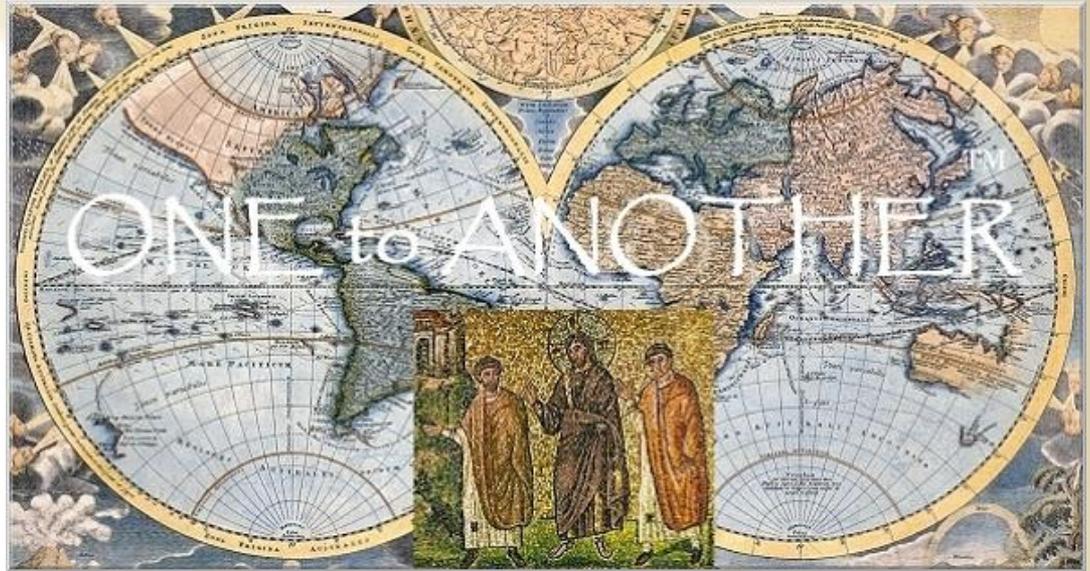




"And they said **one to another**, did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?"
Luke 24:32 KJV



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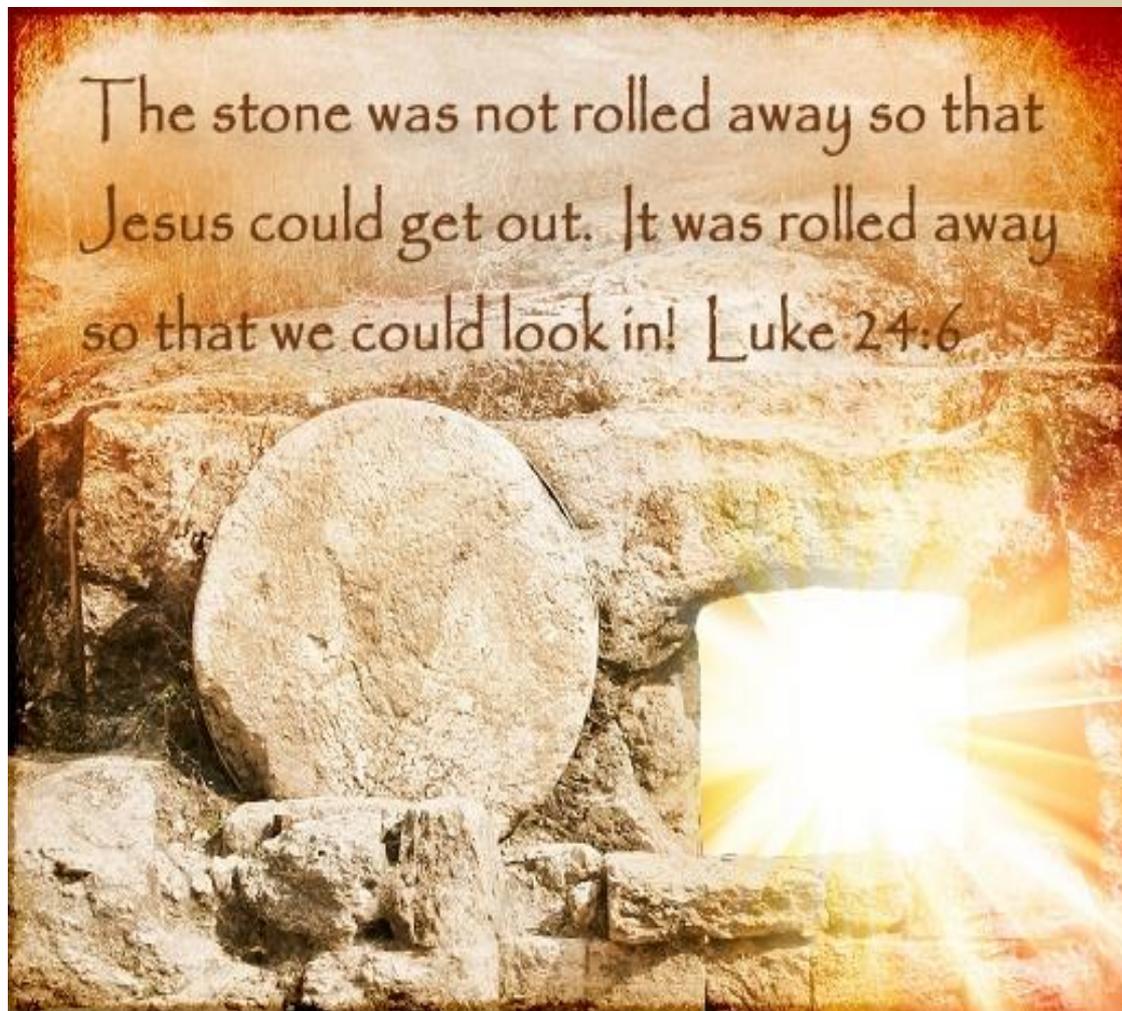


