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19 pamphlets

1 per page

This format is intended mainly to be read and distributed on a computer and phone, although it can be printed.

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These are the same 19 pamphlets as are in pages 2-20.

They are specially formatted only to be printed.

Printing must be double-sided,* after which the sheet must be cut in half and then folded.

This will yield 2 identical pamphlets per sheet of paper.

* Use the word order from the matching pamphlet on pages 2-20 as a guide to know whether the double-sided printing is being done correctly.

Mankind's Ancient Memories



Many ethnic groups around the world have ancient flood legends, where all living things drown in a deluge, except for a few survivors who repopulate the world. These stories have been found in over one hundred different people groups, in every inhabited continent. Most were passed on orally, and they changed somewhat over the centuries. However, many still share a number of common details.

Are these independently created myths? Or are they the faded memory of a real, and unforgettable, event - the common memory of all mankind?

The existence of these legends is not in question, being fully accepted by secular and religious historians alike. The only disagreement is over their origins.

Common details include: The flood was a divine judgement on mankind's sin, one or a few were forewarned and survived in a boat, animals were also on the boat, the flood and its destruction was universal, after the deluge the boat landed on a mountain and then a bird was sent out.

Many of these cultures were completely isolated from each other until 500 years ago, ruling out the sharing of their flood legends. Is it likely that such similar stories arose independently a hundred times in all corners of the world? There are no comparable widespread stories of world-wide destruction by fire, earthquakes or meteors. The only feasible explanation is a single story when men were all together,

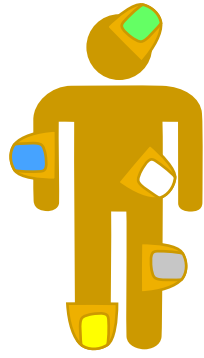
before they spread around the earth. And each culture agreed it was a story never to be forgotten.

This is just what the Bible's book of Genesis records: all men were together right after the flood, after which they dispersed around the globe. The Bible's version of Noah's flood was put in writing millennia ago and was preserved by the Jews. It doesn't have the mythical style of the other flood legends, whose oral transmission corrupted them as we would expect. Yet, many retain enough of the original story to prove a common source. They independently confirm the Bible. People groups all over the world remember, however imperfectly, a global flood as judgment from God.

Those who are not convinced can research it online. There are other theories for these story's origins, but be very careful about your conclusion. Those pushing alternate explanations won't be present to argue your case when you stand before God one day.

The same Bible that describes the flood also foretells a similar event yet to come, a final judgment upon this planet but not by water. That will be when Jesus Christ returns in the sky with great power and glory. The good news is God wants you to escape to his new earth. Jesus and his apostles tell us in the Bible how to "get on the Ark". This is coming. God has already done it once, the memory of which is embedded throughout the human race.

Toenails Everywhere



Evolution teaches that random mutations in the genetic code create the components for new body parts. Complete designs, like a digestive system, are formed by many small steps over a large number of generations. Those with better designs reproduce more. During this long process there would be hundreds, perhaps thousands, of intermediate designs, good and bad. Random mutations are mindless, so their creative attempts have no beginning nor end. These blind architects keep attempting to make stomach parts even in those who already have one.

Consider adding claws, or toenails (TN), to an animal. Blundering mutations will construct: TN on kneecaps, noses or tongues; TN made of muscle, hair, skin or fat; TN growing too fast, too slow, inward, outward or not at all. There will be hundreds of versions during this lengthy process. Natural selection must have options to choose between. Eventually TN on feet have an advantage, but only after a long history of half-baked tries.

Now add in everything else: teeth, skin, glands and joints; circulatory, nervous and reproductive systems; a long list. For each one, many unique partial designs (most of them ridiculous) must exist over many generations. This gradual, multi-step, process is the only way complex systems can be created from chance mutations.

Evolution never stops, so we ought to see this today, humans with TN all over, and of different tissue. We should have partially

designed ears, ribs, livers and brains throughout our body. We should look like monsters. But we never see this in humans, or in plants or animals - only finished products. Nothing is in process.

Perhaps natural selection has eliminated the partial designs? The project takes umpteen generations. How can it be *only* in the past, and that for every biological system? Is evolution paused? A simpler respiratory system in another species is not a partial design, one step away. It's complete, an island separated from the more complex design by miles of ocean, without a single stepping stone in between. We never see the designer's workbench cluttered with failed prototypes.

If the race is always on, why in our day do we only see the finish line? Missing links should be walking among us now, not just in the fossil record.

Try writing the detailed steps to go from no eyelid to a working one. You'll make monsters, and you'll never make an eyelid. No one ever attempts this exercise. They simply assume that it all somehow works.

In fact, accumulated mutations *never* construct functional biological systems from scratch. No one has ever witnessed this. Mutations only make minor changes in existing designs like color, length and size, or they alter the range of an existing system. This is all that science sees today.

Wake Up

A ship was adrift far out in the ocean, its provisions running out.



The captain, officers and sailors occupied themselves with their daily duties and preferred amusements, but surprisingly they gave little thought to reaching land. Furthermore, each man had a different opinion about reaching land, as to its direction, nearness and how to get there. Others weren't sure it could be found or that it even existed, and still others thought land irrelevant.

Most astonishing was how the men did not feel in danger of starvation, but contently drifted on the ocean. Each clung to what "land" meant to them, assuming it would all work out. It didn't strike anyone as odd that most of their diverging views couldn't be correct, neither was there any urge to discuss it between themselves. It was as if they were all asleep.

This is our society's attitude toward what lies beyond the grave. One man believes all will go to heaven, another says most, while another insists it will only be a few. This one thinks there is no afterlife, that one says we can't know, and a third doesn't care. Many expect not paradise but a recycling thru reincarnation. Some claim only an echo of us survives death, others believe we dissolve and are absorbed into God.

