by divine stipulation and God further stipulates how it is to be treated by man and dictates sanctions for mistreatment of life.

Murder is the intentional taking of an innocent life by man. God commands, "You shall not murder"

(Ex. 20:13). God curses the murderer (Gen. 4:10-11) and prescribes punishment for violating life.

His wrath is kindled especially against those who shed the innocent blood of their own children (Ps. 106:35-40) and demands, "There shall not be found among you anyone" who sacrifices the innocent blood of their child (Dt. 18:10).

Human life is sacred to God. He demands retribution for shedding innocent blood.

*Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man (Gen. 9:5-6).*

The only allowance in Scripture for man taking the life of another man is a God-directed responsibility of government (Rom. 13:4) to carry out capital punishment in response to specific transgressions committed usually against the sanctity of life. That allowance is given with specific safeguards (Dt. 17:6), and requires righteous intent on the part of authorities (Jn. 7:7-11).

**After men reject the words of God, "they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).**

Conversely, while God abhors and curses murder, He mandates that mankind protect all human life including the helpless, the poor, the innocent, orphans and widows and specifically the "speechless," (those who cannot speak for themselves—e.g. the unborn, the comatose, the incompetent and the terminal), "in the cause of all who are appointed to die" (Prov. 31:8-9).

God creates man in His own image and as sovereign Lord mandates that we protect it and respect its inviolability. But Cain, like his father, disputes

God's will, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The man "under the sun" tries to evade that will, he declares, "With our tongue we will prevail: Our lips are our own; Who is lord over us?" (Ps. 12: 4)

Adopting those words, Margaret Sanger, the pioneering promoter of eugenics and abortion wrote under the motto, "No Gods and No Masters".

In its speech, law, beliefs and actions, our society increasingly denies that it has a lord. It denies it has a Creator who has made man in His own image. It has removed God from its definition of the sanctity of life and has replaced God's sovereign words and will with the words and ways of man. That faulty process is the way of death. But,

"As for God, His way is perfect" (2 Sam. 22:31);

"For Your Word has given me life" (Ps. 119:50).

The world is teaching our children the way of death. In response, many abandon their faith. Have we ignored teaching them God's way of life?

The Lord warns,

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children (Hos. 4:6). †*



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# PROCLAIMING THE TRUTH

by Ken Raymond

The apostle Paul gave his young understudy, Timothy, this solemn charge:

*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction (2 Tim. 4:1, 2 NIV).*

There is no question in my mind that all those who have been called to preach are sensitive to this charge. The imperative is strong and clear, leading godly men to go about the task of preaching each and every Sunday. They do not, however, all go about it in the same manner. There are two fundamentally different ways to approach the task, and we should be aware of both.

## 'Felt Needs' or Biblical Exposition?

Some argue that the task of preaching ought to focus on specific needs within the congregation. Doesn't Paul imply as much when he defines *preaching the Word* as *correcting, rebuking, and encouraging*? These terms suggest specific pastoral concerns which need to be addressed with *patience* and *careful instruction*. The preacher, therefore, must know his flock and the issues they are struggling with so that he can bring the Word of God to bear on those issues. The point of preaching, then, is not to methodically go through the Word, but rather to address perceived needs. Andy Stanley puts it this way:

**PEOPLE NEED MORE  
THAN ANSWERS TO  
SPECIFIC QUESTIONS.  
THEY NEED TO BE  
GROUNDED IN THE  
WORD ITSELF.**

*Guys that preach verse-by-verse through books of the Bible—[are] cheating. It's cheating because that would be easy, first of all. That isn't how you grow people. No one in the Scripture modeled that. There's not one example of that. All Scripture is equally inspired, but not all Scripture is equally applicable or relevant to every stage of life. My challenge is to read culture and to read an audience and ask: What is the felt need? <sup>1</sup>*

A second approach to preaching understands the nature of the task quite differently. Rather than focusing on 'felt needs' this approach begins by emphasizing the importance of biblical literacy. People need more than answers to specific questions; they need to be grounded in the Word itself. They need the correction, rebuke and encouragement of the Scriptures to develop a biblical worldview. The task of the preacher, therefore, is not so much to read his audience as it is to provide sound biblical exegesis. Paul's charge was to preach the Word, and that means letting the Word speak for itself in its entirety. The preacher is not unmindful of the needs of his congregation, but rather is wary of his own ability to decipher them. He preaches with the conviction that the Word, clearly communicated, is powerful and that the Spirit will apply the truth, as needed, to the hearts of those who are listening. For these reasons, expository preaching tackles entire books of the Bible so that the Spirit can speak through the text as it has been given. The preacher slips into the background, trying not to unduly influence the process. Bryan Chapell puts it this way:

*It can be difficult to bind oneself to what a particular text says; yet that's the way we believe we are most closely bringing forward the dynamics of the Holy Spirit's inspiration to work in the listeners. <sup>2</sup>*

## A Preferred Method?

So which method is right, or should I say—to be preferred? After all, right and wrong are not really categories that apply here. In the somewhat silly evangelical wars that go on over issues such as these, people tend to take polarized positions and step up the rhetoric. Andy Stanley's comments, for example, provide great clarity as to his thinking but are a little over the top. Reality usually lies somewhere in the middle and I think that's the case here. If we're looking for biblical support that favors one methodology over the other, I think we're going to be disappointed. Paul is clear when he urges Timothy to *preach the Word*, but let's face it, he doesn't give detailed instructions. Correcting, rebuking and encouraging with patience and careful instruction can equally apply to both methods, so we need to be flexible. We've all heard great expository messages and great topical messages, so let's not play the exclusive game. Both methods are valid and have their place.

But having said that, let's move on to the issue of preference. Should we favor one method over the other in terms of providing the mainstay of our preaching diet? I would respond with a resounding yes! Expository preaching has my vote. In the rest of this article I'd like to explain why and also encourage you toward this method in your local assembly. There are some pitfalls to avoid and some stretching possibilities to consider if we're committed to this kind of a ministry, but I

believe it's well worth the effort. There is nothing as necessary or effective as a means of growing the body of Christ than a consistent diet of sound expository preaching!

## The Advantages of Expository Preaching

In this section, I'd like to define expository preaching a little more fully and also defend its use. Most of us have an idea of what expository preaching is, but there are a few key components that should not be overlooked. Similarly, there are some misconceptions about the process which should be discarded. For example, expository preaching is not necessarily a running commentary. Quite often you will hear it being either disparaged or described as a verse-by-verse analysis, but that is not accurate at all. Good expositional preaching will derive its *main points and sub-points directly from the text* <sup>3</sup> but will not be slavishly bound to the original verse order. This is an important distinction to make because quite often the heart of a text is revealed in thematic relationships which are easily overlooked if one is zeroed in on a verse-by-verse analysis.

Let's follow up that negative example with a few positives. Expository preaching insists that a text should speak for itself. For that reason,

*the preacher starts with a passage of Scripture and then studies the grammar, the context, and the historical setting of that passage in order to understand the author's intent... the expositor is also an exegete—one who analyzes the text carefully and objectively. Once the preacher understands the meaning of the passage, he then crafts a sermon to explain and apply it. <sup>4</sup>*

This is a great working definition, but I think there is an important element missing. When we say that a text should be allowed to speak for itself, we have to apply that principle to the boundaries of the text and not just the content. The Word of God has been given to us in books or complete literary units, and when we limit a text in scope, for whatever reason, we're in danger of missing important truths. For that reason, it's best to think of a 'text' as a complete book and to reflect that in our preaching.

It's a huge commitment to preach through an entire book of the Bible, but it honors the integrity of the whole 'text' as inspired by the Holy Spirit. This holistic approach makes possible insights not easily gained otherwise. For example, you might choose to preach through the ethical chapters of Ephesians and leave the doctrinal chapters alone, but this does a great disservice to the strong connection Paul builds into Ephesians 4:1 and reduces the motivation for compliance. Preaching through the book as a whole helps believers to recognize their true identity in Christ so that they are ready to both hear and obey the ethical commands. This is a significant advantage! The expositor can consistently develop themes and relationships which have been intentionally woven into the text and can honor the creativity and design of the Word as received.

A second advantage inherent in expository preaching is that it allows God to set the agenda while keeping the preacher out of a rut. Left to my own devices I will start riding my own hobby horses. I can easily return to topics that interest me or passages that I'm comfortable with, and as for reading a congregation, I find that far too subjective a process. Occasionally there is a pressing matter to be dealt with such as 9/11 or a case of church discipline. At those times, topical messages

are very appropriate because "felt needs" are out in the open. For the most part, however, life goes on and the needs of the congregation are as varied and diverse as the body itself. Preaching in an expository fashion removes any angst associated with trying to measure "felt needs." I can open up the Word of God with confidence that it will speak to human hearts on a variety of levels far better than I ever could and that the Holy Spirit will make appropriate applications. It is the Word of God that is powerful, and when we preach it, we know it will be fresh and practical.

There are many other advantages we could refer to, but let me close this section with a summary. Expository preaching allows the whole counsel of God to be taught with authority. Human subjectivity and bias are forced to take a back seat, and the Word itself is allowed to shine. Both the preacher and the congregation benefit from the concerted effort to deal honestly with the text. Raymond Gibson puts it best:

*This type of preaching, week by week, calls the preacher into constant confrontation with the Word, to the revelation of God in Christ, to the saving act which is addressed first to him, then to his people. This association with the Word deepens the motivation that he feels as he enters the pulpit, and he becomes nothing so that the Word can be everything, until it is "Not I, but Christ speaking in me." That Word, abiding, will challenge and confront people in terms of what they are essentially. Communication will take place. Reality will confront the gospel. People will feel in the broad range and profundity of the Word, not only their own problems and their condition, but they will meet the One who answers their problems ultimately and meets their condition unconditionally."*<sup>5</sup>

### Pitfalls to Avoid

Hopefully by this point you are ready to get going! You have either been convinced of the need for expository preaching or reaffirmed in it. In either case, you're committed to the process. That's great, but here are some pitfalls to avoid:

#### 1. The Boring Factor

Some expositors make the fatal mistake of being impressed by their own scholarship. They offer far too much detail and try to impress the congregation with their knowledge of geography, history, Greek, Hebrew and the like. Scholarship is important, but it shouldn't get in the way of the message. Similarly, you can overdo a good

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thing. I personally recall a series from the book of Revelation that lasted for more than three years. Some would defend this approach by putting the onus on the listener—I'm a faithful exegete; it's your responsibility to pay attention. There's a measure of truth in that sentiment, but it doesn't excuse bad preaching. Expository preaching is a method not a justification for putting people to sleep. We still have to utilize skillful preachers who can be faithful to the Word, convicting and interesting all at the same time.

#### 2. Spring-boarding

This pitfall applies to the preacher who either lacks the skill to do exposition or hasn't fully grasped the concept. He will supposedly preach through a text, but never engage it. This is accomplished by spring-boarding which is somewhat of a word association game. You read a text, find a prominent word such as "love" or "grace," and then launch into a topical message. The series on Revelation that I mentioned above was conducted in that fashion. Each week the speaker moved on to the next set of verses in the text, but never commented on them. He simply spring-boarded. His rambling could have come from any book in the Bible and accomplished the same result. This is an extreme example, but illustrates the point well.

#### 3. Theological Soapboxes

Whether we like it or not, most of us have well-established theological perspectives. For the most part this is a good thing, but it also has its drawbacks. The problem is when we bring our theology to the text rather than allowing the text to inform our theology. Unfortunately, we are quite often unaware of this pitfall, but it happens all the time. You'll notice it occur the most when a preacher comes to a passage that seems to be at odds with one of his cherished convictions. The tone changes, and rather than hearing the

passage explained with conviction, you'll often hear why it can't possibly mean what it appears to be saying. We need to preach the Word faithfully and allow some of the tensions within it to stand. There are biblical paradoxes, and we should learn from them, rather than come rushing in to help God out of His predicament.

Similarly, we shouldn't overemphasize our own theological perspectives. This occurs when a sub-point in the text may have a bearing on something important to us. The passage might be going somewhere else but we hijack it by spending an inordinate amount of time on the sub-point which caters to our perspective. Not good! Proper exposition honors the emphases found within the text.

#### 4. Tag-Team Preaching

This is perhaps the most controversial of the pitfalls, but I feel compelled to comment on it. Many assemblies that I'm familiar with will preach through a book but use a variety of men to handle the exposition. I can't condemn this approach, but I think it weakens the process and should be avoided if possible. A strong expositional series will have consistency and will develop thematic elements with clarity. This is nearly impossible to do with a variety of speakers. Expository preaching is both a gift and a creative endeavor, and it weds the text to a given personality and set of life experiences. Utilizing a variety of speakers weakens continuity and inhibits clarity.

### Conclusion

Preaching the Word in an expository fashion is both an exhilarating and daunting task, and I recommend it to every assembly. Developing such a ministry needs to be a priority! We have to seek out those who are gifted by God for this task, develop their gift, and give them opportunity to preach. I recall Gary Inrig making a presentation

on expository preaching at an elders'/workers' conference in Guelph, Ontario, some years back. He was asked what an assembly ought to do if they lacked a skilled expositor. His response was brief. He said: *Go get one.* Such advice may not be feasible for your assembly, but let me conclude where I began: there is nothing as necessary or effective as a means of growing the body of Christ than a consistent diet of sound expository preaching! †

<sup>1</sup> Evangelical Village, *Andy Stanley on Exegetical Preaching*, <http://evangelicalvillage.com/2009/03/14/andy-stanley-on-exegetical-preaching/> (May 6, 2009)  
<sup>2</sup> PreachingTodaySermons.com, *The Truth About Expository Preaching*, <http://www.preachingtodaysermons.com/trutabexprea.html> (May 6, 2009)  
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.preachingtodaysermons.com/trutabexprea.html>  
<sup>4</sup> GotQuestions.org, *What is Expository Preaching?*, <https://www.gotquestions.org/expository-preaching.html> (May 6, 2009)  
<sup>5</sup> Raymond E. Gibson, "Communicating the Gospel," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 10:4 (1956), 410.



#### Ken Raymond

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# INTELLIGENT DESIGN CREATION SCIENCE AND THE CONTEST OF THE AGE



By Rob Sullivan

The United States has the largest number of churches, seminaries, Bible colleges, Christian colleges, Christian bookstores, Christian radio stations, and the greatest access to Bible-based literature in the world. In short, we have more of the light of revelation available to us than any nation the world has ever seen. Yet, our culture is becoming less and less Christian every year. If anything, our culture seems to be increasing its influence on the church as opposed to the other way around. What has happened and why is this shift taking place?

The Lord's conversation with Nicodemus in John 3 provides a key for understanding what is occurring in our generation. In context, the Lord is laying out the need to be born again.

Nicodemus struggles with the concept and mistakenly concludes that Jesus is talking about a second physical birth. In response, Jesus explains that physical birth is not enough, there also needs to be a spiritual birth to enter the Kingdom of God.

To illustrate, the Lord then uses an analogy from nature. The wind blows where it wishes. Though you may hear the sound of it, you can't really tell where it is coming from or where it is going. The second birth is very much like this. We can't do anything to earn it or control it. It is the work of God. Also, we can't see the new birth occurring any more than we can see the wind. At best, we can see the effects of it.

As one of the religious leaders of Israel, Nicodemus should have understood. Yet he still didn't! The Lord then provides him with a maxim:

*If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe; how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?— John 3: 12, NKJV*

If Nicodemus could not grasp truths about the physical world around us, then how could he begin to comprehend spiritual truth?