For many Christians, their favorite story of Jesus during the forty days following His resurrection is the account of Peter's reinstatement of rank among the disciples. This event, recorded in John chapter 21, takes up all but the final verse of the last chapter of that gospel.

In twenty-four wonderful verses, John tells how Jesus performs His second and final miracle of the fishing nets, and how this led to Peter's reinstatement. The great old Gospel hymn "Lovest Thou Me More Than These" is taken from verses (15-18).

Scholars have puzzled over the count of the fish taken in the net. Why exactly 153 large fish? Numerical calculations have been offered up along with conjectured connections to other numbers, yet in the end only one thing is perfectly clear - there was an exact count of the fish, and the number was 153. Whatever else it may mean (and it must mean something), it was a big catch! Big enough to have lured the fishermen back to their nets and boats. *Continued on the next page...*

ONE-HUNDRED & FIFTY-THREE REASONS TO QUIT



The stone was not rolled away so that Jesus could get out. It was rolled away so that we could look in! Luke 24:6

Original picture courtesy of <https://stpeterpastor.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/empty-tomb-worship-slide.jpg> 2013

153 Reasons to Quit



Continued from the previous page...

The area of Galilee is a beautiful place, and the lake (the lowest fresh water lake on earth), was the home fishing grounds of Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and his brother John (the author of the Gospel that bears his name).

Therefore, some have suggested that Jesus may have been pointing to the huge catch of fish when He asked Peter: *“Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these”* (21:15)? This view seems supported by what Peter said prior to the fishing expedition of the night before. *“I am going out to fish’, Simon Peter told them, and they said, ‘We’ll go with you’”* (21:3).

Others have suggested that Jesus may have been referring to Peter’s fishing companions, and whether he loved them more than Jesus.

Perhaps the large and profitable catch of fish is the most likely. If Peter were ever going to return to his profession, now would be the time. With Jesus resurrected, the future uncertain, and a boat load of fish to sell, Peter and the others could start fresh, and rebuild their careers. Only someone who really loves to fish, and has done it for a living, can fully appreciate the temptation – a 153 reason to quit!

However, you do not need to be a fisherman to understand and appreciate the fact that there comes a time in the life of every disciple when we have to make a decision to follow the Master without hesitation, and without promise of compensation or turn back to what we think we know how to do in the flesh.

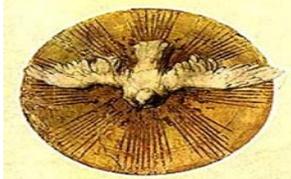
Even so, there is a caveat in this story. As impressive as the catch of fish was, the fact remained that Peter and the others had fished all night without success. It was only when Jesus intervened that the catch was taken. The lesson here is that there is no real security outside of His provision, and even the fish we catch by our own efforts are still His creation. He is the Lord of Life no matter the circumstance.

The question is still very personal - *“Do you truly love me more than these?”* Whatever *“these”* may be, we still have to make a choice. Though like Peter, we are unworthy, let us too say to the Risen - *“Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You”* (21:17), and then lay down our nets, leave our boats, and follow Him.

Dennis D. Frey, Th.D., President, Master’s International University of Divinity

CAN YOU GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE?

Read Luke 4:1, 16-19; Acts 10:38; Philippians 2:5



by Raymond L. Parker, Ph.D., V.P. for Academic Affairs

Continued from last month...