This group follows one religious path, while that group's path goes in the opposite direction. One says the path is broad, another that it is very narrow. This man holds only his version as authentic, another counters that all paths lead to God (even paths which say there is no God). Very few

ever examine whether the religion they were born into is credible.

Many presume they can mix divergent versions according to their own recipe. Some are uncomfortable with the topic, others say keep it out of public discussion, but the rare one preaches it from the rooftops. Still others regard the whole matter as unimportant, neglecting their future. Then there are those who insist it's unkind to accuse any of these erratic theories of being misguided. Lastly are those who profess a faith but refuse to practice what it requires.

Here is the astounding part. Most of us act as if this wild assortment of contradictory beliefs is not a problem. Society largely ignores the issue, yet blindly expects most will reach land and "rest in peace". Most of our conflicting views cannot be legitimate. Can such a dysfunctional situation end well?

Wake up and face this question with the gravity it deserves, even if those around you continue to slumber. Those who've earnestly probed the subject of the afterlife have discovered that the truth is not hard to find. The problem is not lack of light or proof. The obstacles are carelessness, distractions, apathy, your loves and your hates. Your ship's provisions won't last. Arise, search for land, then head for it as if your life depends on it - because it does.

The Wrath of God



It is commonly known that the Jews have been severely afflicted over the past 2000 years, underscored by the Holocaust. What is not commonly known is that Moses predicted this over 3000 years ago. Moses also gave the reason – God’s wrath on his wayward children who would someday forsake him.

Read Leviticus chap 26 and Deuteronomy chap 28 in the Bible, where Moses forecast the Jewish exile to foreign nations and oppression by their enemies. All the Jewish prophets after Moses repeated this theme, that God would treat his people as their deeds deserved.

And so, what Moses and the prophets warned of came to pass. Either this is proof of divine judgement, or Moses and the Hebrew prophets were very lucky guessers. Consider that:

Even the most skeptical historians will concede that the predictions were made well before the fulfilments.

The fulfillments were many, witnessed by thousands, and spread over two millennium right up until our day.

See how the God of the Jews has broadcast a message for mankind across the history of the world. We know it’s God’s message, because he announced well beforehand what he would do - and why. It’s the message of his wrath on whoever rebels against him.

The Jews were privileged to know about God first, so those Jews who spurned him

were punished first, while other Jews throughout history have obeyed their God.

The Jewish Messiah, Jesus, told us there will be a similar final accounting for both Jew and Gentile. History shows that the promises and warnings which the God of Abraham gives through his messengers are not to be ignored.

Since God has warned us by means of the history of the Jews, what should you do? Turn from your evil ways and submit to him, whether you are a Jew or a Gentile. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but says, “Repent and live!” Seek God now while you still can, through the Jewish Savior he sent us, Jesus Christ.

In the past, God would use pagan Gentiles as a rod to punish those Jews who strayed. Afterward, God would punish those same Gentiles for their own wickedness. Now, in love, Jew and Gentile are being reminded of those past judgments, to spur them on to turn to God, so that they may enter his promised paradise.

Don’t make the mistake of those who cover their ears from God’s warnings. They mock the very idea of a wrathful God, while raging at God’s messengers, who were sent for their rescue. God’s judgment has been plainly displayed, so you will have no excuse when one day you stand before your Creator. Make peace with him now through his Son. Otherwise, the same wrath tasted by the Jews will fall on you.

False Prophets



“Many false prophets will appear and deceive many. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.” Jesus

Most would agree with Jesus, that false prophets exist. Our first response should always be to ask ourselves, “Could I possibly be following a false prophet?” It takes courage and humility to say, “Maybe I’ve been wrong all these years.” It can’t hurt to consider it. It’s not doubt; it’s being careful. If you think it fundamentally impossible for you to ever be wrong on this topic, then there’s no benefit in you reading any further.

For two thousand years, from Abraham to the apostle Paul, dozens of Jewish biblical prophets described their encounters with God. The Jews wrote it down as it happened. In every case, their portrayal of God’s nature and message agree.

Centuries later a man arises saying, “I am a prophet of God like them, but my message skews in a new direction and supersedes theirs. I know what happened back then in Israel far better than those who witnessed it firsthand and recorded it. Trust me instead of the Bible (although there’s no evidence of large-scale changes to the Bible.)” Common sense screams for us not to be taken in by such an obvious con man.

These false prophets almost always stand alone and disagree with each other, completely unlike the biblical prophets who reinforced each other’s words. Who are you going to trust? Will it be the large

group of men who were eyewitnesses of God acting and speaking among the ancient Jews? Or will you pick one of the lone prophets who was not there, and who tells us to ignore all the others and trust him alone.

Throughout history many false teachers have splintered off from Christianity. Most attracted only small followings. A few have believers in the millions, and one has over a billion.

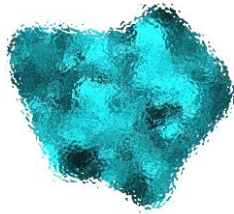
Why are so many led astray, as Jesus predicted? People are deceived by the same defects that cause all of mankind’s ills: pride, stubbornness, apathy, greed, hatred, foolishness, evil desires, selfish ambition, delusions, etc.

If you’ve been captive to a false prophet, you’ll have to fight through these, but it can be done and many have done it.

Jesus said we’ll know false prophets by their fruit (their words and deeds). Most of what they say and do seems fine, but mixed in you’ll see things that are clearly out of bounds. Watch for this rotten fruit.