Ken Ham (president and founder of *Answers in Genesis*) uses this text<sup>1</sup> and connects it with what has befallen the United States, Canada, and the rest of the Western world. He para-

phrases the verse along the lines of the following:

*If you do not believe the earthly things in the Word of God; then how can you then believe the heavenly things in the Word of God?*

If you understand this principle, then you understand the basis for the assault that is now taking place on biblical Christianity.

So much of our culture conveys the message that the Bible cannot be trusted when it comes to the physical/scientific areas (i.e., "the earthly things"). By implication, if Scripture is untrustworthy when it comes to those things we can test, then how could it ever be trusted when it comes to spiritual things (i.e., "the heavenly things"), where faith must necessarily come into play?

This is the principle secular humanism invokes and the tactic our culture employs in assaulting the message of Holy Writ! The Bible is attacked in its science so as to undermine its credibility in other things.

Of course there is nothing new in this. A strictly naturalistic explanation for the universe to the exclusion of the divine has been afoot for many centuries.<sup>2</sup> Such notions long pre-date Charles Darwin and his voyage aboard the *HMS Beagle*.

However, our era is unsurpassed with respect to its challenge against the science of the Bible. Look at just about any avenue where the "conventional wisdom" of our society is conveyed. The message is that the Bible can't be trusted in its biology or geology or paleontology or astronomy and so on and so forth.

No challenge to the science of the Bible has ever been so formidable or effective as that posed by evolution and its proponents. Our schools echo the Carl Sagan mantra, "The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be."<sup>3</sup> The Learning Channel, Discovery Channel, History Channel, and Nat Geo alike contribute to the media

chorus of evolution as fact and selective mutation as creed. Courts and legislators alike wrestle with school board decisions to qualify evolution as theory.<sup>4</sup> Even mainline denominations have now folded their tents and given up the fight.

In recent years in the West, the challenge to the Bible has taken a particularly nasty turn. In the past, skeptics might dismiss the Scripture as misguided fable. Today, some evolution adherents go well beyond mere elitism. Two of the darlings of the media at the moment appear to be Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins. Born in England during the 1940s, both of these men are among the leading apologists for atheism in the world today. Their recent works betray a disdain and contempt for faith in general and specifically the God of the Bible.

*Religion is violent, irrational, intolerant, allied to racism and tribalism and bigotry, invested in ignorance and hostile to free inquiry, contemptuous of women and coercive toward children.*<sup>5</sup> — Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*

Hitchens' book does take issue with the religions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. But it is the Bible and the God it describes that becomes a focal point of attack.

Those who believe in a Creator are the subjects of attack as well. Dawkins explains that those who believe in a personal God are suffering from a delusion that is tantamount to insanity. He utilizes a quote from Robert Pirsig and makes it the basis for his recent work:

*When one person suffers from a delusion it is called insanity. When many people suffer from a delusion it is called religion.* — Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*

The contest at hand unfortunately is often framed as one of science vs. faith. The presumption is that the scientific community stands uniformly behind a purely naturalistic position of evolution. Against that stands the religious (and particularly, the evangelical) community. Of course, this is incorrect. Rational arguments for the existence of God go back to the Scripture itself:

*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.*<sup>6</sup> — Romans 1: 20

In fact, you could argue that the modern scientific movement was founded on the backs of creationists with a high view of Scripture. D. James Kennedy in *What if Jesus Had Never Been Born*, makes a convincing case for this. Bible-believing Christian scientists started many of the fields of scientific advancement that are the basis for so much of the technological development we see in the world today.<sup>7</sup>

Before Charles Darwin came on the scene, a majority of scientists openly professed belief in a Creator. The sentiment was that life and the uni-



# “YOU CAN’T DIVORCE THE CREATOR FROM HIS CREATION.”



verse around us necessitate a Designer. William Paley, in his 1802 work *Natural Theology*, presented his ‘Watchmaker Analogy’ that really summed up scientific thought on the matter, pre-Darwin.

*According to Paley, if we find a watch in a field, the watch’s adaptation of means to ends (that is, the adaptation of its parts to telling time) ensure that it is the product of an intelligence, and not simply the output of undirected natural processes. So too, the marvelous adaptations of means to ends in organisms, whether at the level of whole organisms, or at the level of various subsystems (Paley focused especially on the mammalian eye), ensure that organisms are the product of intelligence.*<sup>8</sup>

– William Dembski

For the naturalist, Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* (1859) changed the ballgame. He provided an alternative theory to that of an Uncaused Intelligent Cause to explain the complexity of nature and biological systems—namely, natural selection as driven by positive genetic mutations.

It is simply a theory and one that is, some 150 years later, yet to be proven in the laboratory. And still, it has become the presumed paradigm of the intellectual. One important response to this has been the Intelligent Design movement.

*The theory of intelligent design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection.*<sup>9</sup> – Center for Science and Culture

Beginning in the 1990s, the Intelligent Design movement gained momentum with the work of researchers such as Michael Denton, Philip Johnson, Charles Thaxton, Walter Bradley, and Dean Kenyon. They began to critique Darwin on scientific and philosophical grounds. “On scientific grounds they found Darwinism an inadequate framework for biology. On philosophical grounds they found Darwinism hopelessly entangled with ... the view that nature is self-sufficient and thus without need of God or any guiding intelligence.”<sup>10</sup>

The next wave of scholars included Michael Behe, Stephen Meyer, Paul Nelson, Jonathan Wells, and William Dembski (source of one of the quotes above). They advanced that Intelligent Cause becomes the key in understanding/explaining life’s diversity and complexity.<sup>11</sup>

To be sure, the Intelligent Design movement has a number of positives. It provides research and information that can be quite helpful for use with those who automatically dismiss the Bible. However, it is careful to dissociate itself with Christianity and the Genesis account of creation.

For example, the Discovery Institute at the Center for Science and Culture is a lead proponent of Intelligent Design. They make the following assertions about themselves:

*Discovery Institute is a secular think tank, and its Board members and Fellows represent a variety of religious traditions, including mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, and agnostic.*<sup>12</sup> – Center for Science and Culture

These comments are also telling:

*The early-to-mid 1990s saw the emergence of several scholars who formed the core of the modern intelligent design movement. They crossed religious and political barriers, from agnostics to Catholics, from mathematicians to law professors, to biologists ... Though they differed in their theological beliefs, the focus of the intelligent design movement was never God, morality, religion, freedom, ethics, or philosophy, but rather, equality.*<sup>13</sup>

Defense of the Bible and its message is not a goal for the Intelligent Design movement. Many proponents even allow for evolution as a vehicle for bringing about the complexity we see in biological systems. William Dembski is clear on this point:

*Logically speaking, Intelligent Design is compatible with everything from the starkest creationism (i.e., God intervening at every point to create new species) to the most subtle and far-ranging evolution (i.e., God seamlessly melding all organisms together in a great tree of life). For Intelligent Design the first question is not how organisms came to be (though this is a research question that needs to be addressed), but whether they demonstrate clear, empirically detectable marks of being intelligently caused. In principle, an evolutionary process can exhibit such “marks of intelligence” as much as any act of special creation.*<sup>14</sup>

It is in this that the most important shortcoming of the Intelligent Design movement can be seen. You can’t divorce the Creator from His

creation. What’s the point of proving that Intelligence is behind the universe around us, if you don’t ask and try to answer the next logical question? Who is that Intelligence and what is such a Being like?

Also, how things came into existence make all the difference. If that Intelligent Designer used evolution, then it is a Designer who has engineered death and survival of the fittest into His plan. If that Designer however, spoke complex biological organisms into existence from the get-go without the need for death, then something has gone terribly wrong in a world that is now beset by death!

Dr. Georgia Purdom from *Answers in Genesis* sums it up best:

In today’s culture, many are attracted to the (Intelligent Design) movement because they can decide for themselves who the creator is—a Great Spirit, Brahman, Allah, God, etc. The current movement focuses more on what is designed, rather than who designed it. Thus, leaders in the movement do not have problems with accepting an old age for the earth or allowing evolution to play a vital role once the designer formed the basics of life.<sup>15</sup>

This brings us back to where we started, namely, with the Bible and the Lord’s conversation with Nicodemus in John 3. How can we understand and believe spiritual truth as found in the Word of God, if we don’t understand and believe the things about the world around us as found on its pages? This is why scientific creationists play such a vital role.

Scientific creationists use science and its various disciplines to demonstrate that the Bible is reliable when it comes to its biology and geology and palaeontology and astronomy and so on and so forth.

Groups such as the *Institute for Creation Research* and *Answers in Genesis* are about the task of showing that the Bible can be trusted when it comes the “earthly things.” Organi-

zations such as the *Associates for Biblical Research* are leaders in demonstrating that the Bible is accurate when it comes to the archaeological record. Dr. Dave Reid’s *Growing Christians Ministries* has some tremendous study material with the course title of *Christian Evidences*. This material gives a great overview of the field. In fact, I named my own ministry, *Christian Evidences Ministries* after sitting in Dr. Reid’s class at Emmaus Bible College. I invite you to visit [www.christianevidences.org](http://www.christianevidences.org) to take a look at just some of the overwhelming evidence demonstrating the reliability of the Bible.

Scientific Creationism doesn’t just tell you that there is a Creator who is the Uncaused Intelligent Designer. It points you to where you can find out all about Him—the Bible! Jesus makes a statement in John 5: 39 that clearly lays out the Subject of the whole Scripture:

*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. - John 5:39*

The Bible tells you not just that there is a God, but that He became a Man and dwelt among us in the Person of Jesus Christ. As the Scripture says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God!” (Romans 10: 17). †

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/au/science-and-biblical-authority>  
<sup>2</sup> <http://www.naturalism.org/history.htm#modern>  
<sup>3</sup> Quote Source: <http://www.richardbell.net/sagan.html>  
<sup>4</sup> <http://www.aclj.org/Search/?sc=evolution> and <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4630737>  
<sup>5</sup> <http://antireligion.com.blogspot.com/> and Hitchens, Christopher, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*; Hachette Book Group, USA, 2007 (page 56)  
 Image Source: <http://www.amazon.com/God-Not-Great-Religion-Everything/dp/0446579807>

<sup>6</sup> Dawkins, Richard, *The God Delusion*; Houghton Mifflin Company, USA, 2006 (pg. 6) Image Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_God\\_Delusion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_God_Delusion)  
<sup>7</sup> Kennedy, D. James; *What if Jesus Had Never Been Born*; Thomas Nelson Inc., USA, 1994 (see chapter entitled “Thinking God’s Thoughts After Him”)  
<sup>8</sup> [http://www.arn.org/docs/dembski/wd\\_idmovement.htm](http://www.arn.org/docs/dembski/wd_idmovement.htm)  
<sup>9</sup> <http://www.Discovery.org/csc/topQuestions.php>  
<sup>10</sup> [http://www.arn.org/docs/dembski/wd\\_idmovement.htm](http://www.arn.org/docs/dembski/wd_idmovement.htm)  
<sup>11</sup> *ibid*  
<sup>12</sup> <http://www.Discovery.org/csc/topQuestions.php>  
<sup>13</sup> <http://www.allaboutscience.org/intelligent-design-movement-faq.htm>  
<sup>14</sup> [http://www.arn.org/docs/dembski/wd\\_idmovement.htm](http://www.arn.org/docs/dembski/wd_idmovement.htm)  
<sup>15</sup> [http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v1/n1/intelligent-design-movement#fnList\\_1\\_1](http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v1/n1/intelligent-design-movement#fnList_1_1)



**Rob Sullivan**

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# Truth Under Fire:

## A Q&A with Dr. Norm Geisler



The following Question and Answer session with Dr. Norman Geisler, author and Professor of Apologetics at Veritas Evangelical Seminary, took place at the 2009 Iron Sharpens Iron Conference. It was moderated by Emmaus Bible College faculty member, Mark Stevenson.

**M:** Moderator (Stevenson)

**Q:** Question

**A:** Geisler

### Relative or Absolute?

**M:** Dr. Geisler, you gave our audience a bit of a challenge last night. You told them if they could think of an example of relativism, you'd love to hear it. Well, we have some brave souls that have taken you up on that. First of all,

**Q:** We all know the old axiom, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Is this a relativistic truth?

**A:** That's a category mistake. A category mistake is confusing two different categories, like blue tastes good. Well, blue isn't a taste, it's a color. Beauty is a category of its own and truth is another category. So the question is confusing two categories. "Beauty is that which being seen pleases." That's Thomas Aquinas' definition, but I think it's a good one. And truth is that which corresponds to reality. They're totally different categories.

**Q:** "How about the statement, 'This is an old building.' Isn't that a relativistic statement?"

**A:** Well, "this is an old building" is a statement about the building itself. It's objectively true or false: either it is or it is not an old building. And you have to define what is old. And as soon as you define what is old you can apply it to the building and know whether or not it is true or false. But if there is an undefined word in the statement, then you don't know what affirmation you're making. Truth is something

that's either affirmed or denied. And if you don't know the terms in the statement, you can't know what is being affirmed or denied. It's like me saying, "Gurgleplops are twelve feet tall." You say, "What?" I say, "Gurgleplops." You say, "What does that mean?" I say, "Well, I don't know." Well, then it's not making a meaningful affirmation.

### Truth

**M:** OK, I think we'll move on. Next Question. You mentioned this morning in your talk – you referred to people taking their blinders off. So the question is:

**Q:** How can unbelievers take off their blinders, in other words, how do you reason with people who "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" and interpret the evidence according to their own presuppositions?

**A:** Well, I think that's a misunderstanding of what the Scripture teaches there. And it's usually built on a misunderstanding of I Cor. 2:14, "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." The Greek word *dechomai* means welcome. It doesn't say he doesn't understand it, it says he's not welcoming it. They do perceive. (Dr. Fred Howe who taught at Dallas Seminary made this distinction in his book on apologetics.) Unbelievers can perceive the truth.



That's what Romans 1:19-20 says: it's clearly shown to them. And they see it, and they're guilty and go to eternal destiny based on seeing it, knowing it and rejecting it. So they can perceive the truth, but they're not willing to receive it. They don't welcome it in their hearts. If the unbeliever couldn't understand the Gospel, how could he ever believe the Gospel? You have to understand it before you can receive it. Dr. Walt Kaiser tells this story. He said he was taking a class in Romans from a liberal Greek scholar, and everybody in the class was a liberal except himself. So he thought he'd ask him a good question. One day he said, "Professor so-and-so, would you tell me what Paul means by the Gospel? And the professor went into a 45-minute discourse on the Gospel. Kaiser said, "I've never heard anything better." It was so good that some of the students were getting convicted, and they were raising their hands and saying, "Professor, professor.

You don't believe that, do you?" He said, "I wasn't asked that. I was asked, 'What does Paul mean by the Gospel?' I don't believe a word of it." So he obviously understood it. He perceived the truth, but he hadn't yet received the truth. Then the suppression – notice Romans 1:18: they know the truth, but they're suppressing it – they're holding it down. So it's not a question of mind doesn't understand it, it's a question of will. He doesn't want to believe it.

**Q:** Many Christians seem to think that arguing for the absolute nature of truth proves Christianity. But many atheists believe in a correspondence theory of truth and the absolute nature of truth. But they also believe Christianity is wrong. How do we engage people who believe in absolute truth but perceive reality in a radically different way than Christians?