I. The Concept of Christ-likeness

The concept of Christ-likeness is made clear in the New Testament. Paul declared that we are to have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5). We are to look at life as Christ did. We are to follow the will of God as Christ did. We are to relate to others as Christ did. We are to honor the Scripture as Christ did. We are to put God first in every decision as Christ did.

Now we must be reminded the Lord Jesus in His humanity, (that is, as He lived as a man on planet earth), was led by the Spirit, anointed by the Spirit, and walked by means of the Spirit. The Scripture passages listed above proclaim this reality. The only way that you and I can follow the example of Christ is when we are led by the Spirit, live in the Spirit, and walk by means of the Spirit (Gal. 5:18, 25). The Christian life is not trying harder or doing more. The Christian life is dependence upon and sensitivity to the initial promptings of the Holy Spirit.

II. The Evidence of Christ-likeness

As we follow Christ in the living of His human life on our planet, several realities are evident. The evidence of Christ-likeness in us is when these realities are manifest in our lives and seen by others.

As we join that disciple band of two thousand years ago, we note several characteristics of the life of Christ. For example:

When Christ saw the hungry, He fed them.
When Christ saw the sad, He cheered them.
When Christ saw the weary, He strengthened them.
When Christ saw little children, He blessed them.
When Christ saw the bereaved, He comforted them.
When people cursed Him, He blessed them.
When people hated Him, He loved them.
When people spitefully used Him, He prayed for them.
When one of His own betrayed Him, He called him friend.
When people reviled Him, He did not retaliate.
He never sought vengeance.
His feet never trod a wicked path.
His mind never had a wicked thought.
His hands never took what they should not have taken or performed a sinful deed.
His tongue never spoke that which was sinful to speak.
His heart never entertained an unholy motive.

III. The Wonder of Christ-likeness

How wonderful all of this is and yet there is an element of sadness to this story. **The work of Jesus was limited to a land 45 miles wide and 90 miles long. His ministry lasted only 33 years.**

Continued on the next page...

CAN YOU GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE?

Read Luke 4:1, 16-19; Acts 10:38; Philippians 2:5



by Raymond L. Parker, Ph.D., V.P. for Academic Affairs

Continued from the previous page...

America never saw Him. Europe never saw Him. China never saw Him. Russia never saw Him. The islands of the sea never saw Him.

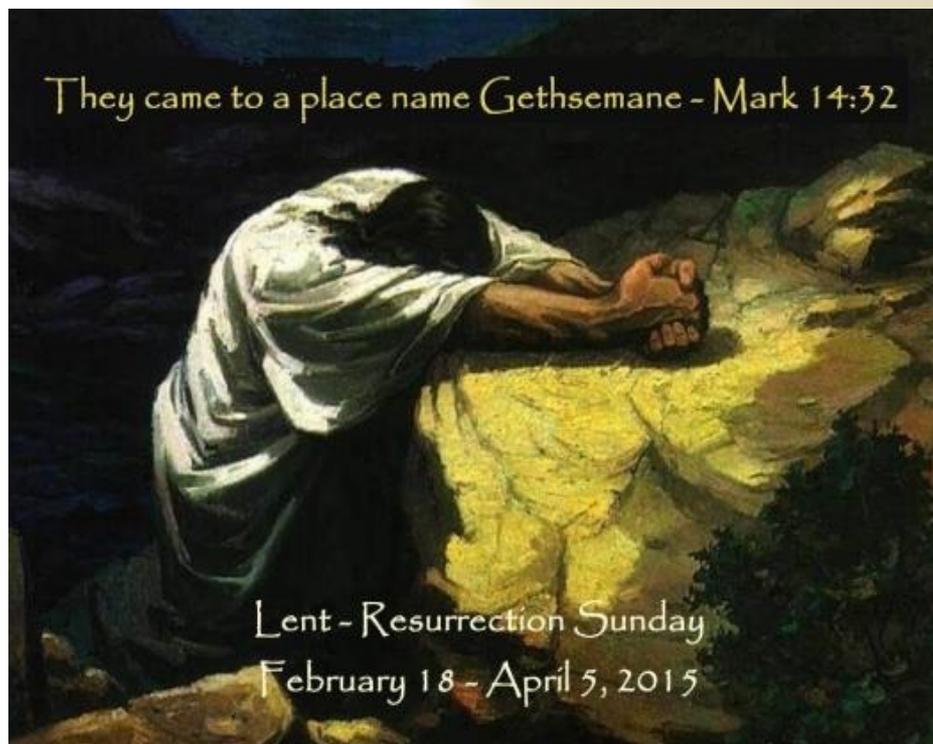
Is it fair for such a wonderful life to be unseen by the multitudes of millions of continuous history? Thus, God devised a plan whereby all could see Jesus. You and I who believe are to be the fulfillment of that plan. We are to be Christ-like. We are truly the only Jesus that many folk will ever see. Those realities that were so evident in the life of Christ are to become evident in us.