False prophets come in all shades, from those who boldly break from the biblical faith to those who unknowingly slip in a few false doctrines. Be aware that your favorite Bible teacher may fall somewhere in that spectrum, if they deviate from the original message. Let Moses, David and Isaiah - Jesus, Peter and Paul be your teachers and you can’t go wrong.

The Idol Of Chaos



Throughout the history of mankind, many cultures have invented and believed in idols. A statue is fashioned which is thought to have special powers over nature. Its devotees are convinced of these powers because certain events are wildly misinterpreted as proof. Once this belief is ingrained in a society, its deeply buried roots are very hard to dislodge. Sceptics are ridiculed.

In truth, the statue is a dead piece of stone which cannot see, think or move. Yet, everyday events are assumed to be under its control, and are even interpreted as proof of its powers.

Idols exist today, even in western culture. If not, then in what year did we magically break free of mankind's propensity to deceive itself? Is our culture too arrogant to see the idol we've invented?

Many are convinced that chaos plus millions of years has special powers over nature, a power that created every living thing. This presumed power, this idol, is called evolution. Museums are its temples, preaching its message. Scientists are its priests and prophets, assuring us that we can trust them. Sceptics are ridiculed.

In truth, this lifeless idol has no powers. Chance and disorder never create anything, no matter how many years you give it. The creative power of chaos plus time is assumed, its proofs no better than the proofs for other idols.

One proof given for evolution is common designs between living things, but this does nothing to explain how deaf, dumb and blind randomness designed them. "Many small steps over millions of years" is a completely inadequate scientific answer, like a vague political campaign promise.

Some point to an animal's lengthening limb or color change. This is literally one step out of the one million needed, and a trivial one. If an infant sketched a rectangle, would this prove that he could design the rectangular smart phone in your pocket?

If evolution really worked as believed, all living things would have partially designed stomachs, brains and kneecaps all over their body. You'd realize this if you spent ten minutes thinking how the process could possibly work.

But no one bothers to do this because they are sure they are right. A creature without lungs steps behind the curtain of time and out the other side with lungs. No one ever explains what happened behind the curtain, or how it could breath all that time.

Think about the many steps of how a fetus grows. We can't wait the thousands of generations that randomness plus natural selection requires to redesign this system from one in a simpler animal. It must be completed in *one* generation, or the new species perishes. All of our critical organs must work on the first try, or we're dead.

Consider that you may be an idol worshiper who believes that mud plus chaos plus time created all living things.

Figuring Out The Map



Many people around the globe have concluded that the Bible is a sound historical record of how God spoke to a lost world through the ancient Jews. They view this book as a map to God's promised paradise. Presented here is a method to understand this map, so you can find the treasure. Specifically, this method navigates through the sometimes conflicting doctrines of different Christian groups, in order to discover what God is really saying. Each follower of Jesus ought to try something like this method, because in the end you, not your teachers, will answer to God for how you lived your life.

From the beginning of the Old Testament, pick every 5th chapter (or 20th, or 100th, as you wish), through the end of the New Testament. Each day study one chapter (or a third of the chapter, etc., as you wish). It's vital you don't deviate from the pattern to make samples random and prevent bias.

As you study, determine how the passage answers only this question: What does it tell me about God and how he interacts with mankind. Write down the answer but only in a couple sentences. Too many notes hinder the process and will inject your own ideas. Look only for one main point in the passage as it relates to the question.

Apply these principles: First, set personal preferences aside. Approach each passage with zero bias, as if you had never heard any Christian doctrine. Give each passage equal weight. Do not let a few verses dominate. Determine the passage's main point without being influenced by what

other parts of the Bible say. This will prevent manmade doctrines from coloring your interpretation. For the rare section you can't understand, don't force it; move on.

We must assume that God speaks to us in the Bible using the same rules of communication that we use everyday with each other. If not, then what rules would we use? Therefore, apply these well known and common sense rules for things like how to understand figurative language or being careful to not read too much into what is said. It helps that the main points are often repeated and given from different angles, making the heart of the message hard to miss.

Watch out for assuming that you already know what the answers will be. The biggest challenge will be purging your mind of all the doctrines you've heard all your life. You want to start with a blank slate.

Once you finish this neutral sampling of the Bible, summarize your notes down to one page or less. Almost certainly you will find that your conclusions differ from what you thought was the gospel, so you will be glad you did this exercise. Of course, it's not enough to understand the map, you must walk on its trail to reach the treasure. Most people never get around to searching for the true gospel in this way. Do not put it off because of laziness or distractions. You do not want to be wrong on this topic!

That's Not Funny



When a child makes an inappropriate joke, their parent says, “That’s not funny.” No one should joke about the Holocaust or child molesting. Most people understand this, yet many are still comfortable with telling and listening to inappropriate or carnal humor. By staying away from the dirtiest jokes, they may even claim that they practice clean comedy.

Do you laugh when people insult one another, ridicule a person’s stupidity or someone falls on their backside? Do you enjoy jokes based on vices like cruelty, drunkenness or sexual promiscuity?

Do you giggle for stories about death, theft, greed or bathroom functions? You might say, “I can’t help it. It’s funny.” It’s time to ponder why you find bad behavior and people’s misfortunes so entertaining.

This pamphlet is targeted at those who seek to be “pure in heart” like Jesus taught. Those caring little for that virtue will scoff at this. Yes, there are many sins more serious than unclean comedy, but “pure” means free from all contamination.

The rule of thumb is this: never joke about behavior that is not morally acceptable when done for real, no exceptions. Humor never sanctifies unethical conduct. Maybe you already do this in some areas. Perhaps you never joke about sexual topics. Extend that rule to everything that is foul in God’s eyes.