**A:** We do what the Bible says, "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord," Isaiah 1:18. "Give a reason for the hope that is in you, I Peter 3:15. "Whatever things are true, think on these things," (Phil 4:8). We use our mind to "bring every thought captive to Christ," (II Cor 10:5). We give them a rational argument. And once the rational argument is given, then it's up to them to accept or reject. That's an act of the will. Apologetics only leads the horse to the water. Only the

Holy Spirit can make them drink. Apologetics can just convince them that this is valid, that this is so. It can't convince them to believe in it. That's a matter of their will and the Holy Spirit working on their will. So don't think people are saved through apologetics: they aren't. But there's a big difference, and the difference is this: If there's an elevator with a light on, and the floor looks solid, and there's a 300-pound man getting off, and there's an elevator over here, with no light on, and you can't see the floor, and nobody getting off, which is the safest one to get into? Christianity says take a step in the light, the light of the evidence. Don't make a leap in the dark. But you still have to take the step of faith. It's only able to bring you to the point where you know that something is true; it cannot convince you to believe in it.

**M:** While Christians believe truth is absolute, we hold vastly different interpretations of Scripture on various issues. The questioner states: "I have encountered some frustration with the dogmatism of many Christians." (Here's the question – )

**Q:** While Christians are justified in arguing for the absolute nature of truth, should there not, at the same time, be humility about our finitude and general inability to discover truth?

**A:** I was at a Bible conference for pastors in Muskegon, Michigan, many

years ago, and another gentleman and I were having a friendly dialogue on a certain topic, and obviously we didn't agree. So I thought I'd ask him a couple of questions:

1) Do you believe the Bible is the infallible Word of God?

He said yes. I said, "Then if your view is in accord with the Bible and mine isn't, then you'd be right and I'd be wrong, and vice versa." "Right."

2) I said, "OK. Do you have an infallible interpretation of the Bible?" "He said, "yes." I said, "I'm in trouble. I'm talking to the Protestant Pope!"

I've got an infallible Bible, but I don't have an infallible interpretation. I've changed my mind four times on who the "sons of God" in Genesis 6 are. I've held all four views over the last 40 years. I had to be wrong three times. And I may be wrong now, see. So, I thought I'd ask him two more questions.

3) Do you believe God is infinite? "Yes."

I said, "Good, that's not a finite God. He believes God is infinite. We've got a lot in common. Then I asked the final question.

4) Do you have an infinite understanding of God?

Sure enough, he said yes.

I said, "I'm not talking to the Protestant Pope, I'm talking to God!" He has an infallible interpretation of the infallible and an infinite

understanding of the infinite. All I could say is, "Let's have coffee."

### Logical Reasoning

**Q:** This question first of all makes a statement and then asks the question. "In many cases Christians seem to begin with the conclusion and then try to show evidence for it. The questioner gives an example, and he/she made the point that he doesn't necessarily want to focus on the example, but the bigger point. So the example is, no matter what we are told by physicists or geologists, etc., some of us will not accept that the earth is more than 10,000 years old. So, again, the statement is, "We begin with the conclusion, and then try to show evidence for it." How do we justify this approach?

**A:** Well, there's nothing wrong with the approach. It's not necessary to do it that way, neither is it forbidden to do it that way. The point is the bottom line: You can begin with the truth, and then examine whether these things are so, like the Bereans did, in the book of Acts. Or you can begin with just looking at the evidence and then coming to a conclusion. You can jump in either place you want to. But make sure that you look at the evidence, and you look at the evidence with an open mind. Why is it possible to change your view? I've changed my view on many things in the Bible over the last 59 years that I've been studying it. Why is it possible? Some of them I had my mind pretty much made up at

because it was possible, even though I had my mind made up, I was able to put that aside and say, "well, let me look at this evidence here." And I looked at the evidence and, lo, and behold, I was wrong, and I changed my view. So, that's the way we should do it. No matter where you start, for example, when I started out... (I'm a pre-trib, pre-mil, dispensationalist. I believe in all seven dispensations of the Scofield Bible with the footnotes. That's my belief.) But when I first drew the charts and had them spread across the auditorium, I had each dispensation with a straight line between them, as though one ended and that was it. And then later I discovered, hey, the age of conscience is still with us, because we still have a conscience, human government is still with us because we still have human government. Then I began to diagram it differently. I didn't give up believing there were these different ages and different tests; I believed that they built on each other, and it was more like a staircase than it was a straight line.

How did I do that? It's what's called *retroduction*. (See Norman Geisler *Systematic Theology*, volume One, pages 205-225). You start out by doing an inductive study of the Bible – for example, the Bible teaches there is one God. The Bible teaches there are three persons who are God. Then you do a deduction and you say, "Well, there must be three persons in one God." Then you take that deduction back to the Scripture and let all of the

Scripture nuance it, help you to better understand it. That's called a *retroduction*. It's like a snowball going down the hill: Every time it goes down it picks up more because it's bigger. And then it picks up more as it goes down. So look at that chapter on methodology and you'll see that there are different stages—induction, deduction, reduction—which enhance your belief. And then you come to a conclusion that is broader and wider and more biblical than you had before.

### Only One Spiritual Solution?

**Q:** The next question apparently comes from a mathematician. So here we go: In mathematics there are problems that have more than one correct solution. And the solutions may even be opposite. For example, a positive number has two square roots of the same magnitude but opposite in sign, one positive and one negative. Does the multiplicity of solutions in mathematics have any parallels in spirituality? When can we determine when there is only one possible solution to a spiritual question?

**A:** You must remember: mathematics starts with presuppositions, and mathematics [is] dealing with the abstract, not the concrete. For instance, there are an infinite number of points between my two fingers. There are an infinite number of points now (different width indicated). There are an infinite number of points now (different width indicated). But you can't get

an infinite number of sheets of paper between my two fingers no matter how thin they are. So when you're dealing with the concrete it's a different world than dealing with the abstract. You're starting with different presuppositions. Riemannian Geometry you start with the presupposition that parallel lines can meet in infinity. You start with that presupposition, you're going to get different conclusions than you're going to get in the regular geometry, because in regular geometry, parallel lines don't meet. So the reason they can come to different conclusions is they start with different definitions, different presuppositions. When we're dealing with truth we're supposed to be starting with, either from general revelation or special revelation, truth statements—not just abstract. Because abstractly you can get an infinite number of moments before today. But you can't actually get an infinite number of moments before today—it's called the Kalam Argument—because if today is the end of all moments, actual moments before today, and an infinite can't have an end, then the universe can't be eternal. It's a good argument for the existence of God. Mathematicians look at you and say, "Well, you can have an infinite number." Well, yes, an infinite number of abstract moments, but not an infinite number of concrete moments. Because you can't end an infinite, and today is the end of all moments before today.

**M:** *We're going to have a quiz after the end of this session! (laughter)*

**A:** It reminds me of the story of Einstein and his chauffeur. His chauffeur had heard the lecture on relativity so much that he said, "Hey, I've got it down. Why don't you let me give it tonight?" Einstein got up there and he just wowed them with his lecture on relativity. And they opened it up for questions, and the first guy asked a question that was so complicated that he didn't even understand the question. He said, "That's so simple I'm going to have my chauffeur answer that!"

### Converted to Atheism?

**Q:** You mentioned that several prominent atheists have changed their position and now believe in God. The question is: Are there any well-known believers in God, and especially those who have professed to knowing the truth, who have become atheists? And what does that imply?

**A:** Well, it implies that someone was going the right way, and somebody was going the wrong way. There's a one-way street, and you can either be going the right way or the wrong way. So I'm not suggesting that no one ever drove the wrong way on a one-way street. They have, and there are some believers who have become atheists. I'm thinking of one in particular who was a

student of one of the top apologists in America today. His name was Don Loftis, and he was a student of William Laine Craig. He's advertising, "Apologist Became Athiest." Well, I've communicated with him, and I've read his book, and I've written a review on it. And I've found in his book what I find in all of the other people who became atheists: There was always a choice of their will in reaction against God. It was not because of intellectual reasons. Even Nietzsche, the great atheist, said, "I don't know of any rational reasons that have led people to atheism." If you want to read a great book on this, read Paul Vitz – he's a converted Freudian Psychologist who wrote a book, *Faith of the Fatherless*. And in this book he studied all the great atheists, and he found out that all of them either had no father, or a bad father, or a dysfunctional father, and they were reacting against God. So that, contrary to what Freud said, we're not creating the father, the atheist is killing the father. And I can give you illustration after illustration. I have a lecture on the new atheism in which I have all these quotes I've collected for 30 years. Huxley said, "The reason I accepted evolution is because we wanted to have our sexual freedom." It wasn't rational argument. My favorite two examples are Nietzsche who said, "If you tell me about this God of the Christians, if you could prove Him to me, I would believe Him all the less."

Now, what was his problem? It wasn't rational, because if you prove it, you should believe it all the more, right? He said, "I'd believe it all the less." That's rebellion. He said, "If you tell me I must obey God, hubris wells up inside of me." Here's an honest atheist.

There's another atheist, Jean Paul Sartre, who wrote the book, *Being in Nothingness*. He said, "All of life is an empty bubble on the sea of nothingness." That's pretty well like Harry Truman said of his political opponent, "That guy is nothing but a rimless zero." That's nothing right there. You say, "How did he become an atheist?" Jean Paul Sartre became an atheist. He said, "I was burning a hole in a rug one day with matches, and God convicted me of my sin." (This is in his autobiography entitled, *Words*.) "And God convicted me of my sin. And I said, 'Someone who would intrude into a child's imaginations isn't worthy to be believed in. So I gave up believing in God.'" He said, "I got rid of God the Father, but I couldn't get rid of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had attached Himself in the back of my head (I'm quoting almost word for word now from Sartre). But one day I caught Him in the cellar and I threw Him out. And He's never bothered me from that day to this. Atheism is a cruel and long-range affair. I've carried it through consistently. I've lost my illusion." Now, what was his problem? His problem was not lack of intellectual apprehension. It was moral rebellion. And you can trace to the heart these people—exactly what Romans

1:18 says: They know the truth, but they're suppressing it.

**M:** *Would someone like Charles Templeton fit in that category?*

**A:** Exactly. In fact, I was asked to debate him once. I'd learned from the previous debate that they were paying the atheists much more than they were paying me. So I said, "Well, how much are you going to give me for doing this?" They said, "We're going to give you a thousand dollars." I said, "How much are you giving him?" They said, "Ten thousand dollars." I said, "I tell you what. I'll make you a deal. I'll do it for nothing if he'll do it for nothing." We never debated because he was in it for the money. He was the one that used to be in Youth for Christ, and who tried to get Billy Graham to give up his faith. Billy Graham put his Bible on the stump and prayed to God and went in the right direction. Templeton rebelled against God and went in the wrong direction.

### Absolute Truth and an Absolute Mind

**Q:** Another question related to atheism: Is there any fundamental flaw with affirming the absolute nature of truth and denying God's existence?

**A:** Absolutely. Read St. Augustine's book on free will in which he gives an argument for the existence of God, calls it "a proof from truth." Because if there's absolute truth, there has to be an absolute mind, because truth is an

idea, and ideas only exist in minds. And if there's an absolute truth, there must be an absolute mind in which the truth resides.

### Why Pain and Suffering?

**Q:** The next question is not asked really from a philosophical point of view, but more a pastoral point of view. How do you answer the famous question, "If God exists, why is there pain and suffering?" (Again, at a more pastoral level from someone who has lost a loved one.)

**A:** Well, there are two ways to approach that. There's the rational approach, which C. S. Lewis did in his book, *The Problem of Pain*. That's an excellent answer. Then there's a more personal approach which he did in his





book, *A Grief Observed*, when his wife died. And you have to approach the question entirely differently. You don't give rational arguments to someone who is suffering. What they need is an arm around them, they need love, they need prayer, they need counseling. Now, I know because I've experienced both. I've experienced the rational; I've debated atheists for 25 years at the university. And that's very comfortable. I think their argument is wrong because they can't even get their argument off the ground unless there's a God. How do they know—as C. S. Lewis said (and this is what converted him)—how do they know there's injustice in the world and therefore no God? Injustice means “not just.” That means you must know what “just” is. So you'd have to have an absolute moral law saying, “Thou shalt always be just,” and an absolute moral lawgiver before you could even get your argument off the ground. So it's circular.

And then I know the existential level, too. The existential level is when someone who is close to you dies. My daughter died. I had buried my father, I'd buried my mother, I'd buried my sister. I'd been pastoring since 1954. I thought I'd seen everything, but when a child dies... you haven't seen everything until a child dies. And I felt the existential force of that. I was out making funeral arrangements with my wife. Four of my friends – John Ankerburg,

Ravi Zacharias, Josh MacDowell, and Kenneth Grath, had calls on the phone leaving me with some words of comfort. John Ankerburg, I don't know if he was just intuitive at it, or what, but he said the best things and the most comforting things. Number one—“I love you.” Number two—“I'm sympathizing with you.” Number three—“I'm praying for you.” And number four, “which was the great surprise—it's not your fault.” It's not your fault. That was so comforting to me, I cannot express it.

The other things that were comforting to me is (sic) exactly what Romans 15:4 says, *that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope*. I'd memorized hundreds of verses when I was in Bible School, and I was in Bible School for five years—the best part of my education. I'd memorized hundreds of verses. So I knew verses, and when I woke up at night crying, I could quote them to myself. And quoting the Scripture to me was a great comfort. I knew the words from great hymns and choruses that had biblical truth in them. I'd wake up singing them to myself: God is love, God is light, God is faithful day and night. He is eternal; He never changes though the seas rise up and swallow mountain ranges. Scripture, friends, and hymns; that's how you approach somebody who is suffering.

**Q: How would you approach an unbeliever in a similar kind of scenario?**

**A:** The same way. I'd approach unbelievers the same way because they're not immune from that. They need love, they need prayer, they need comfort, they need encouraging words; and I'd approach them exactly the same way. When I started asturing in 1954, my first funeral was an 86-year-old atheist. What do you say at an atheist's funeral? Well, I learned from my pastor you don't preach to the dead. That's too late. *It's appointed unto man once to die; after this the judgment*. Preach to the living. So I preach the same way: Comfort them with Scripture, comfort them with hymns, comfort them with your love and with your concern for them. And then you have a chance to win them to the Lord.

### Belief in God and Academia

**Q: How does a young Christian in secular academia function and relate to a body of believers who do not understand or sympathize with his or her daily intellectual struggles?**

**A:** That's a very good question. First of all, I would say to young people in the secular world be sure to read the book by J. Budziszewski, *How to Stay Christian in College*. J. Budziszewski was an atheist who was converted to Christianity much like C. S. Lewis—from the problem of evil: there must be

a moral law, and there must be a moral lawgiver. And he's written some excellent books: *The Law Written on The Heart*, from Intervarsity, and his book on...I just think his *Revenge of Conscience* book, Part I, is a C. S. Lewis quality type book. A great book. So, you start by getting yourself prepared for college. And remember, you're going to alien territory. This is the enemies' ground; they're out to destroy your faith. I know—I've been debating them. I remember once at Temple University in Pennsylvania I was debating atheists, and after the debate I went over to shake his hand and just make small talk with him. And he took a couple of steps back, and he said, “Let's not fool each other. We're out for the hearts and minds of these young people.” And they are. And they're getting most of them, too, because there's no competition between somebody who's come through our churches—they've been holding hands for Jesus for eighteen years and not learning much theology, and hardly any apologetics—to go into a University complex like that. That's like going to fight a world-class army when you've never even been to boot camp. So remember that. And then, secondly, that's your primary battle there. Get attached to a church, get attached to a good Christian group on campus, get well trained in apologetics, get some good apologetic material.

How do you communicate this to the people back home? Give them some of the evidence, what's going on, what you have to daily face. Show

them. We had missionaries that we supported for years, and their missionary letters were glowing. They were just wonderful. I said, “You know what, I don't even feel like giving a penny to you, let alone praying, because everything's o.k.” I said, “Why don't you tell me what's really going on?” The next letter they got robbed, a poisonous snake was in their kitchen, they got bit by it. I said, “That's the kind of letter we need. We need to hear what's really going on. Now I feel like really praying for you and feel like sending some support to you.” So, tell 'em! Tell them what's going on in the college. It's a rough world.