To be Christ-like, we must be, led by the Spirit, live in the Spirit, and walk by means of the Spirit. We must depend upon and be sensitive to the initial promptings of the Holy Spirit.

We must yield to the Spirit. This is the secret—yield, yield, yield! Moment by moment we are to yield to the Holy Spirit. We ask Him to make us like Jesus and we ask Him to lead us to those people that Jesus would minister to if He were here.

Let us determine that, on this day we will be, led by the Spirit, live in the Spirit, and walk by means of the Spirit. As we yield to the Spirit in this way we fulfill the challenge of the Apostle Paul, *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus* (Phil. 2:5). The Lord Jesus was led by the Spirit, anointed by the Spirit, and empowered by the Spirit. To be Christ-like we must have that same relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Gracious Spirit, dwell with me;
I myself would gracious be.
And with words that help and heal
Would your life in mine reveal;
And with actions bold and meek
Would for Christ my Savior speak.





So which did He say – “*Show me a coin*” or “*Bring me a denarius*”? He didn’t say either one, because He wasn’t speaking English. And when you get back to the Greek you have the same problem. In Greek, “coin” is *nomisma*, and “denarius” is *denarion*. But Jesus didn’t use these words either, because He wasn’t speaking Greek.

Did Jesus Actually Say These Things?

My wife is bilingual. She speaks Spanish and English. Now, I want you to imagine her saying to me in Spanish “*Cut the grass.*” I want you to further imagine that there were two other bilingual people (Bill and Ted) who heard her say this to me, and they report it all to a totally different English-speaking person (Rufus). Bill said to Rufus, “*She told him to cut the grass.*” Ted said, “*No, she told him to mow the lawn.*”

Now, which did she say – “*cut the grass*” or “*mow the lawn?*” She said neither, because she was speaking in Spanish. That’s the problem that we have with the four Gospels. 47% of the words in the Gospels are the red letters of Jesus, and yet all of these words are in Greek, not in the language that He spoke.

Let me go straight to the Bible, and give you a good example of what I am talking about. In Matthew 22:9 Jesus said, “*Show me a coin.*” In the parallel passage (Mark 12:15) He is quoted as saying, “*Bring me a denarius.*”

You see, we don’t have the original words of Jesus – just translations of them. And translations are what they are – imprecise recensions of what a person actually said. Does the contrast between “coin” to “denarius” change the meaning of the passage? No. Does the fact that the translators used different words to convey what Jesus said constitute a breach of trust? No. I have always believed that when there is a contradiction (different words) between one Gospel and the next, in the way Jesus phrases things, then one version is a commentary of the other. They shed light on each other, giving us a fuller-rich interpretation of the Gospel.

But why is this? Why do we not have the original words of Jesus? I believe that the answer is a theological one, and it is because God did not want His Son to share the Good News. He was the Good News. He wanted us to tell the story across the world, both then and now; starting with Peter’s Pentecostal Sermon, and graduating ultimately to the pen. We speak of this Good News in our own words. In the same way, Jesus never baptized anyone. Why? It is because shepherds don’t give birth to sheep. Sheep give birth to sheep. That’s our job.

If Jesus had written a book, then, as with Islam, it would have been the only New Testament Scripture ever invented. But God puts the responsibility of changing the world on our shoulders. Since the ascension of Jesus Christ, what God does He does through us. We just don’t read the Gospel to our audiences. We tell it in the very power that works through our lives. We are constantly interpreting the Gospels in an infinite number of contexts. Sermons are not merely recitations. They are interpretations of what God said then and there, and what He is saying here and now.

The Jews understood this when they insisted up through the second century AD that the oral Law of Moses never be written down, for if it were, it would lose its life-giving essence. The spirit that was conveyed through the oral law made Judaism come alive. In the same way, when the Gospel is told and retold, not by the earthly Jesus, but by His living spirit, this truly makes us the Body of Christ, operating in all of His authority.

By Dr. Gary Crossland. Dr. Crossland is [Professor of N.T. Greek](#) at MIUD, the author of the internationally acclaimed *The Merged Gospels*, and frequent teacher in Israel.