Unfortunately, many who profess Christian faith will laugh at off-color banter. Or do

you alter your standards based on the audience? If so, you are a hypocrite who is more concerned with how you look to men than to God, who is always listening in. This is not just about the jokes that you tell, but also the ones you laugh at. When you so much as grin at a funny story centered around an impure deed, you tell everyone around you that impurity is not a big deal and it’s even a little delightful.

Do you forget that Jesus had to die to deal with all our depravities, both big and small? Or maybe you mistakenly presume that God’s moral standards are as low as yours. Now, for those of you who are not Christian you maybe don’t care about all this, but God does, and he will still hold you accountable.

You might be thinking, “Why are you so eager to douse our fun? This rules out a big chunk of the Sunday comics, and a lot else. My life would be dreary if I couldn’t chuckle over slander, strife, violence, cheating and a lot else that God hates.” If you haven’t figured it out by now, this also bans all teasing. “What! How could I possibly enjoy time with my friends without making fun of them, snickering at their failures, and pretending that I despise them?” And practical jokes are out too.

God requires morally purity, and that always takes priority over having fun. When you choose fun over virtue, you provoke him to anger. You may think, “Oh, he’ll laugh it off, like I would.”, but you are dead wrong.

Eye Witnesses



Is this you? “I don’t believe what the Bible says, so I’m not at all worried about its warnings.” If your neighbors raise an alarm, is it wise to ignore their voices, unless you have a sound reason to do so?

Some will say their reason is that they don’t trust anyone but themselves, yet they don’t actually live that way. None of us are omniscient, and most of the information we live by each day we learned from others. This is how society operates and it works well. We give criminals a life sentence based on eyewitnesses. Likewise, you will plan a vacation to Australia without ever having seen it.

“Yes, I know that, but it’s different with the Bible.” No, it is not. A jury isn’t allowed to arbitrarily pick which witnesses to believe. And don’t be lazy and fall back on some empty Bible objection you once read.

“So, should I believe everything I’m told?” Of course not. For topics that matter, you have learned to sift truth from error. Now do the same with the Bible. Why bother? A lot of sincere Christians are shouting, “You should listen to this.” That should count for something. If the Bible is true, you really don’t want to ignore it! God is not giving each of us a personal interview in his throne room. If God choose to speak through a few dozen biblical prophets, why fight him?

This is not just about eyewitnesses who lived 2000 years ago. You can find genuine Christians today who experience the supernatural as the Bible promises. Yes, you must filter out bogus claims and

coincidences, which are the vast majority, but God expects you to use your brain to do that. You may end up with only a few cases of undeniable miracles that corroborate the Bible, but they still count.

Some won’t accept the Bible’s miracle stories, arguing there’s no evidence for miracles, but that is circular reasoning. Eyewitness testimony is valid evidence, and the Bible should not be judged by special rules. That is the main point of this pamphlet. Miracles are rare, like the Jewish Holocaust, but that alone cannot be a reason to disbelieve. Demanding an extraordinary level of evidence is putting your fingers in your ears. What matters is the evidence that we do have, not the evidence we don’t.

Then why not believe all religions? First, know that the claims and warnings of many religions are of no significance. Second, how many eyewitnesses do they have, if you can even find one? The Bible contains a huge number of eyewitnesses. You’re not being asked to believe the words of one crackpot, like with a cult. The biblical witnesses were spread over many centuries and locations, making it impossible that there was any collusion or conspiracy.

The claim that copies of the Bible sustained wholesale changes to its message is untrue. You can easily check this out by comparing old copies of the Bible with today’s. Read the whole Bible and judge the eyewitness accounts for yourself. Millions have, and they concluded that it is true history.

Creator or Creation



What would you rather have, what's behind door A or door B? Behind door A is one who lives forever, never growing old or frail. Behind door B is a lover whose wrinkles and warts will start appearing within 20 years. Inside door A is he who has already promised to build and maintain a new and incorruptible planet earth. B has financial investments that could easily evaporate next month. Through A is a father with ideal qualities like integrity, wisdom and compassion. Through B are your deeply flawed friends and family. A has a shepherd supplying a rich variety of delights forevermore. B has one plate of food, and you'll be hungry again in 6 hours.

By now you've figured out that door A is our Creator God, while door B is his creation. Why can't we have both? What's behind door B is not forbidden, but the crucial question is this: who is your god? If each day you seek only after what is behind door B, then that is your god. If you do not give our Creator God the honor, trust and obedience he requires, then you do not have both. You only have B.

What would you rather have, the king who can place a crown on your own head, a crown that will never fade? Or do you want recognition from some man who in a few years will either quit, be replaced, or die? Will you pick the one who loves you perfectly and who knows what's good for you even more than you do? Or will you pick a new car, house and clothes, dead objects incapable of love and knowledge? Do you want him who offers us immortal

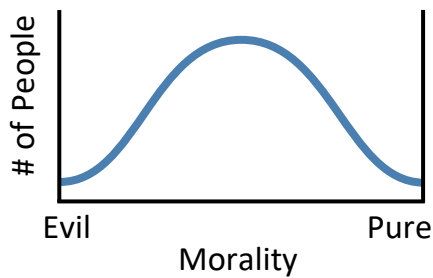
bodies which will never again get sick? Or do you want an empty Hollywood fiction that is incapable of healing the simplest illness and can never raise you from the dead? We could do this all day.

In the long run, you are always better off being connected with the maker instead of the thing he made. The maker can keep on making more and better things, but the thing itself will wear out.

If God's creation is so flawed, why trust him? God cursed this present creation because mankind rebelled. But because of his great love for us, he promised a new creation, one which will not be cursed. It will be the future home of those who have ended their rebellion against him.

God's Jewish messengers and his son, Jesus, tell us that you can only serve one master. If the worldly treasures of door B are all that you value, then you are not a servant of the one true God, and you will not inherit the vastly superior benefits of door A. Since these benefits will come mostly in the renewed earth, they are delayed. This requires you to trust God's plan and to wait patiently. Even though the treasures of door A far exceed those of B, many desire only B's brief rewards. What about you?