I was in eastern Tennessee speaking at the University there and there was an atheist who came to my lecture. He didn't say, “boo”, didn't ask a question, but of course he'll go back to his class and attack it all. I said to the students, “Who is he?” “Well, he's the Bible teacher.” I said, “He's an atheist, and he's your Bible teacher. Well, what are you learning?” They said, “Well, he won't let us bring a Bible to class.” So, that's where our tax dollars are going—to have atheists teach our kids the Bible where no Bible can be taken to class. They're in a really tough situation. And you need to convey that to your parents. Ask for prayer. Be in touch with somebody who can get answers because you're going to get questions you can't answer while you're there. And pray for your parents, and pray for those who don't really understand how tough it is.

### Old Testament Salvation

**Q: This next question comes out of your talk this morning. “Did you say that a person cannot be saved by the work of Christ without knowing the facts of Christ? If so, what about Old Testament believers?”**

**A:** Okay, I did say that, and there's a whole chapter on that in Volume Three of my Systematic Theology (pages 413-15, 524-51). But, revelation is progressive. And not everyone—if you had gone up to, let's say, the people in the streets of Nineveh who had just gotten saved—a big revival broke out, the biggest revival in history. Do you know any revival where one man preaching five words in Hebrew and brought down a whole pagan country and the revival lasted for 150 years, until the book of Nahum, and they were finally destroyed? I don't. That's got to be the greatest revival in history. Remember, Jonah started that revival by going to the University of Whales. Remember that? And he got a Master of Revival by Repentance after a three-day course. You don't want that course!

So, in the Old Testament, if you go up to these people in the streets of Nineveh and say, “Can you recite the four spiritual laws for me?” they wouldn't know how to do that. “Oh, do you know Jesus is going to die for your sins and rise from the dead three days later?” They obviously had less of the content.

Now, there's only one Gospel, Galatians 1:8: *Let any other gospel be accursed*. But Galatians 3:8 says that

Gospel is preached to Abraham! You look back in Abraham's gospel and you have to really read into the text to say that all these Old Testament saints had explicit knowledge that Jesus was going to die for their sins and going to rise from the dead. I know about Psalm 16 and Psalm 2 and Isaiah 53 and all of that. I'm talking about the average Joe-Blow in the Old Testament: did he know all that? No. Revelation was progressive. But in the New Testament it's very clear: Acts 4:12. And Acts 17 says that, "... the time of this ignorance God winked at, but now commanded all men to repent." So, in the progress of revelation today it is absolutely necessary to know the content of Jesus' death and resurrection. How do we know? Those verses said so. In the Old Testament Hebrews 11:6 applies to them: *He that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.* They didn't have to have that exclusive knowledge.

**Narrative or PreSuppositional Truth?**

**Q:** Some Christians are now arguing that Scripture needs to be understood as narrative not propositional truth. It contains truth, but it is not the truth. How do you respond?

**A:** Even parables have propositional truths in them. Jesus was trying to teach the truth in the parable, and that truth is propositionalizable. So every

truth claim is a proposition. The Bible is filled with truth claims. Some are given by illustration, some are given by example, some are given directly in discourses. But it's all propositions and it's all propositionalizable. I don't mind people talking about narratives. But it's like the Episcopalian Rector who was sitting in one of my classes. I was teaching a relatively liberal group of students that Jesus was the only way. I gave them the lecture similar to the one I did today here on pluralism. And so he raised his hand, and he said, "Are there any stories in Islam?" I said, "Not really many. Just little sermons." He said, "That's what I like about Christianity. It's got great stories." And I said, "Yeah, and they're true!" So, I don't mind people studying the narratives as long as they realize they're true. Do you realize that all the disputed narratives in the Old Testament Jesus and His disciples personally verified were historically true? Jonah and the whale. It's not a "whale of a tale," it's a tale of a whale! How do I know? Matthew 12:40-42, "...just as Jonah was," (Strong contrast), "even so I will be." Now, he's not saying, "Just as you believe this mythology about Jonah, I'm going to tell you the historicity of my death and resurrection." He affirmed the existence of Adam and Eve. They came to Him with a literal question about literal marriage and divorce, and what did He say? That God literally created Adam and Eve.



So if Adam and Eve aren't literal, then the doctrine of depravity, the fall of man, salvation, marriage, the church... Do you realize there are about eight fundamental New Testament doctrines that are based just on the literal, historical nature of Genesis 1 and 2, to say nothing of Jonah, and the flood, Matthew 24. I counted once, and it's in one of my books, twenty of the first twenty-two chapters of Genesis, Jesus and His disciples quoted something out of every one of those chapters as historically true. So, narrative is fine, but you start demythologizing saying it's only a narrative, only a story, and it's not important. To show you how far this has gone inside evangelical circles, when I was teaching at Dallas, it would have been somewhere between '85 and '89, a book came out by Moody Press,

the name you can trust (and I've published books with Moody Press, and I'm not knocking them, I'm just showing you how far this goes). And one of the Moody faculty had written a commentary on Jonah in which he said, "It is not necessary to take Jonah literally." So, I wrote the author first and I said, "Jesus took Jonah literally. It's necessary for us to believe what Jesus believed. Therefore, it's necessary to take Jonah literally." I like syllogisms. I think in syllogisms. He responded very poorly, I might say, and missed the whole point. I wrote the administration of the school and I noticed the next edition of the book it didn't have that in, so apparently it was successful. But, hey, if Jesus took it literally, it's necessary for you to take it literally, too. Because if Jesus was wrong in anything He taught, He can't be the Son of God. So all of this stuff about allegorizing, and mythologizing these things—they're great stories, but just take the point of it. Hey, the point is, Jesus based His teaching on those things, His teaching about His death and resurrection and His second coming! Just Matthew 12, Jonah, and Matthew 24, the flood, are two, for starters. So I look very negatively on people who are talking about mere narratives or mere stories as opposed to stories rooted in history.

**The Question of Alternative Lifestyle**

**Q:** We have a couple of ethical questions. The first one is: How would you contend against same-sex marriage and for heterosexual marriage, especially given the divorce rates among Christians?

**A:** Well, when I'm in a secular university, I don't bash them over the head with the Bible. Here's what I say when I get that question: Give me an argument against same-sex marriage.  
 1) You didn't get here that way! That's my first argument. That's all I say.  
 2) If all of you got on an island, within a generation none of you would be here! Just think about it. It's contrary to nature. Doesn't it say in Romans 1 it's contrary to nature?  
 3) The plumbing doesn't fit!

**To Lie or Not to Lie?**

**Q:** Okay. Next Question. Do you believe that Exodus 1:15-18 which describes the Hebrew wives' response to Pharaoh when he gave the edict that they should kill the Hebrew male babies, and Joshua 2, the story of Rahab, allow Christians in some situations to lie?

**A:** Yes. And I'll give you my reasons. Remember the Corrie ten Boom story. She's been abused at this prison camp and then they're being released, and they have to sign a statement and it says, "Sign here that you've been treated humanely." And she pauses for a

moment, and you can see in her mind all of the abuses going on, and then she signs her name and leaves. Remember the story about, "Do you have any other radios here?" and they said, "No," and lied to save the lives of the Jews. I mean, there are people who wouldn't do this. And I respect their view. But here's the question I ask people who wouldn't lie to save a life: Why do you leave your lights on when you go away? You're lying to save your lamps; why wouldn't you lie to save a life? You're lying to save your jewels; why wouldn't you lie to save a Jew? See, there are higher and lower laws, and when a higher law and a lower law come into conflict, truth telling and life saving, you always choose the higher over the lower. Just like when two of the Ten Commandments come into conflict. I faced that when I was seventeen. My parents weren't Christians. My mother didn't say, "Just stop going to church." She said, "You must give up this Christian nonsense, and if you don't give it up, I'm going to beat you to death with this poker." She was shaking a poker from our stove in my face. And I said, "Mom, 'For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'" And Jesus said, "If you love father and mother more than me, you are not worthy of me." There's a higher and lower law, and sometimes they come into conflict. And when they do, you always obey the higher, and suspend your obedience to the lower.

TRUTH UNDER FIRE

## The Growth of Islam

**Q:** The next couple of questions relate to Islam: Does the growth of Islam argue that naturalism, relativism and pluralism may not be as big a threat as we have made it?

**A:** Well, that's a very good question. In fact, it seems like a contradiction. I think we're talking about two different groups of people, because we've got a mixture in the world today. I'm talking about American secularism when I talk about naturalism and relativism and pluralism. When you're talking about Islam, I would say that's the greatest threat in the world today. And the reason it's the greatest threat is because it's the second largest religion, now the fastest growing religion—not because of converts, but because while we're having less than two children per family, they're having eight. You know how long it will take them to take over the world? If you and I don't start having more kids, and getting more converts—I'm serious about this!—go home and get some more kids. I've got six and you should have at least six. They're out-populating us and within one generation they're going to have taken over Europe and much of the world. It wouldn't be so bad if they weren't a violent religion, but they're a violent religion in which their book tells them, "Kill people that convert from your truth. Kill people that

believe things like the trinity and all this blasphemous stuff of Allah having partners."

I wrote a book on Islam in 1983 called, *Answering Islam*. It was one of the first books on the topic, and my co-author was a converted Muslim. He used a pseudonym on the book; I used my real name. He was afraid he was going to get killed. People told me, "Don't use your real name. You might be, too!" But what happier thing could happen to you? It's like sticking your gun... a guy stuck his gun in the gut of a Christian and said, "Give me your money, or I'm gonna kill you." He said, "You can't threaten me with heaven." Threaten me with something else; but you can't threaten me with heaven. Think of torture or something like that, but... So I'm not afraid. But in this book we said it's the greatest threat in the world today. And between 1983 and 9/11, I crisscrossed the country saying this is the greatest threat. For all those years I kept preaching less and less because it was falling on deaf ears and nobody was listening. And then the bomb hit. Now, the book had sold only 20,000 copies in those years, which is not a world's best seller (for eight years). In the next eight weeks, it sold 20,000 copies after 9/11. This is the greatest threat in the world today. Go on the internet and find out. There's a little clip about Islam and world population. It's on *YouTube*. You

can get it and just read it. It will scare the devil out of you because this is showing the cold hard facts of why we're losing the battle numerically, and it will just be a matter of time before they take over. They don't even need to get converts; but they have. I think you're absolutely right that Islam is a threat. And how can we reconcile these parallel things going on? Because secular humanism is creating a vacuum, a moral vacuum in which Islam comes. CNN, which is a liberal news channel, actually was giving a favorable report of an African country that was in such chaos until the Muslims came in and took over. In other words, they were saying Islam is better than the chaos they were having before. And if you talk to people who have converted, you will find that they believe the same thing. And the more that naturalism and relativism and pluralism break down our society—there are only two things that can really change that: One, a religion of fear. Islam, that says you need something because you don't have any moral structure at all. Or two, a religion of love, called Christianity. And if we don't beat them to the punch, they're going to punch us with Islam, and we're all going to be studying the Koran in Arabic.

## Teaching Youth Absolute Truth

**Q:** This is a question that I think is looking for a little advice: Where do you suggest we start in teaching our young people in our assemblies to stick with absolute truth? (So before they even go off to college, what are some suggestions you would have for parents and church leaders?)

**A:** The Truth Project is a good program. Get that and read it. It's put out by Dobson. They put millions of dollars into it. Any of the things that have been done by David Noebel—the book on *Understanding the Times* is an excellent book. And their retreats—they have two-week things with teenagers. They don't entertain them. They inform them, they instruct them, they challenge them. They're taking classes—8-hours a day, taking exams, memorizing verses. And they're lined up! People are lined up waiting to get in to this. So, they need to get into some world view studies. *Understanding the Times* is one of the best; the Truth Project is a good one, and there are a number of them around the country. So I would start there. Or get our book, those *Twelve Points* and the videos and the book that goes with it, and get them trained in it. You'd be surprised: They're smarter than you think they are! And they love this more than you'd think they would love it.

## Do Debates Lead to Salvation?

**Q:** There are a number of questions along the lines of this next one. It has to do with your own ministry: Can you tell us about some of the people that were saved after listening to your debates over the years? Related to that, another question says: You talked a little about some of the scholars and intellectuals that have come to the truth after examining the evidence. Can you share with us some of the more striking examples? And, is there a common argument that is convicting to people, that you've found?

**A:** There's not one common argument. Different arguments appeal to different people. Like, you would expect for Frances Collins, who was converted from atheism, you wouldn't have thought that the cosmological argument of scientific evidence would be the greatest. It was the moral argument of C. S. Lewis that was more persuasive to him. So you never know, depending on a person's background. But, in my experience over the years in debating atheists, many of them have subsequently become believers, and some of them became Christians. So I was debating in a University in Miami. And some of these places demand that no outsiders come in, and they demand that you take a vote after. So, we debated atheism, and the guy was a Harvard PhD in philosophy, and the audience voted two to one in favor of Christianity over Atheism. They had a

follow-up meeting. Fourteen kids were saved at the follow-up meeting. And the atheist attended the follow-up meeting, and he got up and said, "You know, I'm not even sure what I believe any more!" So, I don't know if he's subsequently become a believer, or not. But the guy named Richardson who used to defend the Moonies left the Moonies after we had a debate with them at Northwestern University. I debated an atheist once who was formerly a Christian—went to two Southern Baptist schools—became an atheist. I debated him at the University of Texas. And he invited me over to his home. Got his Bible out, asked me questions from the Bible, invited me to his class to teach his class. Again, I'm not sure he has become a believer, but... "I'll hear you again." "Some mock. Some believe."

One of the best debates we ever had was at the University of Calgary where we debated 3 1/2 hours on humanism vs. Christianity. The guy who was the other debater was a Berkeley professor, and he had written twenty-six pages of articles, i.e. it took twenty-six pages just to give the titles of the articles. He was on the editorial board of the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. We debated all that time, and they took a vote after it and the audience voted three to one in favor of Christianity. And the *Campus Newspaper* read, "Atheist fails to convert campus Christians."

I have a file full of letters that thick of atheists who have read one or

more of our books—I *Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, book, for example, and have become believers. There are some who have written me to tell about it. Yeah, it does work, and people do come. And they come for different reasons. But you give the case, you give the reason, and let the Holy Spirit use it to convince people. And you never know which one is going to convince them the most.

### My Favorite Book

**Q: Final Question: What is your top recommended Norman Geisler book?**

**A:** It's called, *Christ, The Theme of the Bible*. It was the first full book that I ever wrote alone. My first book was *A General Introduction to the Bible* with Bill Nix, 1968. And then I wrote that after. It's a Christo-centric view of the whole Bible. It's my favorite book. It's the book I love the best, and it's been one of the poorest sellers of all other books. But Jesus wasn't popular in His time, either, and if He came back today, we'd probably do the same thing, crucify Him all over, because we

couldn't stand somebody that perfect living in our midst. But seriously, there's nothing more important than the Scriptures, and there's nothing more important than taking a Christ-centered approach to the Bible. And it's just the book that I love the most. I wrote it in a snowstorm. We were snowed in and I didn't have anything else to do. I'd been teaching Bible Survey for ten years and I had all the material stuck in my mind, and I just poured it out. I think that probably in a week or a week and a half I wrote the whole book. And it's the book I love the most because it's the theme I love the most. *Christ, The Theme of the Bible* was later reprinted under the title, *To Understand the Bible, Look for Jesus*. †



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Dr. Norman Geisler is the author or co-author of some 70 books and hundreds of articles. He has taught theology, philosophy, and apologetics on the college or graduate level for 50 years. He has spoken or debated in some 30 countries on six continents. He has a B.A., M.A., Th.B., and Ph.D (in philosophy). He has taught at some of the top Seminaries in the United States, including Trinity Evangelical and Dallas Seminary, and has been guest professor at numerous other schools. He and his wife Barbara live in the Charlotte, N.C. areas. He maintains an active writing, speaking, and lecturing ministry across the country. He is currently Professor of Apologetics at Veritas Evangelical Seminary, Murrieta, CA.