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Books Worth Reviewing*

Review of: *Christian Zionism: Navigating the Jewish-Christian Border*
by [Faydra L. Shapiro](#), with Forward by [Brad H. Young](#)

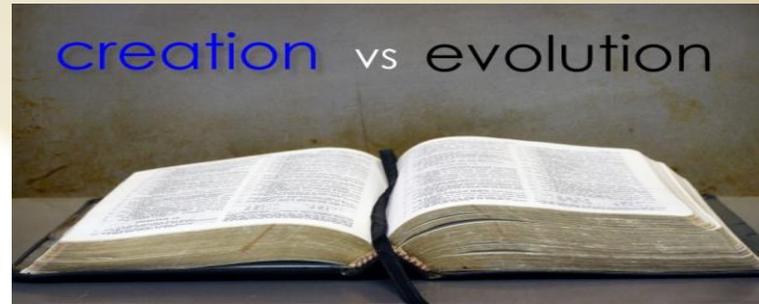
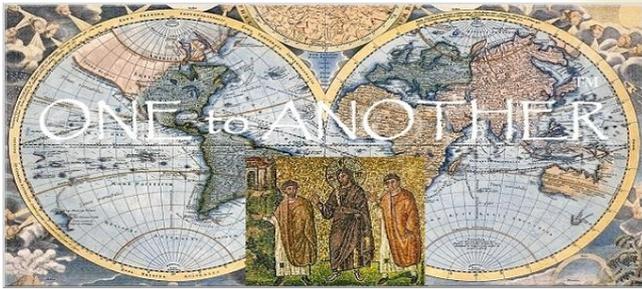
Continued from last month... In my opinion she achieves this goal and more. Dr. Shapiro sensitively explores the waters of a Christianity whose members are aware of their connection to Judaism and who want to more authentically follow the Jesus they serve. While some may have other motives, the majority of those seeking to 'bless Israel' do so with a heart for the God of Israel who, in their eyes, commands them to do so. I believe that this book achieves its aim. It is a good contribution to the field of Judeo-Christian relations in a post Holocaust world because it goes beyond the attempts of Catholic and liberal Protestant attempts to 'dialogue' and touches on somewhat gritty topics that are verboten in those venues.

Dr. Shapiro's ability to articulate a clear vision of the various 'sects' of Christian Zionism is refreshing and very welcome. As a believer who lives in the No-Man's zone and a professor at an Evangelical Divinity School, I applaud her desire to 'flesh' out not only the differences but also the common ground.

I found this book delightful to read and found myself cheering for the insights and what seemed to be a mutual desired outcome; a coming together of Christians and Jews to nurture the growth of God's people and His Land. The author's optimistic attitude toward both Christians and Jews was a delight.

I would recommend this book to all of my students and colleagues at the Divinity School and to anyone interested in the borders or common ground between Jews and Christians. It is a quick read, because it is well written and the reader will come away with a positive view of both groups and a hopeful attitude toward change.

*Cheryl A. Durham, Ph.D. is Dean of Students at Master's International University of Divinity, and the ninth great granddaughter of the Geoffrey Chaucer, 1343 - 1400, known as the Father of English Literature.



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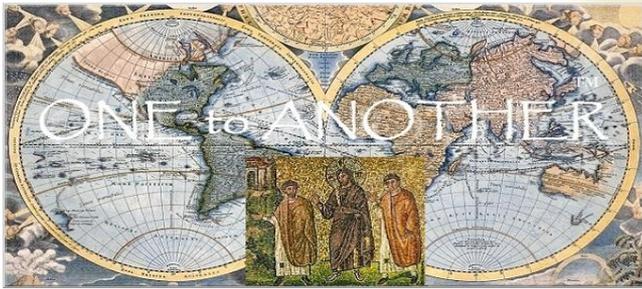
WHY CREATION & EVOLUTION WILL CONTINUE TO COLLIDE IN 2016

Part 3 of 5 by Dennis D. Frey, Th.D., President

Most people are conflicted when it comes to what they believe about the origin of the earth. When polled about this belief, the vast majority of people believe that God had something to do with it, but as the onion of the idea is peeled, the core belief is reduced to only a generally held notion of some kind of creation involvement.

Conservative evangelicals are not willing to abandon the Genesis account of creation, and doctrinaire secularists are not willing to abandon evolution. There is a real difference of opinion between these two groups, but in that larger middle ground there is less support for creation than for evolution, and this is true mainly because of fundamentally conflicted opinions.

The larger middle ground of individuals who really do not know what they believe about origins are more likely to be swayed toward the evolution argument if only because it is pressed so vigorously by those who seem to know what they are talking about (e.g. secularists in control of scientific research and academia). *To be continued...*



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SIN IS THE MOST ABOMINABLE THING

by David Tyler, Ph.D., Dean Department of Biblical Counseling

Continued from last month...