Cozy With Sin



The above histogram portrays mankind's acceptance of sin in their own behavior. On the left are the few given to unrestrained wickedness. Those on the right tolerate nothing less than 100% purity. Most people are quite comfortable living in the middle.

We'd never hold up a store but will cheat on our taxes. We punish children for lying, but we won't fight our own vices since, "nobody's perfect". We expect our spouse to be faithful, but lust at strangers because "I can't help it." We're indignant over violent acts in the news, yet we slander our neighbor because, "That's not nearly as bad." This is the usual flip flopping, double minded attitude toward sin.

This doesn't make any sense! Why is only the left side of the graph heinous? Why can sins on the left be stopped but not those on the right? The existence of criminals on the left does not make the middle acceptable. Is wrongdoing wrong, or isn't it?

Mankind has spent thousands of years getting cozy with a measure of evil. We figure we only have to abhor the more vile atrocities. For the rest we make excuses: It's too hard to stop, I'm not that bad, everybody's doing it, I need my vices to cope, I'd be mocked (even in church) if I tried to be perfect.

This lax attitude toward depravity was long ago dragged into the Christian church by Jesus' enemy, the devil. For centuries

theological arguments have been amassed for why the right side of the graph is unattainable and even to be avoided. Christian, do you intend to stand before God and explain why you permitted immoral deeds in your life, while saying out the other side of your mouth, "But I believed in everything you stand for."?

Christians protest, "We can't be blameless. God knows that, and he is totally okay with it." Men told you this. Go back and study the whole Bible, without any hint of preconceptions, and see if God actually said it. God is not okay with sin, and he is coming to judge the world (including those in the pews) because of men's corrupt morality.

But God, in his mercy sent Jesus to rescue those who will turn from all evil. Jesus came to "take away the sin of the world", to "cast our sins into the depths of the sea", so that we would "die to sin". His purpose is much more than just forgiveness.

Whether you are a non-Christian or a churchgoer, you are not safe living in the middle of the graph. The only escape God gives is Jesus. Beg Christ to make you pure, then work with him. He will require you to join with other servants of his.

Believe what God said, that total obedience is not only possible, but is the only path that brings salvation, joy and peace. Your thoughts, words and deeds can be clean - in this life. That is good news!

Babylon



“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!” So begins the 18th chapter of the biblical book of Revelation, where Babylon’s violent destruction by God is vividly recounted, as judgment for its wickedness. Among its crimes are: excessive pursuit of riches, luxury and glory, adultery (spiritual, literal or both), defiant boasting, enticing the world into sin, and attacking God’s people. Most of the chapter is devoted to describing Babylon’s complete overthrow. All of its wealth, prosperity, commerce and splendor will come to an abrupt and final end, causing shock and grief in everyone who loved her.

As with much of the book of revelation, there are multiple views among sincere Christians as to what this is predicting and when it might happen. However, what it warns us of is clear enough. Many areas of our present culture match the description of the devilish city presented in this chapter. Next century or next week, the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth. With the splendor of his majesty, he will bring a sudden and violent end to all evil, fulfilling for the very last time the predictions of this chapter. It also says:

“Come out of her my people, so that you will not share in her sins, and not receive her plagues; for her sins are piled to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.”

If you know that the Bible is God’s message to us, what should you do? Separate yourself from everything that might possibly be part of the “Babylon”

that God will judge. Otherwise, like Lot’s wife, you will be dragged under when it’s annihilated. Go read the chapter. Then cry out to God to open your eyes and show you what you must “come out of”. Then do it!

“Babylon will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.”

“Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea and said: ‘With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.’”

If this is how God will dispose of all the vile places, practices and peoples of this world, why would you participate in them for even one more minute?

This same warning to distance ourselves from all evil is repeated throughout the entire Bible. For the sake of the eternal destination of your soul, and for those you love whom your example is swaying, run from whatever smacks of “Babylon”; run as fast as you can.

“Woe! Woe, O great city! In one hour your doom has come!”

God’s will release his wrath quickly and unannounced, just like he did to the literal city of Babylon 2500 years ago. Do not allow even the slightest chance that you might be found on the wrong side of the line, being swept away with the godless city. Do not delay. Flee!

The Rebel



Long ago there was an elderly man with several grown sons. They all lived on a large estate in the countryside. One son, Sam, had a rebellious nature. He hated his fathers rules and wanted more autonomy. He didn't agree with his wages. This finally erupted into a series of violent confrontations. Wrongs were committed and limbs were lost. Finally, Sam seized some of his father's property and left home for good, settling down in another land.

A couple generations later, there was a grandson of Sam named Chris. He had become a believer in Jesus. One day, Chris' friend Tom, also a believer, came to visit.

Tom: Chris, do you ever think about what your grandfather, Sam, did years ago?

Chris: Absolutely. I'm very proud of what grandpa did. He was in the right.

Tom: Are you seeing this from a Christian perspective? Sam was insubordinate to the one God put over him. He did awful things. Blood was shed.

Chris: You're ignoring what a terrible father he had.

Tom: That may or may not be true, but how does that excuse what your grandfather did? You gladly celebrate his defiance of authority, and his violence. Is that the way Jesus taught us to live? What message does it send to your children? I don't expect your non-Christian brothers will understand, but you should. The meek will inherit the earth, not the rebels.

Chris: You know full well that some of the local militia joined Sam in his fight for freedom. Why are you dishonoring our brave men in uniform?

Tom: What? I've said nothing about them. Isn't it you showing disrespect by hiding behind them to deflect my uncomfortable words?