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TRUTH  
UNDER FIRE

# THE PENAL SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT OF CHRIST

## TRUTH UNDER FIRE

The theme of the 2009 ISI Conference is *Truth Under Fire*. There have always been attacks on Christian truth from the days of Paul and Peter and the other apostles. There is nothing new in attacks upon the gospel. The lives of the apostles were spent proclaiming the gospel and defending it from false teachers. It is no different today. It does seem, however, that today there is an explosion of aberrant teachings within the Bible-believing community.

One of our elders was at a conference last year, and he got to speak personally with Bruce Ware. Dr. Ware is a top-notch theologian, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, who has written a number of important books. My friend asked him, "Where are the main areas of attack today from the enemy?" Ware sighed. He said, "There is no one place—every doctrine is under assault today. No matter what direction you turn, every major doctrine is being reexamined and redefined by someone. There seems to be an explosion

of attacks upon the foundational truths of Christianity."

## THE MEANING OF PENAL SUBSTITUTION

The aspect of the truth under fire that I am to address is really at the heart and the core of the gospel. It is the penal substitutionary atonement. By the word penal I mean that Christ paid the penalty for my sins on the cross. By substitution I mean putting of one thing or a person in the place of another—in the case of Jesus' death I mean that He died on the cross in my place, that is, instead of me. The word atonement is a broad, general word describing the whole plan of salvation. It means the reconciliation of God and man through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Our English word "atonement" was coined early in the 16th century and originally appeared as two words, "at-onement." It quickly became a technical theological term and was first used in an English Bible by William Tyndale (1526). He used it to translate 2 Corinthians 5:18, "God hath given

unto us the office to preach the atonement." In that passage the term speaks of our reconciliation to God, that is, the idea that we have been brought from a place of hostility to God to a place of friendship and peace.

## THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

That this great truth of the Christian faith is under fire is demonstrated in a book entitled *The Lost Message of Jesus*. The author, Steve Chalke, is a well-known English speaker, author, broadcaster, and social worker. The recipient of many awards, he is the director of Oasis Trust and Faithworks. Chalke's book has caused a firestorm in Britain and has found a receptive ear among many young evangelicals. In his controversial book he wrote,

*John's Gospel famously declares, "God loved the people of this world so much He gave His Son" (John 3:16). How then, have we come to believe that at the cross this God of love suddenly decides to vent his anger and wrath on his only Son?*

*Editor's Note: This article is an edited transcript of a message delivered by Alex Strauch at the 2009 Iron Sharpens Iron conference held on the campus of Emmaus Bible College.*

BY ALEXANDER STRAUCH

The fact is that the cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse—a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offence He has not even committed. ... Such a concept stands in total contradiction to the statement, "God is Love." If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetuated by God towards humankind but borne by His Son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus' own teaching to love your enemies and to refuse to repay evil with evil."<sup>1</sup>

Others agree that the penal substitutionary view of the atonement is unjust and unloving. Joel Green and Mark Baker, both professors at evangelical seminaries, wrote, "God takes on the role of the sadist, inflicting punishment, while Jesus, in His role as the masochist, readily embraces suffering."<sup>2</sup> John Spong, an apostate Anglican bishop, said, "I would choose to loathe rather than to worship a deity who required the sacrifice of his son."<sup>3</sup>

These modern-day evangelicals (Spong, of course, is not an evangelical—nor a Christian, it seems) find it embarrassing to talk about such biblical concepts as blood sacrifice, ransom, punishment, judgment, wrath, substitution, and propitiation. They find all of these concepts to be very distasteful and medieval. They are violent, and they create violence. Such writers prefer to speak of love, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, growth, and inclusion.

Some time ago I had an eight-hour layover at an airport. While waiting I met a couple in the same predicament, so we hooked up for the day and had lunch and dinner together. It soon became clear that the man's wife had the modern mindset that rejects biblical teaching on essen-

tial doctrines like the atonement. I tried to talk to them about the gospel and the Bible, but every time I would mention the death of Christ on the cross, she would say, "That's not Christian! Christianity is loving and tolerant. God is nice; He's not mean or violent. The cross is mean." This is the mindset of many people. They reject penal substitutionary atonement because in their ears it sounds so violent, cruel, and bloodthirsty. It portrays God as a revengeful being seeking retribution through His Son.

Well, you might ask, what did Jesus do on the cross if He wasn't bearing the penalty due to us? We're told He was there as an example to

**"THAT'S NOT CHRISTIAN! CHRISTIANITY IS LOVING AND TOLERANT. GOD IS NICE; HE'S NOT MEAN OR VIOLENT. THE CROSS IS MEAN."**



show us the extent of God's great love. You might ask, Is that true? Yes, of course that is true, yet demonstrating God's love was not the main reason or the sole reason Christ suffered on the cross.

Because the penal substitutionary atonement of Christ is at the very heart of the gospel, we should know it, understand it, love it, and fight for it when we hear people attacking it.

And, I should add, we should be able to defend it from the pages of Scripture.

### OLD TESTAMENT FOUNDATIONS

Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, well-known expositor and Dallas Seminary professor, said, "The sacrifices of animals ... were enshrined in the law of Moses as emblems and types intended to teach men and women that forgiveness of sin was impossible without the satisfaction of divine justice in the payment of the penalty of death."<sup>4</sup> With this helpful summary of the Old Testament sacrificial system in mind we shall now look at four Old Testament texts that set the stage for the teaching of the New Testament.

#### LEVITICUS 4:14-21 (THE SIN OFFERING)

*Then the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD, and the bull shall be slain before the LORD ... So the priest shall make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven (vv. 15, 20, NASB).*

I want to make four brief observations about this text. First, sin is the problem. God is holy, and we are defiant rebels against God. The fundamental root problem of the human race is not climate change, economic meltdown, widespread crime, or Islamo-fascism—although these may be symptoms. Rather our problem is sin, and it separates us from God. Second, sinners are cleansed by the shedding of blood. The entire chapter is about the purification of the priest and nation and anything contaminated by sin. Allen

Ross, professor of Old Testament at Beeson Divinity School wrote, "It was as if the blood were crying out to heaven on behalf of the sinner, testifying that the shed blood had purified the sanctuary to make a way back to God for the sinner."<sup>5</sup> Third, guilt may be transferred to a substitute victim. The elders laid their hands on the head of the bull symbolically transferring the guilt of the people to the sacrificial animal. The sacrificial victim was then slain. Finally, Moses says, the people were forgiven.

#### LEVITICUS 17:11

*For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.*

Again I want to make just five brief observations on this text. First, contrary to the contention of contemporary religion scholars, blood sacrifices did not originate in the pagan world. Corruptions of the idea (e.g., bribing the deity with sacrificial rituals) are to be found in paganism. Yet the practice of sacrificing animals had its beginning in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:21) and was later incorporated into the Law of Moses in texts like Leviticus 17:11. Second, the term blood speaks of death by sacrifice. Ross wrote, "Throughout the Bible blood is not only the symbol of life—it is the life. When blood is shed, life is relinquished. Draining blood from an animal formed a graphic picture for the worshiper that the lifeblood was taken. God had designed it this way so that the people were confronted with the loss of life and reminded of the sacrifice every time the blood of an animal was shed."<sup>6</sup>

Third, in the New Testament the practice of sacrifice continued when God offered Jesus as a propitiation (i.e., a sacrifice that satisfies the wrath of God against sin, cf. Rom. 3:25). Fourth, the love of God is the source of the sacrifice that satisfies God's just demands. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). As John Stott observed, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly that God's love is the source, not the consequence, of the atonement ... God does not love us because Christ died for us; Christ died for us because God loved us. If it is

**CONTRARY TO THE CONTENTION OF CONTEMPORARY RELIGION SCHOLARS, BLOOD SACRIFICES DID NOT ORIGINATE IN THE PAGAN WORLD.**



God's wrath which needed to be propitiated, it is God's love which did the propitiating."<sup>7</sup> Finally, as P. T. Forsyth noted, sacrifice "was not the worshiper's invention; it was God's prescription ... The value of the sacrificial rite lay wholly in the fact of its being God's will, God's appointment, what God ordained as the machinery of His grace."<sup>8</sup> He added, "The atonement did not procure grace, it flowed from grace."<sup>9</sup>

#### LEVITICUS 16 (ISRAEL'S ANNUAL DAY OF ATONEMENT)

The annual Day of Atonement was a dramatic reminder of the reality of sin, substitution, the transfer of guilt, and forgiveness. On that one day of the year (Tishri 10 in the autumn) Aaron (and subsequent high priests) entered the Holy of Holies with sacrificial blood. During the day he probably entered four times: (1) After slaughtering a bull to make atonement for himself and his family he entered with hot coals and incense which he placed before the Lord. The resulting smoke hid God's presence from the high priest "lest he die" [vv. 11-13]. (2) He then carried blood from the bull into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on and before the mercy seat or propitiatory [v. 14]. (3) Having slaughtered a young goat as a sin offering for the people, he brought its blood into the Holy of Holies where he sprinkled it on and before the mercy seat [v. 15]. (4) Having laid his hands on the head of a second live goat, confessing the sins of the people and sending it with the peoples' iniquities into the wilderness [vv. 20-22], he most likely entered the Holy of Holies one last time to get the censer and incense dish.<sup>10</sup>

This significant passage underscores at least five important facts about atonement. First, the Israelites, including the high priest himself, were in need of cleansing from their sins. Second, forgiveness is procured by the sacrificial death of a victim. "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22). Third, the ritual of the sacrificed goat indicates that atonement is substitutionary. It died in place of the people. Fourth, the ritual of the living goat illustrates that guilt may be transferred to another and taken away. Finally, the assertion of the Lord that the people were

forgiven indicates that His demand of a penalty has been satisfied.

**ISAIAH 52:13-53:12**

**(THE SUFFERING SERVANT)**

This text, the fourth of the great “Servant Songs” of Isaiah, was treasured by the early church because it is filled with a vision of the Redeemer himself.<sup>11</sup> Believers never tire of reading this passage for private nourishment and public worship. Although Isaiah alludes only once to the sacrificial system (v. 10, “guilt offering”), that allusion is clear and unmistakable. Furthermore, as J. S. Whale noted, “the song makes twelve distinct and explicit statements that the Servant suffers the penalty of other men’s sins: not only vicarious suffering but penal substitution is the plain meaning of its fourth, fifth and sixth verses.”<sup>12</sup> (1) He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, (2) He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted [v. 4]. (3) He was pierced through for our transgressions. (4) He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening for our well being fell upon Him. (5) We are healed by His scourging [v. 5]. (6) The Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him [v. 6]. (7) He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due [v. 8]. (8) The Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief. (9) He rendered Himself as a guilt offering [v. 10]. (10) He will bear their iniquities [v. 11]. (11) He poured out Himself to death. (12) He Himself bore the sin of many [v. 12].

**NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING AND PROCLAMATION**

The New Testament is one with the Old Testament in teaching the doctrine of the penal substitutionary

atonement. Let’s look at the key New Testament passages on the subject.

**JOHN 1:29**

Seeing Jesus, John the Baptist proclaims, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” He did not say, “Behold, God’s example of love.” No, he points to Jesus as the one who fulfills all of the promises and types of the sacrificial system of

**BECAUSE THE PENAL SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT OF CHRIST IS AT THE VERY HEART OF THE GOSPEL, WE SHOULD KNOW IT, UNDERSTAND IT, LOVE IT, AND FIGHT FOR IT WHEN WE HEAR PEOPLE ATTACKING IT.**



the Old Testament. All of the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament were pictures of the one great sacrifice for sin that Jesus made at the cross.

**MATTHEW 20:28**

Jesus is here explaining His mission to His disciples, and He says, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” He is telling them why He

came. Six important truths cry out for emphasis: First, Jesus came voluntarily. You and I are not consulted about two vital events, our birth and our death. Jesus, however, was sovereign in His service. He voluntarily came into this life, and He voluntarily gave up that life at the cross.<sup>13</sup> Second, He came to serve, i.e., His life was selfless, self-giving, self-denying, and self-humiliating. He served by giving Himself in death for us. Third, He gave His life as a ransom. D. A. Carson wrote, “The word ransom (lytron) was most commonly used as the purchase price for freeing slaves; and there is good evidence that the notion of ‘purchase price’ is always implied in the NT use of lytron.”<sup>14</sup> Fourth, the purchase price in this case was the death of Jesus Christ. Fifth, the clear implication of the text is that those for whom Christ paid the price needed to be ransomed. Like slaves or prisoners of war we needed to be released. Finally, the word lytron is used only here in the New Testament and coupled with the preposition “for” (anti) it “denotes a ransom price substitutionary in character.”<sup>15</sup> The preposition anti most commonly means “instead of” or “in exchange for.”<sup>16</sup> The thought here is of “a substitutionary offering for a human life.”<sup>17</sup> Jesus died instead of others (“many”).

Once we understand that we are a purchased people, bought with precious blood, the implication is clear. As Paul wrote, we are not our own; we have been bought with a price, namely the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We are now free from the slavery and bondage of sin. We are free to serve God, which is our greatest service and what we were made for.

**MATTHEW 26:27-28**

At the last Passover (and the first Lord’s Supper) Jesus took a cup of wine, gave thanks for it, and handed it to the disciples saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” The language of verse 28 with its “blood” that is “poured out” is sacrificial language. The sacrifice ratifies the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34, which provides for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus’ sacrificial death was “for many” implying that it was a substitutionary act. Every time believers partake of the bread and the cup they proclaim (announce, preach) the death of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 11:26). There is a great irony in the fact that people who deny the substitutionary penal atonement will nevertheless participate in the Lord’s Supper. This action belies their words for in taking the bread and cup they are proclaiming that Christ died for their sins, that He was slaughtered as a sacrifice in their stead, that He became a scapegoat for them and bore the penalty of God’s wrath in their place.

**ROMANS 3:24-26**

Our next passage comes at what C. E. B. Cranfield calls “the center and heart” of the Epistle to the Romans<sup>18</sup> and what older commentators called “the marrow of theology.”<sup>19</sup> This is because it is Paul’s central passage on justification and because of his use of the great atonement vocabulary: “justifi[ca]tion” (acquittal in God’s courtroom), “redemption” (release from bondage through the payment of a price), and “propitiation” (the satisfaction of God’s wrath). Our focus here will be upon verse 25 and Paul’s use of the term “propitiation.” He wrote, “Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood.”