The Bible is a very practical book. Unfortunately, many people even Christians, believe that the Bible, far from being practical, is remote from life. However, nothing could be further from the truth. The purpose of God's Word is to instruct and enlighten us concerning the very situation in which we find ourselves.

The Bible is a problem-oriented book. In Genesis 3 we find the first recorded problem in the Bible. In Genesis 4 there is the problem between Cain and his brother Able. The problems continue. There was the problem between Joseph and his brothers, Jacob and Esau, David and Saul. Every person Jesus encountered had a problem. It is the most human book in the world. It puts forth its truths in terms of people and their words, actions and experiences. It is our counseling book.

The Bible talks to us about why we are unhappy. What is the cause of our unhappiness and difficulties? Why do things go wrong? Why are there adulteries, fornication, murders, deceit, jealousies and disease? Why is there death? The Bible is not detached and theoretical. The Bible comes to us and says, "I want to talk to you about you. Why are you having difficulties? Why are you anxious and depressed? Why is life not a perpetual holiday?" The truths found in the Bible are indispensable to understanding ourselves and the world in which we live. It teaches us how to deal with the most abominable things – the things of sin through the message of salvation from sin both now and forevermore.

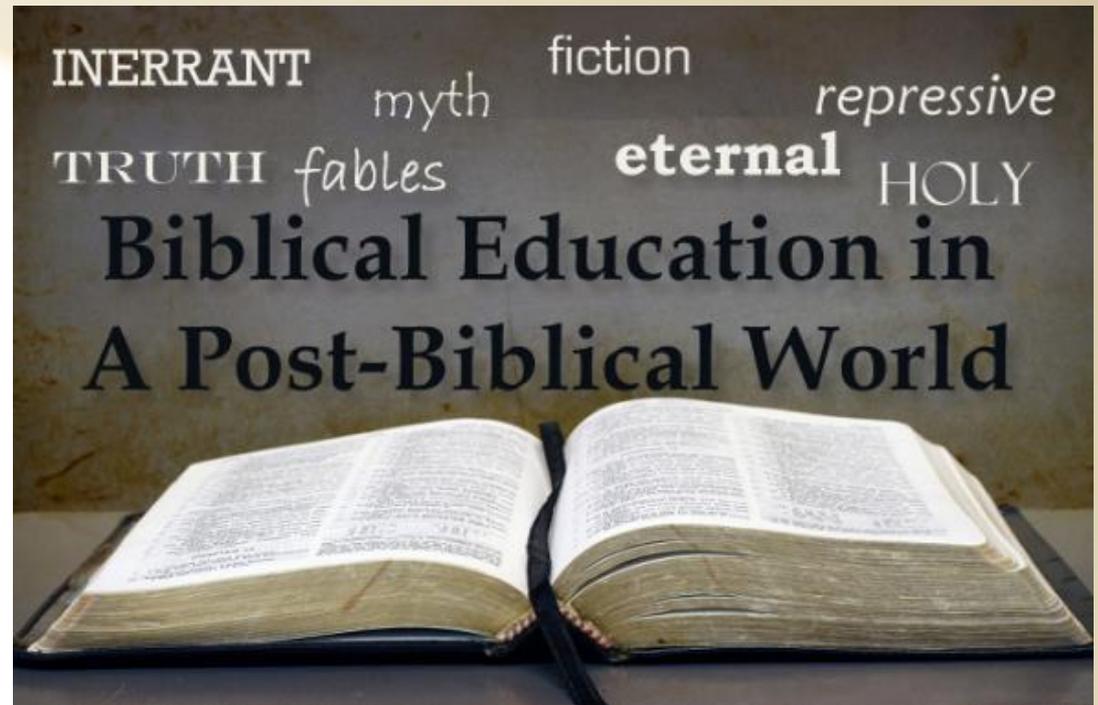
Therefore, those who do hold to Biblical inerrancy, and who preach and teach the Bible as the Word of God must double-down on their responsibility to "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (II Timothy 2:15 KJV).

Knowing *about* the Bible is not good enough. "*Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment*" (James 3:1 NASV).

So, are we safer in the church? Well, yes and no. Yes, for millions around the world the church is still a beacon of Bible light, and a haven of hope.

Nevertheless, for more than four decades, a significant element of the church has been trending post-Biblical. The same researchers cited previously have revealed that currently in the United States, 49% of protestant pastors do not believe that the Bible is truly inerrant.

An eclectic approach to Biblical trustworthiness has lead thousands of pastors to accept such unBiblical ideas as open Theism, Theistic evolution, allegoric interpretation of miracles, the possibility that Jesus was not sinless, a rejection of the sacredness of human sexuality, and the rejection of the Holy Spirit as an actual person of the Godhead.
To be continued...