Chris: Yeah, maybe.

Tom: You know about your grandfather's two brothers who were patient and submissive. They gained independence the right way, over time and without bloodshed. They left home as peacemakers.

Chris: What's your point?

Tom: It's time for you to realize that those days of long ago were not so noble in God's eyes as you thought.

Tom: I've noticed that you're still joining with your non-Christian brothers in that annual celebration on the anniversary of the day your grandfather left home. Is that a festival that God smiles upon?

Chris: I'll think about what you've said.

Tom: Thanks. I appreciate your humble and teachable spirit. And it blesses the Lord.

Now the two brothers of Sam whom Tom had mentioned were named Canada and Australia. And their father was England. Everybody knows Sam's other name.

FAVORITISM

“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?” James ch 2 NIV



This world loves highlighting heroes, those with exceptional rank or talent. However, God does not esteem one person above another based on this world’s criteria. Therefore, his church cannot either and favoritism is not allowed. Unfortunately, this isn’t always put into practice. When the church does give added attention to select Christians, they are telling other believers, “The rest of you are not as important. Sit on the floor by my feet.”

Who does the church favor? Those with formal titles and colorful garments, leaders with high profile ministries, gifted orators, celebrity musicians, dead saints.

How are these “great ones” shown partiality? With lavish introductions on a spotlighted stage, special days, recognition ceremonies and dinners when they visit or for their accomplishments or retirement, pictures and statues (if you can believe it) in the church lobby or on the website. They are given excessive media coverage. Their books and music are prominently displayed in the book store.

One of more common ways this ungodly behavior shows up is when a prominent (i.e. favored) Christian dies. Thousands who never met the man travel miles to lay flowers at his “shrine”. Condolences pour in from around the world. Well know Christians across the country lament our great loss. That same day another believer dies, an ordinary man. He has no shrine bursting with cards and bouquets from complete strangers, no one outside his family and close friends will mourn this loss. It sends a clear message that some Christians are “more equal” than others.

We expect the sons of this world, who don’t know God, to behave in a prejudiced way, not treating everybody with equity. They value and bow down to people with the most wealth, beauty, talent and status. But the Kingdom of God is never to operate that way, and devout followers of Christ should know better.

So what are believers to do? Of course they should give special attention to their family and close friends. But with the rest, treat the famous just like you would the unfamous. To learn how you or your church may be unconsciously falling into this sin, notice how the non-Christians play favorites, because regrettably the church tends to copy the nations around them, but with a partially sanitized version. This showering of attention on a select few needs to stop. As James said, it is evil.

Does God Cause Calamity?



Yes, but not all of them. Does he get angry at us? Yes, but slowly. If a calamity comes on an individual, group or nation, people ask, “Where is God in this?” The Bible teaches in dozens of places that God punishes the wicked by sending disaster. It’s a common theme throughout the Old Testament, the words of Jesus, and the predictions of Revelation. The Lord’s judgments also serve to push the wayward to repent, although some never respond.

It's true that we usually don't know for a specific calamity what part God may have contributed, although he does leave clues. So, some calamities are from God and are deserved, but there are other causes like the Devil, evil men and our foolishness. This is a fallen world, so the righteous will also suffer, like Job, Paul and Jesus.

Our response to every calamity should always be to first examine ourselves and ask the Lord if it is from him because he is angry with our rebellious behavior.

Most Churches won't teach this. If disaster comes, they say God feels our pain, or he can use it for good, or it's a mystery. They will never propose that God may be displeased with us. Since God's role may be unknown, some use this as an excuse to never bring up his wrath. Others teach falsely that God never gets angry. Still others presume that only the very wicked are judged, but not us; we're the good guys.

Popular Christian teachers with a large following will never, ever suggest that God

is inflicting penalties on our nation through some disaster because he is angry with us. If they did, their following would quickly shrink, their popularity would fade, and the world would shun them.

Christians who suggest that events like 9-11, a hurricane or the Holocaust could be a judgment from God will usually be rejected and persecuted both by the culture and by many churches, just like the prophets, apostles, and Jesus were mistreated.

When national tragedies happen, rage is misdirected at the perpetrators of evil, instead of seeing them as a tool in the hand of God, like Babylon was. The Lord will judge the Babylons that attack us, but that's his business not ours.

The Jews have been making this mistake for thousands of years. They still mourn the loss of their temple and how they've been oppressed. They expend energy on fighting antisemitism, while refusing to listen to their own prophets from Moses to Jesus, who told them that God would judge them if they deserted him for other gods, which they have done. To this day most Jews are separated from God, because they won't recognize his hand of discipline.

Because most of this world dismisses the idea of a wrathful God, they will be totally unprepared and shocked on the day of Jesus' return. Jesus said that day will be just like the days of Noah, when the flood came and destroyed them all except those few who were ready. Are you ready?

The Mark of the Beast



The Bible's book of Revelation speaks of a "beast" who is esteemed by many and has great authority. This beast is presented as a rival kingdom to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, so it is an enemy of God and his servants. The beast requires a mark (666) on its subjects. Those who refuse are oppressed or killed. God warns of eternal wrath on those who take this mark and bow to the beast or its image, since they reject the true God and his eternal Kingdom.

Revelation is highly symbolic and deadly serious, so the safest way to understand the beast and his mark is to consider anything, literal or figurative, that may fit. This means you do not swear allegiance to any person, place, thing or institution that competes with God.

Be careful you aren't led astray by teachers who insist the beast can only be a man, the mark can only be a literal imprint on your body, and this can only happen in the future. It's long been known that one key to understanding Revelation is through its hundreds of Old Testament references. The book of Daniel mentions a beast and then explains that it represents a nation.