I am going to make five observations on this text. First, it was God who set forth Christ Jesus, that is, displayed Him publicly. The whole initiative behind the act of propitiation was God’s. This is something we could not do for ourselves. It was an act of divine grace (v. 24). Second, Jesus Christ was set forth as a propitiation. This word expresses the turning away of God’s wrath from the sinner to Jesus Christ.<sup>20</sup> The Greek word here translated “propitiation” (hilastērion) is translated “mercy seat” in Leviticus 16:2, 13, 14, 15. The mercy seat or propitiatory was the place where atonement was made. Jesus

**ALL OF THE BLOOD SACRIFICES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE PICTURES OF THE ONE GREAT SACRIFICE FOR SIN THAT JESUS MADE AT THE CROSS.**



Christ is the New Testament place of atonement. What in the Old Testament was hidden from public view in the Holy of Holies has now been publicly displayed.<sup>21</sup>

Third, the translation “propitiation” is a matter of scholarly debate. Many modern scholars, following C. H. Dodd, argue that the word should be translated “expiation,” i.e., the covering, forgiving, or putting away of sin. Such writers view the concept of

anger or wrath as unworthy of the God of the Bible. It is viewed as a cruel and pagan concept. In thorough studies of the word by Leon Morris and Roger Nicole, however, it has been demonstrated that the translation “propitiation” is the correct one.<sup>22</sup> Christ’s sacrifice assuaged the wrath of God. Morris wrote, “Unless we give real content to the wrath of God, unless we hold that men really deserve to have God visit upon them the painful consequences of their wrongdoing, we empty God’s forgiveness of its meaning.”<sup>23</sup> By averting the wrath of God from the sinner to the sacrifice the righteousness of a holy God was satisfied. Fourth, the act of propitiation was accomplished by means of the substitutionary death of Jesus. The Scripture is clear, says Morris, “that the wrath of God is visited upon sinners or else that the Son of God dies for them ... Either we die or He dies.”<sup>24</sup> In summary of our fourth point we may quote David F. Wells, professor of historical and systematic theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary: “In Pauline thought, man is alienated from God by sin and God is alienated from man by wrath. It is in the substitutionary death of Christ that sin is overcome and wrath averted, so that God can look on man without displeasure and man can look on God without fear. Sin is expiated and God is propitiated.”<sup>25</sup>

Finally, the whole process is fair and just. It demonstrates the righteousness of God. God justifies the sinner, that is, He acquits him or pronounces him “not guilty.” How can a righteous God do this and remain righteous? He does so by providing a substitute wrath-bearer. Sin does not go unpunished, but in the mercy of God it is punished in the Person of Christ (v. 26). It is ironic that the critics of penal substitution say that it

is unfair and unjust. To preach such a doctrine hurts our witness to the world. No, we must allow the Scriptures to tell us what is righteous and fair. In this text the inspired apostle tells us that God's act of propitiation is both righteous, fair, merciful, and loving (cf. Rom. 5:8).

**1 JOHN 2:2 AND 4:10**

The doctrine of the penal substitutionary atonement is also found in John's first epistle. "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins," that is, Jesus has borne the wrath of God for our sins in our place (2:2). In chapter 4 John adds, "He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (v. 10). This is quite significant. The critics of the doctrine of penal substitution argue that it would be inappropriate for a loving God to pour out His anger on His Son. Yet our text tells us that this is exactly what a loving God has done! God's love is expressed in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ.

**ROMANS 5:8-10**

The great apostle wrote, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." He is here addressing the problem of man's sin and rebellion against God. His plight is indicated by the words, "helpless," "ungodly," "sinners," "enemies," and "wrath of God." Sinful man is helpless to save himself from God's anger against his sin. God solves the whole problem through the death of His Son. I want you to note with me the following five salient points:

First, we are justified by the work

**THERE IS A GREAT IRONY IN THE FACT THAT PEOPLE WHO DENY THE SUBSTITUTIONARY PENAL ATONEMENT WILL NEVERTHELESS PARTICIPATE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER. THIS ACTION BELIES THEIR WORDS FOR IN TAKING THE BREAD AND CUP THEY ARE PROCLAIMING THAT CHRIST DIED FOR THEIR SINS, THAT HE WAS SLAUGHTERED AS A SACRIFICE IN THEIR STEAD, THAT HE BECAME A SCAPEGOAT FOR THEM AND BORE THE PENALTY OF GOD'S WRATH IN THEIR PLACE.**



of Christ. "Justification" is a key term in the doctrine of the atonement. It is a legal or forensic [Latin forum = law court] term. Before the bar of God's justice the sinner is acquitted, that is, declared "not guilty." The word "now" in "having now been justified" adds the nuance of the continuing 'just' status of those so acquitted.<sup>26</sup> Second, we have been justified by the blood of Jesus. By "blood" Paul means the sac-

rificial death of Christ upon the cross. Our Lord did not die an ordinary death; He died a sacrificial death. Third, we are saved by Christ from the wrath of God. The God of Scripture is a righteous God who is angry at sin. This does not mean He is out of control or vindictive. Rather, He is righteously angry as are we when we hear of children being raped, kidnapped, or murdered. John's Gospel says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (3:36). Fourth, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son. "The verb 'to reconcile' means to bring together, or make peace between, two estranged or hostile parties (cf. 1 Cor. 7:11). The language of reconciliation is seldom used in other religions because the relationship between human beings and the deity is not conceived there in the personal categories for which the language is appropriate."<sup>27</sup> The doctrine of reconciliation tells us that God has changed us from being His enemies to being His friends—people who enjoy a personal relationship and communion with Him.

We should note carefully that all of these great atonement words speak of things that are accomplished by the death of God's Son: (1) Redemption—we have been purchased out of bondage at a great price. (2) Justification—we have been acquitted in God's courtroom. (3) Propitiation—a term of the sanctuary; the wrath of God has been assuaged in a substitute. The blood of another has been sprinkled on God's mercy seat. Philip G. Ryken, minister of Philadelphia's famed Tenth Presbyterian Church, wrote, "We see blood in every aspect of the

atonement. The blood of Jesus is our redemption—the payment of the price for our freedom from sin. His blood is our justification—the legal basis for the declaration of our righteousness before God. His blood is our propitiation—our protection from the wrath of God."<sup>28</sup>

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:21**

This text, says the Lutheran commentator, R. C. H. Lenski, "is one of the most tremendous statements written by Paul's pen."<sup>29</sup> "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Christ the sinless one was charged with our sin. It was laid to His account. We, on the other hand, become clothed in His righteousness (cf. Isa. 61:10; 1 Cor. 1:30). The words "on our behalf" (*hyper hēmōn*) should be rendered "for us" or "instead of us." It is a clear statement of substitution.<sup>30</sup> It is said that when Martin Luther first began to write about this verse ("He made Him who knew no sin to be sin instead of us"), he felt his pen begin to shake.

**GALATIANS 3:13**

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us." Martin Luther called this the "fortunate exchange."<sup>31</sup> Others have called it a "wonderful exchange" or "the exchanged curse." He noted that the whole emphasis of the verse is upon the words "for us."<sup>32</sup> The words "curse" and "for us" speak powerfully of penal substitution. The sinless Son of God bore the penalty of our sin. Here we have demonstrated "the indescribable and inestimable mercy and love of God." In one of the most forceful statements of penal substitution ever written, Luther wrote,

*"When the merciful Father saw that we were being oppressed through the Law, that we were being held under a curse, and that we could not be liberated from it by anything, He sent His Son into the world, heaped all the sins of all men upon Him, and said to Him: 'Be Peter the denier; Paul the persecutor, blasphemer, and assaulter; David the adulterer; the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise; the thief on the cross. In short, be the person of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men. And see to it that you pay and make satisfaction for them.' Now the Law comes and says: 'I find Him a sinner, who takes upon Himself the sins of all men. I do not see any other sins than those in Him. Therefore let Him die on the cross!' And so it attacks Him and kills Him. By this deed the whole world is purged and expiated from all sins, and thus it is set free from death and from every evil."<sup>33</sup>*

**THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS**

Throughout this great epistle we find sacrificial language applied to Christ. He is the High Priest who made "propitiation for the sins of the people" (2:17). "At the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (9:26). "By the grace of God [He tasted] death for everyone" (2:9). "Through His own blood ... [He] obtained eternal redemption" (9:12). "Having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God" (10:12). These and other texts in the epistle make it clear that Christ paid the penalty, namely death, as a substitute for sinners ("for everyone").





**1 PETER 2:24**

In an allusion to Isaiah 53 (vv. 4, 11) Peter wrote, “He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross (lit. ‘wood,’ i.e., ‘tree’).” The word “to bear” (anapherein) is sometimes used in the Septuagint (e.g., Lev. 14:20) of bringing a sacrifice to the altar, and some commentators translate, “He carried up our sins in His body to the tree.” Others see here the imagery of the scapegoat (Lev. 16) upon which the high priest put the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement.<sup>34</sup> In either case Jesus acts as our substitute taking our sins upon Himself and dying for them.

**REVELATION 5:9**

In a sublime scene of worship Christ is portrayed as the Lion of the tribe of Judah who is about to accomplish His royal office of dominion in His Kingdom. He is also pictured as the Lamb who was slain and then resurrected. His right to rule the world (5:10; 20:4–6) is based on the atonement He accomplished. “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” It is clear that this atonement was penal as the word “slain” and the phrase “with your blood” make clear. It was costly as the word “purchased” indicates. And it was effective as the fact that men from all over the world were purchased and given a place in the Kingdom (vv. 9–10).

In summary, then, we may say that the doctrine of penal substitution “assumes that our main problem is God’s righteous wrath against us for our sinfulness, which puts us in danger of eternal punishment. [It] argues that

Christ’s perfect sacrifice for our sins is necessary to satisfy God’s righteousness. Christ’s death bore a divine penalty that we deserved. By taking our penalty upon Himself, God satisfied His own correct and good wrath against us.”<sup>35</sup>

**THE WORSHIP IN REVELATION 5 IS SPECIFIC, “WORTHY ARE YOU ...FOR YOU WERE SLAIN, AND PURCHASED FOR GOD WITH YOUR BLOOD MEN FROM EVERY TRIBE AND TONGUE AND PEOPLE AND NATION” (V. 9).**



**THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF PENAL SUBSTITUTION FOR TODAY**

**IT SHOULD CREATE IN US A PASSION FOR WORSHIP**

The new song of the 24 elders and the four living creatures as well as the praise of the myriads of angels tells us

what heaven thinks of the Lamb who was slain. The heavenly-minded Christian will be a worshipping Christian. The worship in Revelation 5 is specific, “Worthy are You ...for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (v. 9).

The Lord Jesus Christ knew that His central work was to die (cf. Mt. 20:28). In fact, His death is the heart of the gospel. Paul said that of the truths revealed to him the gospel was “of first importance.” He wrote succinctly, “Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor. 15:3). He did not die for His own sins, but for our sins. He bore the penalty in our place.

Jesus gave the Lord’s Supper to His people to remind them regularly of His work of penal substitution. “Remember Jesus Christ!” Paul tells Timothy (2 Tim. 2:8). We are inclined to forget. Jesus gave to His disciples two simple items from the dinner table; bread and wine. “In the night in which He was betrayed [He] took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ In the same way He took the cup also after supper saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me’ (1 Cor. 11:23–25).

Our worship at the Lord’s Supper will be greatly enriched the more we understand the truth of Christ’s atonement. Shallow, unfocused, and irrelevant “sharing” will give way to worship that is focused on the great themes of Jesus’ atoning work. Our worship will take on new meaning if a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting would be set aside to explain

one of the great texts we’ve surveyed in this message. Our congregations need to understand these great passages of Scripture. Those who know the Word should model this kind of ministry at the Lord’s Table to help others see that worship should be directed toward God—rehearsing His mercy and grace and extolling the name of Jesus and His atoning work. Regular exposition of the texts dealing with justification, redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation will inform the mind, warm the heart, and put meat on our worship

Worship is also enriched by the singing of great redemption songs, that is, songs rich in redemption terminology. In fact, it is good to help people see the meaning of the songs they sing. It is helpful in a preaching meeting for the song leader to point out to the congregation the words of a particular song. This is true as well when a person suggests a hymn in the Lord’s Supper. Here’s an idea: have the congregation sing a verse or two of a hymn, and then, as the music is still playing, read the next verse and point out the rich theology in the song. Give the congregation a moment to meditate in silence on these words, and sing the next verses. This adds intelligent worship to our singing.

I would also encourage you to put good, solid books in people’s hands in order that they might understand these fundamental matters concerning the work of Christ. I am thinking of books like John Stott’s *The Cross of Christ* (Inter Varsity Press); Martyn Lloyd-Jones’ *Romans 3:20–4:25: Atonement and Justification* (Banner of Truth); and J. I. Packer and Mark Dever’s, *In My Place Condemned He Stood* (Crossway). These books will explain the truths of the atonement

and prepare people to resist the false teaching that is prevalent even in evangelical circles. For younger Christians I would suggest Jerry Bridges and Bob Bevington, *The Great Exchange* (Crossway) or John Piper, *Fifty Reasons Jesus Came to Die* (Crossway). It is in books like these, and not *The Shack* (!) that believers should be receiving their instruction.

Finally, your own personal worship should be enriched by a greater understanding of the penal substitutionary work of Christ. Your prayers will be deepened, enriched, and enlivened by these great truths of

**OUR WORSHIP AT THE LORD’S SUPPER WILL BE GREATLY ENRICHED THE MORE WE UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH OF CHRIST’S ATONEMENT.**



God’s Word. Meditate on these great truths in your prayers.

**IT SHOULD CREATE A GREATER LOVE FOR THE GOSPEL**

We should love the gospel and all that it entails. We should never tire of studying the gospel. We shall never in this life fully grasp the amazing depths of Christ’s sacrifice. It is rooted in the

divine plan of God. The atonement was initiated and accomplished by God Himself. He provided the sacrifice of His Son, and we receive its benefits in faith.

Love for the gospel means that we shall exercise great care in preaching it. A friend told me that in his church gospel preaching amounted to a string of emotional “tear-jerking” stories. A lady once told me that in her church there would be six or seven “altar calls” in which the preacher appealed to his listeners to “accept Jesus.” In both of these churches the gospel itself was hardly explained. In an evangelistic meeting the congregation needs to be told that they are sinners in serious trouble with God. Illustrations may be used to explain the concepts of lostness, wrath, redemption, justification, reconciliation, and propitiation, but emotional stories are no substitute for the gospel message itself.

**IT SHOULD CREATE GREAT DEVOTION AND SERVICE TO CHRIST**

The gospel is the greatest motivating power in the Christian life. We love the gospel as a result of God’s plan of salvation; it should become the motivating power of our service.

Jerry Bridges in his books often speaks of the need of preaching the gospel to ourselves every day. This will keep us properly motivated to serve God. It will help us from falling into legalism, moralism, false guilt, and fear. The gospel is the best and proper motivation for all that we do. It will protect us from being grouchy old Christians. I see Christians who, as my old friend, Sam Dalton used to say, act “like they’ve been baptized in lemon juice and weaned on a dill pickle.”

There are too many angry Christian people. There are others who are being driven by some kind of fanatical religious guilt; they live in fear and all kinds of oppression from man-made rules.

If we love the gospel, we will want to tell people and we will want to see people saved. We will have a heart for the people around us, and we will have a global vision for the gospel. We do not have a tiny gospel; it is a world-gospel. The great commission says to disciple all nations. Do you have a love for the gospel that inspires you to get it out to the whole world? Are you interested in world missions? If you love the gospel, you will love those who spread the gospel. “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news” (Rom. 10:15; cf. Isa. 52:7).

**IT SHOULD CREATE A DESIRE IN US TO GUARD THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL FROM FALSE TEACHERS**

What should our response be when we hear what J. I. Packer calls “smarty pants notions” on the doctrine of the atonement? I’m speaking of those who profess to be born-again, evangelical Christians, and yet they say, “I’m offended at the penal substitutionary atonement; it’s a medieval idea. It’s really offensive to the world; it’s going to hurt the gospel if we teach this kind of thing.” What should our response be? It should be one of righteous anger, saying, “You don’t know the gospel. Be careful. You may wake up one day hearing the Lord say, ‘Depart from me. I never knew you’” (Mt. 7:23). As Paul told the Corinthians, this message is offensive to those who do not believe the truth. It offends their pride to be told that they are spiritually helpless and can

only be saved through Christ crucified (1 Cor. 21–25). We should have a sense of outrage when we hear of people, supposedly in our camp, telling us that these are ideas from the dark ages, and are not even found in the Bible.