Continued from last month...

Consequences - Almost without exception people know *about* the Bible, but the number of people who have actually read the Bible, and know what it teaches is shifting, and, its influence in culture is shrinking as the shift not only continues, but does so at an accelerated rate.

Conclusions - Pastors, Bible teachers and lay leaders can no longer presume that in formerly Christian cultures the Bible is generally regarded as the ultimate source of truth. In fact, it is increasingly viewed as fictitious and repressive. Read a Bible verse aloud in a public place, and the reaction will most likely not be affirming. < Continued on left column.

SOOTHING SCRIPTURES



Sunday
Evening Tea
with
Thelma Wells

When I was growing up in my great-grandparents' house, Daddy Harrell taught me to use two beloved passages of Scripture to soothe my nerves and give me peace, even in the most stressful situations. Throughout my life, the Twenty-third Psalm and the Lord's Prayer have worked like spiritual Valium for me, taking the edge off my edginess and helping me grow more gracious and patient.

Since then I've stored up a mental filing cabinet full of remedial Scripture passages. Seven of my favorites are shared in my book *The Buzz*. As I said there, I've whispered memorized Scripture passages to myself as I've *"waited for the phone to ring, waited for a child to come home, waited for a decision to be made, or waited for the turbulence to end at thirty thousand feet."* And still today, whenever I recite them, whatever the setting, I can feel my worry easing, my blood pressure dropping, and my muscles relaxing.

Try it for yourself the next time you feel your nerves fraying and your patience falling. Prepare ahead of time by memorizing Philippians 4:6-7. Here's how I like to say it: *"BEE anxious for NO-thing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the PEACE of God, which surpasses alllllllll understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

Dr. Thelma Wells is a MIUD graduate, and an internationally respected leader. Her speaking and writings have helped to lift the lives of millions. [More...](#)



Korach- *"Then Moses said to Korah, Hear now, you sons of Levi: Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you?"* Numbers 16:9, 10.

Through God's direction, Moses had elevated the tribe of Levi to have the special position of caretakers of the tabernacle. But that wasn't enough. Now Korah and his followers are blaming Moses for taking them out of Egypt. Most of us have the experience of being blamed unjustly, and it hurts most when the accusation comes from someone we've trusted. For Moses, the followers of Korah were not only his co-workers, they were his cousins.

What will Moses do? With the confidence of knowing that he and Aaron have sought no special place for themselves, but have only done as God has commanded, Moses can do two things. First, with open conscious he can tell the rebels that they are rebelling against God and not him. And second, he can leave the judgment and his vindication to God. Following God and submitting all decisions to Him gave Moses the freedom to know he was not at fault. God wants to lead us with that same certainty.

PRAYER: *Lord, Enable us to follow You so closely that when we are accused we know in our hearts that we have only done what You asked us. And then, give us the faith to leave judgment and our vindication to You. Amen*

*James B. Solberg, M.A., D.D. is U.S.A. National Director for [Bridges for Peace](#). He serves on the adjunct faculty of MIUD, and is the author of the highly acclaimed devotional book [Sinai Speaks](#).



HAPPY, HAPPY, HAPPY

By James J.S. Johnson*

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding” (Proverbs 3:13). “He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he” (Proverbs 16:20). “Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 144:15).

So, it's not unbiblical to be happy about being happy. You can be both “happy” and “joyful” – and feel doubly good about it! So, the next time some skeptic tries to bash Christianity, as a supposedly “negative religion”, set them straight – they are wrong! In fact, we should enjoy being happy with gladness, living life with a song in our heart — and laughter should not be a stranger!



Years ago someone told me that the Bible only promises “joy” to godly people, never “happiness.” The idea was that “joy” is a gladness that is content in the Lord, regardless whether the surrounding circumstances are pleasant or unpleasant. *“Happiness depends on what is happening to you,”* I was told, *“but joy is only dependent upon your appreciation for God Himself — glorifying Him and enjoying Him forever.”*

Wise-sounding sound bites, right? But is that Biblically sound advice? Not quite. While it is certainly true that our joy should be anchored in the Lord, as we appreciate belonging to Him, it is also Biblically proper to enjoy being happy — glad — as we enjoy appreciating and experiencing the many blessings that God gives to us, here and there, from time to time (Proverbs 3:13 & 16:20; Job 5:17; Psalm 146:5-9; Esther 5:19 & 8:17-19 & 12:27; John 13:17; Romans 14:21; 1st Peter 3:14 & 4:14). In fact, if a happy occasion is honoring to God, surely it will blend joy with happiness!