History is filled with beastlike nations who rejected God's morality and launched destructive wars on undeserving neighbors. The nation's supreme leader receives most of the blame, but he could do nothing without an obedient army. Now, when a person joins the military, they must pledge obedience to their country's superiors. As a soldier, they can do a lot of good in defense of their loved ones and assisting the

oppressed. On the other hand, they could be signing on to serve a beast, taking its mark of ownership on their forehead.

We easily recognize when other countries do evil, but some have a blind spot and are convinced that their own country could never do wrong. They think their nation is infallible, while in fact only God is. They see absolute loyalty to their country as a great virtue, not grasping the point of the beast narrative which is that loyalty to God must supersede all else. Because of this, many soldiers have obediently carried out a beast's evil schemes.

Revelation says those who refuse the beast and its mark will suffer or die, exactly what happens to soldiers who refuse orders. In the heat of battle, some have chosen to obey their leaders and commit atrocities just to save their own neck, and in doing so they lost their eternal soul.

Followers of Christ with strong patriotic sentiments need to consider this before joining the service and also while in it, keeping in mind who their true Lord is. If their nation's orders ever disagree with God's, they must obey the latter, even at the risk of losing everything.

Those who choose not to fight are shamed as cowards, and in some cases this is true. In other cases, it may be a wise servant of Jesus refusing to worship the beast or its image and take its mark upon his forehead.

There once was a kingdom with a young prince, who one day would be the king. He proposed to a woman from a neighboring kingdom, whose name was Linda. As the wedding drew near, Linda visited her long time friend Carol.



Linda: Carol, I've got to talk to you about the prince. His kingdom has enemies, and there's a danger of me being kidnapped. So the prince told me, "We were destined to be together. Nothing will separate you from my love. No one can take you from me."

Carol: How sweet.

Linda: It is, and I love the prince, but not enough to surrender my ability to choose.

Carol: What are you talking about?

Linda: What if he turns out to be a monster, and I want to leave him and go back to my native land. He clearly said that option is impossible. I will have no choice in the matter. I'll be a prisoner. It's creepy.

Carol: You're adding way too much to his words. He didn't say he would block you from leaving. He's only assuring you that he will do everything in his power to protect you. If my brother said that to you, would you take it the same way?

Linda: Of course not, but this is the prince talking, not your brother.

Carol: Should the prince's words be translated with a special code, just because he's royalty? What code would you use? Since no such code exists, will you invent one, and then put words in his mouth?

Linda: But there's a difference between the rest of us and him. With his army, he actually has the power to imprison me in the castle for life. So, he could have meant he would make me into a puppet.

Carol: Him having that power does not change the meaning of his words, nor does it give you license to add your own ideas to what he said.

Linda: There's more. You know the royal code of ethics; they don't lie.

Carol: Again, that doesn't . . .

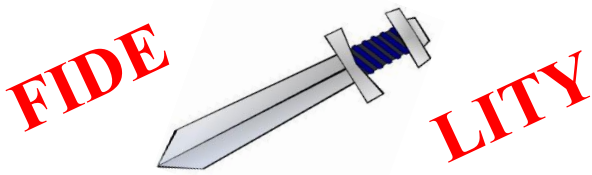
Linda: I know, I know. His honesty doesn't change how his words are to be understood.

Carol: Didn't you tell me once that your old boyfriend said something like that?

Linda: He did! I never took him to mean he was canceling my free will. Okay, don't read extra things into what the prince says, just because he is honest and all powerful.

The next day, Carol went to her weekly Bible study. A woman read from John 10:28, "I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." The woman shared, "What a comfort. Jesus says it's impossible to ever depart from him. My salvation is eternally secure. Does anyone have any thoughts on this?"

Carol replied, "As a matter of fact, I do."



There was a soldier on a Marine base who created a popular website. He loved the Marines, so his site hyped up its virtues and benefits. However, the homepage had an odd introduction. It described how the Marines on his base, including himself, would not complete their daily duties, that they would not follow orders, and that they were neither loyal nor humane to their superiors or to each other. It insisted this was their regular practice. The rest of the website preached the merits of discipline, obedience and fidelity for every Marine.

A general got wind of this. He flew to the base and sat down with the Marine.

General: Soldier, are you aware of the exceptional standard expected by the Marines?

Marine: Oh yes! That's what attracted me to join up, their integrity, courage, self-control, and their loyalty to each other.

Gen: Then how do you explain this irreverent blasphemy on your website?

Mar: Well, uh, it's not just me. Most everyone in our camp agrees with me, including the base commander.

Gen: Yes, I'll be sitting down with him as well. But I'm starting with you since your heresy has infected the rest.

Mar: I'm not sure I'd call it that.

Gen: You agree that loyalty is a virtue, and then you say, "Except we don't practice it." You value obedience, and then in the next breath say, "We often don't do what we're told." You admire kindness toward your

fellow soldiers, yet you freely admit that, "We treat each other poorly, not nearly as well as we could if we really tried."

Mar: That is true. I can give you a lot of books by some brilliant service men who eloquently explain all this. And maybe you're not aware that we've been doing it this way for a long, long time.

Gen: Oh, I'm very aware. And that makes it okay? What astounds me the most is that you, and the rest of your upside down camp, don't see any problem with this. Explain yourself, soldier!

The Marine was speechless and had nothing else to say. The meeting ended. When the general finished his business at the camp, he flew home.

Next weekend the general attended the weekly meeting of an organization he had belonged to for a long time. This institution was very similar to the Marine Corp in that it esteemed virtues like integrity, obedience and devotion to its leader and members. In fact, it demanded fidelity to a higher degree than the Corp. The general sat down with the other attendees. As was their regular custom, they began by reading the group's opening statement:

"God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves."