You know what Paul said to Timothy? Guard the gospel (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:12–14). We are to guard the gospel of the Lord Jesus

**THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE PENAL SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT ARE PROMOTING FALSE TEACHING. THEY ARE OPPOSING THE GOSPEL FOR A WATERED-DOWN GOSPEL—SOMETIMES SO WATERED-DOWN THAT IT IS ANOTHER GOSPEL.**



Christ. We are to die, if need be, for these doctrines. Be prepared to fight for them. Contend for the faith. How do we do this? Well, one way we do it is by making sure that our leaders, our elders particularly, are biblically qualified and know these doctrines. In speaking of the qualifications for elders, Paul said to Titus (1:9), “[He must hold] fast the faithful word, which is in accordance with [apostolic doctrine].” He must know it, believe it, hold to it, cling to it, and have no doubts about it so that he will be able

to do two things: give instruction “in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict it.”

Sadly, there are elders today who do not even understand these basic concepts we’ve talked about. I have received phone calls from people who say, “Can a person be an elder if he hasn’t read the whole Bible?” They apparently will settle for the lowest possible standard. Unqualified elders cannot defend the church from false teachers because they are not trained in the Word. We need to examine our elders as to their biblical qualifications. Can they teach the Word, and can they spot false teaching and refute those who promote it?

Those who oppose the penal substitutionary atonement are promoting false teaching. They are opposing the gospel for a watered-down gospel—sometimes so watered-down that is another gospel. The apostle wrote, “The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17). We need elders who are laboring in these great truths—teaching them regularly. In too many churches believers have never been taken through the book of Romans or the book of Galatians. As J. Vernon McGee used to say, “They’ve been raised on sermonettes preached by preacherettes, and they have become Christianettes.”

We also need to encourage people to do their own study of these things. Even the best of elders can only teach so much. If the people don’t go on from what the elders have taught them and study the Bible themselves, they will not grow in their knowledge of the truth. So you need to encourage and challenge people to understand these things. My topic in this conference is a case in point. Challenge your local church, “You

must understand the penal substitutionary atonement.” These terms shouldn’t be foreign words to them. They should be words that make their hearts glad.

Paul’s final words to the Ephesian elders were an apostolic and prophetic warning that wolves were coming who would devour the church. “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise speaking perverse things, to draw the disciples after them” (Acts 20:28–31). He says that these wolves would arise “from among your own selves,” and today the attacks on sound doctrine are coming from within the professing evangelical community. We need to be alert. False teachers are always at the door. They come in through religious radio and television programs; they come in through books published by evangelical publishers; they come in through what young people hear in some evangelical colleges. Be on guard; study so that you will have good antenna for teaching that is not the true gospel of Jesus Christ. †



Alex Strauch  
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<sup>11</sup> J. S. Whale, *Victor and Victim* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 67.  
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<sup>15</sup> Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3d ed. (London: Tyndale, 1965), 33.  
<sup>16</sup> Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 35.  
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<sup>18</sup> C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 1:199.  
<sup>19</sup> Cf. Frederick L. Godet, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. A. Cusin and Talbot W. Chambers (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 150.

<sup>20</sup> Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 201.  
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<sup>22</sup> Serious students should read Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 144–213; Roger R. Nocole, “C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 17 (May, 1955), 117–157.  
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<sup>25</sup> David F. Wells, *The Search for Salvation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1978), 29.  
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<sup>27</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 311.  
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<sup>30</sup> Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, 1053.  
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<sup>35</sup> Mark Dever, “Nothing But the Blood,” *Christianity Today* (May, 2006), 30. Dever is here summarizing J. I. Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution,” *Tyndale Bulletin*, 25 (1974), 3–45 (esp. 20–21). Both of these articles have been made conveniently available in J. I. Packer and Mark Dever, *In My Place Condemned He Stood* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 53–110.

**THE FUNDAMENTAL ROOT PROBLEM OF THE HUMAN RACE IS NOT CLIMATE CHANGE, ECONOMIC MELTDOWN, WIDESPREAD CRIME, OR ISLAMOFASCISM—ALTHOUGH THESE MAY BE SYMPTOMS. RATHER OUR PROBLEM IS SIN, AND IT SEPARATES US FROM GOD.**

# THE TRUTH THAT UNIFIES

BY JOHN PHELAN, SR.

In the fall of 1949, as young believers and as a newly married couple, my wife and I arrived at Emmaus Bible School on the South Side of Chicago. We anticipated that the LORD would prepare us for foreign missionary service. In time we would find ourselves back at home in Nashville, Tennessee, with a desire to see the birth and establishment of a New Testament assembly of believers in our home town. We were joined by Hal and Norma Greene, Canadians whom we had met at Emmaus.

The work started in a tent in the summer of 1952 with the help and encouragement of Mr. William MacDonald under whose ministry we had been challenged. The work continues at this writing and as happens in so many efforts, there have been many heartaches along with the blessings of GOD.

Some of the blessings have come to us in most unusual ways. During the 1960s when racial turmoil was very evident in our area, the LORD resolved the tension we felt by bringing into our fellowship an African-American woman who had been saved in an assembly in Detroit. When she relocated to our area, we gladly received her into fellowship. Thus Willie Mae became a blessing in our local church until the LORD took her home to heaven in 2006.

Because Nashville is a city far from the coasts, one might not normally think of it as a place where immigrants flood in to settle. Today our fellowship would suggest otherwise, in that we look like those described by John in Revelation 5:9, who have been redeemed "to GOD by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." We praise GOD that the believers among us come from many

cultures and backgrounds but we are all one in CHRIST.

Isaiah tells us that GOD'S ways are above our ways as the heavens are above the earth. This is borne out in the many unusual ways that have brought together the believers that meet at the Gospel Chapel in Nashville. In 1988, Pat and Myrtle Warner came to us from St. Kitts in the Caribbean via New York when his company transferred him to our area. The first of our Indian families came when the Saturn automobile plant was built here and they in turn have brought their friends. It was political unrest and the persecution of CHRISTians that caused some of our Armenian brothers and sisters to come to this country and be with us. One unforgettable evening was the night that two of us went to the home of an Armenian couple and were used of the LORD to lead to the SAVIOR a lady in her 60s who spoke no English, all through the use of interpreters. Desiring better educational and employment opportunities for their children caused some to leave their homes in Egypt to be among us today. Nashville is a great educational center and some have sought out those advantages. Presently there are several young folks among us who are finishing their medical training. The bottom line is that GOD is the One that has brought about the merging of so many with such a variety of languages and backgrounds. He is still the GOD of miracles. Instead of sending Mary Lou

and me to the foreign mission field, the LORD has brought a mission field to us.

At our recent annual "Praise and Challenge Sunday," to recognize and celebrate our unity in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the diversity of languages was highlighted. Passages of Scripture were read by individuals in some of the languages represented among us, including Spanish, Malayalam (a language of southern India), Taiwanese, Armenian, Polish, Farsi, Arabic, and, of course, English. The LORD has done in our midst by GOD the HOLY SPIRIT what millions of dollars spent at the United Nations has not been able to accomplish. HE has brought together a diverse body of people, unified in HIM, all knowing and loving the LORD JESUS CHRIST, to worship and serve HIM with a oneness of purpose, that is to make HIM known giving HIM all the glory. Again in the language of Revelation 5, "Thou art worthy ...and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." As one we say, "Hallelujah, what a Savior!" †



# Dr. MacLeod Asks

Faculty member Dave MacLeod leads us in a public forum to discuss issues pertinent to contemporary Christian life. Last issue he asked the following question:

**Years ago Prof. F. F. Bruce led a discussion on “Moral Problems in the Old Testament.” In the course of the discussion he was asked the following question, “If Samuel had listened more carefully, might he have heard a Voice saying, much as Jonah heard it some centuries later, ‘Should I not spare Amalek?’” (see 1 Samuel 15:13; cf. Jonah 4:11). Prof’s Bruce’s questioner was suggesting, I believe, that Samuel’s instructions to Saul contradict what we know of the compassion and mercy of God. How would you have answered this man’s question?**

## Steven Ritland Responds:

It plainly says in 1 Samuel 15:1–3: “Then Samuel said to Saul, ... ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, “I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”’”

God is not a God of confusion, so He would not give contradictory instructions. God knows in advance those who will repent and those who will not; He knew that Nineveh would repent, and chose to show that city mercy. Even if there were a possibility that Agag and company would have repented, which is doubtful, has not the potter power over the clay to do with it as he chooses? Can we give a better answer than that of the Apostle, which he wrote in Romans chapter nine:

So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom he desires. You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who resists his will?”

On the contrary, who are you O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this.”

Will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

Steven Ritland  
Rochester, Minnesota

## Jim LeValley Responds:

It seems that Prof. Bruce’s questioner was suggesting two things: (1) Samuel did not listen carefully to God in this matter, and (2) God’s judgment was not in keeping with his love and mercy. In light of 1 Samuel 15 (especially verse 2), it is apparent that God had clearly communicated to Samuel what he wanted Saul to do to the Amalekites. Samuel, in turn, conveyed God’s demands to Saul. The Lord also explained his reason for destroying the Amalekites, “for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.”

The incident of which God spoke is recorded in Exodus 17:8–16. At that time Amalek (grandson of

Esau) attacked Israel in Rephidim as they journeyed from Egypt to Canaan. In response God ordered Moses to write down in a book and then read to Joshua his decree, “I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven” (v. 14). It is clear from 1 Samuel 15 that Saul did not completely obey the Lord, and that incomplete obedience was his Waterloo.

Prof. Bruce’s questioner implies that an order to destroy the Amalekites was contrary to the character of God. However, the God of the Bible is the holy, sovereign, and righteous judge of the universe. He judges in history and will judge in the future in accordance with his own perfect standards of justice. As human beings we are finite and sinful and are boastfully arrogant when we challenge God and his right to judge us for our sins.

The case of Nineveh was quite different in that they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and the Lord consequently forgave them (Jonah 3:1–10). The questioner is unhappy with God’s judgment on Amalek, just as Jonah was unhappy with God’s mercy upon Nineveh. The lesson in all of this is that we should humbly

acknowledge that God is to run the universe as he sees fit. “But our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases” (Ps. 115:3). “Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?” (Gen. 18:25; cf. Rom. 9:14–18).

Jim LeValley  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

## Ken Barker Responds:

It is important to keep in mind the history of the Amalekites. They were the descendants of Esau. There were serious tensions in the family due to Jacob’s subterfuge which led Esau to be angry toward his brother and disrespectful toward his parents (Gen. 28:6–9). On a personal level Esau later showed kindness to his brother (Gen. 32:9–12) but the seeds of animosity had already been sown. Esau was an immoral and unbelieving man (Heb. 12:16) and his descendants bore the consequences in their dealings with Israel.

It seems that the Amalekites (descendants of Esau) were filled with hatred toward the descendants of Jacob in the eras of Moses and Samuel even

more than in Jacob’s time. They proved their hatred by attacking the Israelites at Rephidim, where they were subsequently defeated. At that time God promised His people through Moses, “I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven ... The Lord will have war against Amalek from generation to generation” (Exod. 17:14–16).

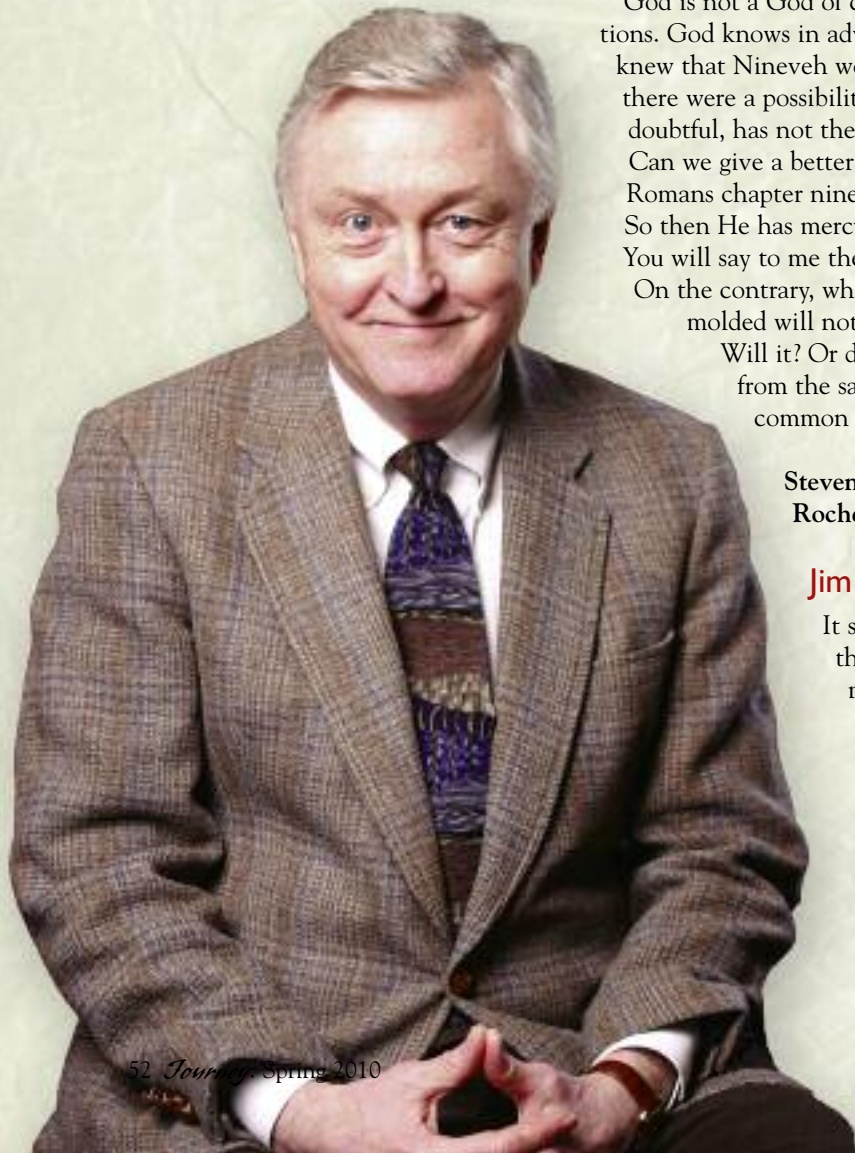
It seems rather strange that God spared Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrians, who became notorious for their hatred toward God and His people, and toward anyone, apparently, who was not an Assyrian. But God can and does see and respond to those who fear him and repent of their sins. Where would you and I be, sinners that we are, if God did not forgive those who repent and believe in him? (see Jonah 4:9–11).

Ken Barker  
Wausau, Wisconsin

## NEXT ISSUE’S QUESTION:

**Perhaps the best treatment of believer’s baptism currently available is a new book edited by Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright entitled, *Believer’s Baptism* (B & H Publishing, Nashville, 2006). One of the chapters, “Baptism in the Context of the Local Church,” by Mark E. Dever, addresses the question of access to the Lord’s Table. Dever, pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington D.C., would close the Table to those Christians who had not been baptized as believers but had only experienced “evangelical infant baptism” (Dever’s phrase). Dever believes that the failure to obey Christ’s call to be baptized “calls into question the claim of being Christ’s follower (since Christ commanded baptism in Matt. 28:19–20). Even if the disobedience is unintentional (as in the case of an evangelical infant baptism), it is still sin and cannot be countenanced by the church” (340). Should we regard conscientious paedo-baptists, that is, those who sprinkle infants, as “disobedient” and guilty of “sin” for not being baptized following faith in Christ? Should they be granted access to the Lord’s Table?**

**Please send responses to Journey Magazine, Emmaus Bible College, 2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001, or e-mail to [journey@emmaus.edu](mailto:journey@emmaus.edu). Include name, city, state, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited to yield brevity and clarity.**



# The Passover Lamb

© Beth LaBuff

There lived near old Jerusalem,  
A lad with withered hand—  
Despised, rejected by his friends,  
An outcast in the land.  
Just days before the Festival  
The boy was roused from sleep  
'Twas time to choose for Passover,  
A lamb from 'mong their sheep.