< *Continued left.*

*James J. S. Johnson, J.D., Th.D., is the Chief Academic Officer, and Associate Professor of Apologetics, Bible, Forensic Science, and History at the [Institute for Creation Research](http://www.creationresearch.org)



Tent or Tabernacle

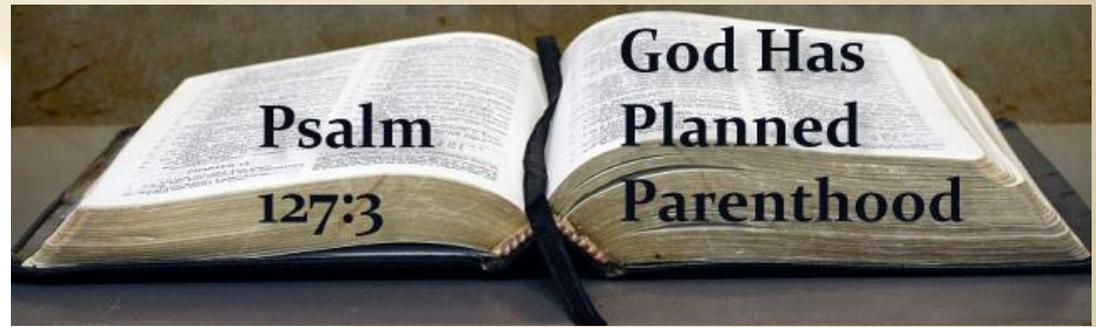
A Tent or a Tabernacle?*

David built a *sukkah* for the Ark of God's presence. You might think that means a tent but that isn't exactly right. A tent is a type of building that is a shelter from storms and shade from the sun. A *sukkah* is a temporary structure that is deliberately unfinished. In fact, for a *sukkah* to be done right, you should be able to see stars through the roof at night.

David put the Ark of God's presence in a place that was not safe from the storms. He did in on purpose. David didn't want anyone to think that this was supposed to be a palace for God, but was only a temporary place for a short duration. He knew that God was able to provide all the shelter that was needed for His holy presence.

It was called, "*The Tabernacle of Praise.*" It was a tabernacle that was a meeting place between man and God. It did not bring glory to the builder since it was just a temporary dwelling. It wasn't a place to escape the storms. It was a place to hear from God. It was a place of worship.

*Dr. Brimmer lives in and writes from Jerusalem, Israel, and is a licensed Israel tour guide. He serves on the adjunct faculty at Master's. To contact Dr. Brimmer about leading a tour email him at tom@tombrimmer.com.



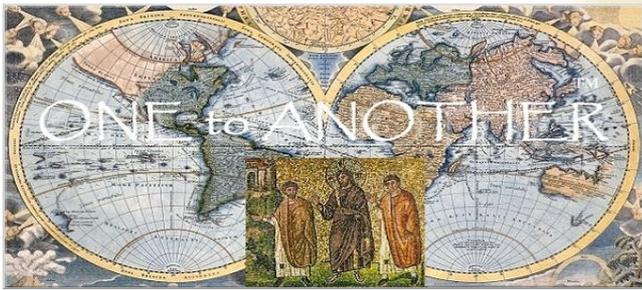
We Dare Not Squander Our God-Given Opportunity

by Bradley Mattes, M.A.*

Continued from last month... The fight for life has ebbed and flowed on the legislative beachhead since 1973, both in the states and at the federal level. But never in the 43-year history of legalized abortion have we had the opportunity we have this year. The US House and Senate recently put a bill on the president's desk to essentially defund Planned Parenthood. The president couldn't wait to veto it, but the bill was significant anyway, because for the first time Congress passed legislation defunding this abortion giant. We finally have pro-life majorities in both the House and the Senate. Not enough to override a filibuster, but, finally, majorities. Now read this next sentence and let it sink in: *Had we elected a pro-life president in 2012, the bill would have become law.*

As the 2016 campaigns continue, you'll be tempted to hit the mute button when candidates' commercials come on. But this year several candidates are falling all over themselves to out-pro-life each another. This year we have a real shot to put a pro-life president in the White House. *To be continued...*

*Bradley Mattes is President and CEO of the [Life Issues Institute](http://LifeIssuesInstitute.com), and holds a Master of Biblical Studies Degree from Master's International University of Divinity.



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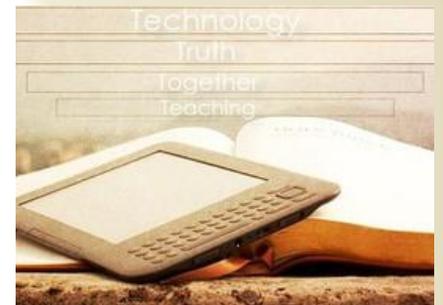
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