"A male lamb, that's one year old  
We'll choose, but he CANNOT..."  
(His father explained carefully)  
"Have blemish or a spot.  
The task that I'll entrust to you—  
To watch him, let him graze,  
Protect, provide, and care for him  
Throughout these next few days."

The perfect lamb—selected for their  
Passover that year,  
The boy's responsibility  
Required he keep it near.  
The next few days the lamb became  
A gentle friend, his playmate.  
He kept the lamb near while he slept  
And close-by while he ate.

The two watched clouds drift  
'cross the sky.  
They lay in pastures—green  
And rested by a quiet hill  
Near waters—still, serene.  
Inseparable, the two became,  
Content the time to spend,  
Not shunned because of withered hand,  
The lamb became his friend.

The boy wished things would never  
change—  
This peacefulness— forever.  
(Though course was plotted e'en before  
God's fellowship was severed.)  
As days passed by, a somberness  
Had settled o'er the lad.

The Passover required his lamb,  
His countenance grew sad.  
The sacrifice of his dear lamb,  
The thought gave him a chill.  
To take his mind off of his woe  
They climbed a grassy hill.  
Amazed—for from their vantage point  
They saw—*Place of the Skull*,  
Where three men hung on crosses,  
Raised high, above them all.

The lamb saw what the boy could not,  
A hushed angelic throng,  
Who looked down from the shore of  
heav'n—  
A force ten-thousand strong.  
Watching, waiting, at-the-ready  
In shocked and silenced pall.  
To come and rescue from the cross,  
If Christ should give the call.

Awed at the sight, the lamb drew near  
The cross—a gripping pull.  
The breeze whisked drops of falling  
blood,  
It stained his soft white wool.  
The lad's eyes wide, he'd tried to grab  
The lamb 'fore he could stray.  
A soldier barked with vulgar lips  
"You get that beast away!"

Their eyes transfixed upon the cross,  
They withdrew to a valley,  
His tears fell on his bloodstained lamb.  
They 'waited death's finale.  
A thought— *This Man, where are His  
friends?*  
Perhaps he's just like me,  
He gazed down at his withered hand  
Tears made it hard to see.

Then darkness shrouded 'round  
the scene,  
Both were compelled to look,

Death shadowed hill and valley,  
The ground in protest, shook.  
The Man cried, "It is finished!"  
He breathed, then bowed His head.  
"Surely He's the Son of God!"  
The Roman soldier said.

The boy rushed home, informed his Dad  
(His countenance was shaken)  
About the Man upon the cross,  
By God and friends forsaken.  
And then told what the soldier said,  
The ridicule, the blows.  
"They left Him naked on the cross.  
They gambled for his clothes."

'Twas like a beacon was turned on—  
Remembered prophecies—  
*For our transgressions were His wounds—  
Bruised for iniquities.*  
*Isaiah told that He's be like  
A lamb, to slaughter led.*  
*A Man of Sorrows, who knew grief,  
And punished in our stead.*

Then Father said, "There's no need now  
To sacrifice your lamb,  
A new cov'nant—established,  
Sealed by the Great I Am."  
The doom—dispelled from  
bloodstained lamb  
And boy with withered hand,  
Christ's sacrifice placated God,  
To save both lad and lamb.

*For Christ, our Passover lamb,  
has been sacrificed.*  
*1 Corinthians 5:7 NIV*

*Behold the lamb of God, which  
taketh away the sin of the world.*  
*John 1:29 KJV †*



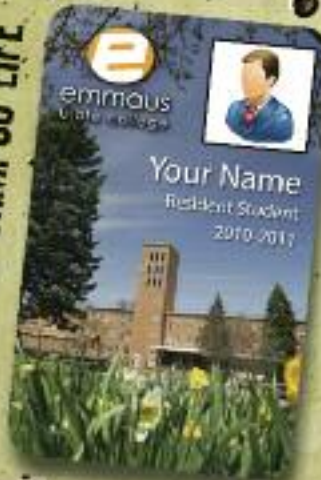
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  - Biblical Studies (B.S., A.A. or Certificate)
  - Business Administration\*
  - Church Planting and Revitalization (minor)
  - Computer Information Systems\*
  - Counseling Psychology\*
  - Elementary Education\*
  - Intercultural Studies\*
  - Music Education\*
  - Music Ministry\*
  - Nursing (A.A.S.)†
  - TESOL—Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (minor or certificate)
  - Youth Ministries\*

\*Features a double major in Biblical Studies  
†Dual degree program with Biblical Studies  
through Northeast Iowa Community College



EXPERIENCE LEARNING OVERSEAS



EXPERIENCE RELEVANT EDUCATION



EXPERIENCE REAL WORLD INTERNSHIPS

# News from Emmaus

## New Business Administration Degree Program

The new Bachelor of Science degree in Biblical Studies and Business Administration is a four-year program designed to provide students with a thorough understanding of the Bible and to prepare them to operate effectively as business leaders in either commercial or ministry settings. The program includes intensive study in three academic areas: Bible and theology, general education, and business.

The specific mission of our Business Administration program is to equip students with theoretical as well as practical ethical leadership skills in order to produce dynamic, effective leaders for the Kingdom. In addition, it is our goal as a business faculty to develop business leaders who are competent, conscientious, and people of character.

We realize that potential employers want to hire college graduates who have gained business expertise coupled with practical experience in order to produce effective, valuable employees. Our program is designed to do just that—to develop that kind of employee who is prepared to meet the business world head-on, with a biblical worldview.

Our Business Administration program will prepare students for careers in a variety of areas including finance, marketing, management/leadership, accounting, sales, human resources, and more. Thus, we strive to promote academic excellence in and out of the classroom—to educate and equip students through quality business curricula, resources, and services so they will make wise decisions concerning not only their academics but also their professional lives for future Christian service and leadership.

Eighteen students are currently enrolled in the Business Administration program; however, we anticipate that many more will join them as the program catches on and becomes the high-quality program that we intend it to be, and as the Lord enables.

## New Counseling Psychology Degree Program

Loving God, Loving People. This is the foundation of the new Counseling Psychology degree program at Emmaus Bible College. This past fall marked the beginning of the new program and the realization of our desire to train students in a sound orthodoxy with excellence in Counseling Psychology. While an 'Integrationist' model is taught, the main task is to develop a grid of a robust Biblical theology through which we guide our students into thinking "Christianly" about the theories and techniques found within Counseling Psychology. Our ultimate aim is to train and equip students to be effective people-helpers within the church and para-church ministries; to train students to enter entry-level professions within helping services; and to prepare students for graduate studies in Psychology and related fields to obtain professional licensure.

Only four months into the new program, we have 23 students studying Counseling Psychology! We're excited to see so much interest already within the student body and anticipate even more program growth as many potential students are interested in training for a ministry or career in people helping.

While most of the new courses will be taught by current Emmaus faculty, Mr. Ben Mathew and Dr. Daniel Smith, we are excited to have the additional teaching expertise of an Emmaus

graduate. A recent graduate of Azusa Pacific University in Clinical Psychology, Dr. Andrya (Maldonado '92) Dieter will be teaching a course in Personality Theories to our upper-classmen in the spring semester. We appreciate her willingness to assist with our new program.

We covet your prayers as we continue to develop the program and as we seek to train our students to better love God, and to better love people.

## Notice

Emmaus Bible College is seeking comments from the public about the College in preparation for its periodic evaluation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. Emmaus will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit November 15 – 17, 2010 by a team representing the Higher Learning Commission. The visiting team will review the College's ongoing ability to meet the Commission's Criteria for Accreditation.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the college to:

Public Comment on Emmaus Bible College  
The Higher Learning Commission  
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools  
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400  
Chicago, IL 60602

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed; comments cannot be treated as confidential.

All comments must be received by October 15, 2010.

# Emmaus On the Road

| Name   | Dates  | Location/Events  | City/State  |
|--|--|--|---|
|  <b>Ken Daughters</b>     | June 30-July 4<br>July 25-31<br>Aug 7-14<br>Sep 5, 12, 19, 26            | Indian Brethren Fellowship Family Bible Conference, Indiana Wesleyan University<br>Koronis Bible Camp<br>Upper Peninsula Bible Camp<br>Park Manor Bible Chapel | Marion, IN<br>Paynesville, MN<br>Gwinn, MI<br>Elgin, IL         |
|  <b>Jack Fish</b>         | June 20<br>June 27<br>August 1   | Woodside Chapel<br>Lexington Bible Chapel<br>Oak Ridge Bible Chapel  | Fanwood, NJ<br>Lexington, MA<br>Milan, IL                       |
|  <b>Ken Fleming</b>       | June 12-18   | Missionary Orientation Program   | Greenwood Hills PA  |
|  <b>Dave Glock</b>       | July 25-31   | Koronis Bible Camp   | Paynesville, MN   |
|  <b>Jon Glock</b>       | June 6, Aug 1<br>June 20-25<br>July 4-9<br>Aug 15, 21                    | Oak Lawn Bible Chapel<br>Iowa Bible camp<br>Horton Haven Christian Camp<br>Park Manor Bible Chapel   | Oak Lawn, IL<br>Manson, IA<br>Chapel Hill, TN<br>Elgin, IL      |
|  <b>Joel Hernandez</b>  | June 12-18   | Missionary Orientation Program   | Greenwood Hills PA  |
|  <b>Susie Henderson</b> | July 17-24   | Greenwood Hills Girl's Camp  | Fayetteville, PA  |
|  <b>Tim Iverson</b>     | July 18  | Woodside Bible Chapel  | Maywood, IL   |
|  <b>John Jimo</b>       | June 6, 13, 20, 27<br>July 18-23<br>July 24-31<br>Aug 30, Sept 5, 12, 19 | Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel<br>Sandy Creek Bible Camp<br>Lake Geneva Summer Conference<br>Northwest Bible Chapel   | Dubuque, IA<br>Washington, TX<br>Lake Geneva, WI<br>Chicago, IL |

| Name   | Dates                               | Location/Events                      | City/State           |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
|    | June 13-18                          | Kansas Bible Camp                    | Hutchinson, KS       |
|  | June 20-25                          | Iowa Bible Camp                      | Manson, IA           |
|  | June 27-July                        | Camp Elim                            | Woodland Park, CO    |
|  | July 11-17                          | Camp Li Lo Li                        | Randolph, NY         |
|  | July 18-23, July 25-30,<br>Sept 3-6 | Horton Haven Christian Camp          | Chapel Hill, TN      |
|    | June 6-11                           | Sandy Creek Bible Camp               | Washington, TX       |
|  | June 18-20                          | New Life Bible Chapel                | Toronto, ON          |
|  | August 2-11                         | East Iowa Bible Camp                 | Deep River, IA       |
|  | September 4-6                       | Camp Elim                            | Woodland Park, CO    |
|    | July 4 – 10                         | Camp Li-Lo-Li                        | Randolph, NY         |
|   | June 13                             | Bayside Community Church             | Tampa, Florida       |
|  | June 20                             | Northgate Gospel Chapel              | Seattle, Washington  |
|  | June 21-24                          | Lakeside Bible Camp                  | Clinton, Washington  |
|  | June 13, 16                         | Braidwood Bible Chapel               | Peterborough Ontario |
|  | June 13-20                          | Peterborough, Ontario                |                      |
|  | July 12-20                          | Manchester, England                  |                      |
|  | August 22, 29                       | Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel, Dubuque, IA |                      |
|  | June 5-6                            | Charlotte Chinese Baptist Church     | Charlotte, NC        |
|  | June 13                             | Christian Believers of Donnelson     | Donnelson, TN        |
|  | June 13-18                          | Horton Haven Christian Camp          | Chapel Hill, TN      |
|  | June 20, 27                         | Oak Lawn Bible Chapel                | Oak Lawn, IL         |
|  | June 28-July 2                      | IFCA National Convention             | Springfield, IL      |
|  | July 4, 11                          | Park Manor Bible Chapel              | Elgin, IL            |
|  | July 25-31                          | Verdugo Pines Bible Camp             | Wrightwood, CA       |
|  | August 1-7                          | Upper Peninsula Bible Camp           | Gwinn, MI            |
|  | June 6, 13                          | Cedar Rapids Bible Chapel            | Cedar Rapids, IA     |
|  | June 20, Aug 8                      | Northwest Bible Fellowship           | Omaha, NE            |
|  | July 18-23                          | Willowbrook Bible Camp               | Des Moines, IA       |
|  | July 25, Sept 26,                   | Keystone Bible Chapel                | Omaha, NE            |
|  | August 22-27                        | Lakeside Bible Camp                  | Whidbey Island, WA   |

If you would like more information about having faculty speak at your assembly, retreat, conference or camp please call 1-800-397-BIBLE or e-mail [info@emmaus.edu](mailto:info@emmaus.edu).



FROM THE DESK OF  
DR. STEVE WITTER

Dear Friend of Emmaus,

Most of us love a good deal! If we find out that our favorite retailer is having a great sale, or a good restaurant is having a special, we often do two things. First, we take advantage of it ourselves, and two, we tell our friends about it so they can benefit from it too. I am aware of a pretty good deal, and I want to pass it along to you.

You are reading this because you have Journey Magazine in your hands. Journey Magazine was launched some 10 years ago as a part of the college's Emmaus Ministry Resources program. EMR was launched in the year 2000 to aid in the health and growth of assemblies and the lives of individuals. The four pillars of EMR are the Iron Sharpens Iron conference, EmmausOnline, EMRyouth, and Journey Magazine. For the first 10 years, these projects have been fully funded by a grant that was given to the college for these purposes. This has indeed been a blessing, and only eternity will reveal how the Lord has used these efforts to further the Kingdom for His glory. Until the Lord returns, we at the college believe that EMR will continue to be used in a positive way in the work of the Lord.

Journey Magazine has been produced all this time without subscription....and because we believe that the content of each Journey Magazine is helpful to you, we would like to be able to continue to send it regardless of your ability or willingness to pay. However, the fact remains that it does take resources to produce Journey....which leads me back to that good deal.

If every person who receives Journey Magazine were to send the college \$10, we would easily cover the cost of providing this magazine. That's \$3.33 cents per issue....about what you'd pay for an Iced Vanilla Latte from Starbucks. That's a GREAT DEAL! The Iced Vanilla Latte will grow your waistline; Journey can be used to grow your spiritual walk!

Your partnership with us will allow us to continue to provide you and others with a magazine designed to encourage you and your walk with the Lord. Of course, not everyone is going to be able to send \$10, so if you are able and willing to do more, please do so.

Of course, if not enough people take advantage of this good deal, we will have to revisit the drawing board, and may have to make some changes in the magazine as it currently is published! Thank you in advance for your support....and tell someone else about the great deal that you've just found out about!

Because HE lives,

Steven R. Witter, PhD  
Vice-President for Advancement



Emmaus Bible College  
2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001

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# SOUND BIBLE TEACHING

[www.emmaus.edu/online](http://www.emmaus.edu/online)

Lectures from the classrooms of Emmaus Bible College presented in video format, online, for free. All you need is a Bible, a computer, and a high-speed internet connection. It's a whole new way to walk the Emmaus road.