When Jesus walked upon this earth long ago, he did many miracles. Those who saw what he had just done would sometimes bow down to worship him. On one of these occasions, a man came



forward and stood directly between Jesus and those worshipping him, facing the worshipers. One of Jesus' disciples saw this and immediately went to confront him.

Disciple: What do you think your doing!

Man: I'm here to help them worship Jesus.

Disciple: That's fine. Just stand over to one side, or stand behind them.

Man: I think it works better if I stand here.

Disciple: These people are ten feet away from you and are looking straight at you while they worship Jesus. They're bowing to the ground and extending their hands. Doesn't that bother you?

Man: No, not at all. Besides, they aren't worshipping me. See how they close their eyes and tilt their head upward.

Disciple: Of course I know they aren't worshipping you, but it *looks* exactly like they *are* worshipping you. You have picked the worst possible place to stand.

After another miracle, the same man appeared and this time he was carrying a platform that was 3 feet high. He set it down halfway between Jesus and his worshipers. Then he stood on the platform.

Disciple: What is this pedestal for?

Man: It's so they can see me better. And would you mind not calling it a pedestal?

Disciple: (with exasperation) Why do they need to see you at all!

The man had no answer.

After yet another miracle, the man came out from the crowd again. This time there were several people following him. They all stepped up onto the platform.

Disciple: Where did you find anyone else beside yourself, whose conscience would allow them to stand right in front of Jesus while he is being worshiped?

Man: I told them they would be helping others worship God, and they got really excited. And it doesn't hurt that some people don't mind being in the spotlight.

On another occasion, the worship helpers were again standing on the platform, obscuring the view of Jesus. Another man came and stepped onto the platform to join them. This man handed one of the helpers a microphone, to another he brought a drum set, and to another he gave a guitar. They started to perform.

The disciple came over to challenge the man again. However, when he heard their beautiful music, he was so moved in his spirit that it made him forget all about where they were positioned, and who it was they were overshadowing.

And churches have been doing it this way ever since.

Those who are not convinced can research it online. There are other theories for these story's origins, but be very careful about your conclusion. Those pushing alternate explanations won't be present to argue your case when you stand before God one day.

The same Bible that describes the flood also foretells a similar event yet to come, a final judgment upon this planet but not by water. That will be when Jesus Christ returns in the sky with great power and glory. The good news is God wants you to escape to his new earth. Jesus and his apostles tell us in the Bible how to "get on the Ark". This is coming. God has already done it once, the memory of which is embedded throughout the human race.

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Mankind's Ancient Memories



Many ethnic groups around the world have ancient flood legends, where all living things drown in a deluge, except for a few survivors who repopulate the world. These stories have been found in over one hundred different people groups, in every inhabited continent. Most were passed on orally, and they changed somewhat over the centuries. However, many still share a number of common details.

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Common details include: The flood was a divine judgement on mankind's sin, one or a few were forewarned and survived in a boat, animals were also on the boat, the flood and its destruction was universal, after the deluge the boat landed on a mountain and then a bird was sent out.

Many of these cultures were completely isolated from each other until 500 years ago, ruling out the sharing of their flood legends. Is it likely that such similar stories arose independently a hundred times in all corners of the world? There are no comparable widespread stories of worldwide destruction by fire,



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earthquakes or meteors. The only feasible explanation is a single story when men were all together, before they spread around the earth. And each culture agreed it was a story never to be forgotten.

This is just what the Bible's book of Genesis records: all men were together right after the flood, after which they dispersed around the globe. The Bible's version of Noah's flood was put in writing millennia ago and was preserved by the Jews. It doesn't have the mythical style of the other flood legends, whose oral transmission corrupted them as we would expect. Yet, many retain enough of the original story to prove a common source. They independently confirm the Bible. People groups all over the world remember, however imperfectly, a global flood as judgment from God.



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Try writing the detailed steps to go from no eyelid to a working one. You'll make monsters, and you'll never make an eyelid. No one ever attempts this exercise. They simply assume that it all somehow works.

In fact, accumulated mutations *never* construct functional biological systems from scratch. No one has ever witnessed this. Mutations only make minor changes in existing designs like color, length and size, or they alter the range of an existing system. This is all that science sees today.

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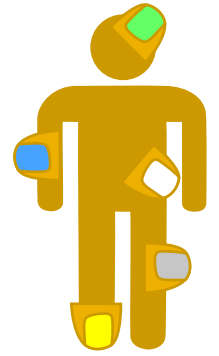
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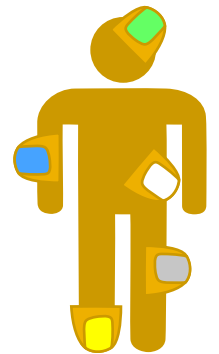
Toenails Everywhere



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Consider adding claws, or toenails (TN), to an animal. Blundering mutations will construct: TN on kneecaps, noses or tongues; TN made of muscle, hair, skin or fat; TN growing too fast, too slow, inward, outward or not at all. There will be hundreds of versions during this lengthy process. Natural selection must have options to choose between. Eventually TN on feet have an advantage, but only after a long history of half-baked tries.

Now add in everything else: teeth, skin, glands and joints; circulatory, nervous and reproductive systems; a long list. For each one, many unique partial designs (most of them ridiculous) must exist over many generations. This gradual, multi-step, process is the only way complex systems can be created from chance mutations.



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Evolution never stops, so we ought to see this today, humans with TN all over, and of different tissue. We should have partially designed ears, ribs, livers and brains throughout our body. We should look like monsters. But we never see this in humans, or in plants or animals - only finished products. Nothing is in process.

Perhaps natural selection has eliminated the partial designs? The project takes umpteen generations. How can it be *only* in the past, and that for every biological system? Is evolution paused? A simpler respiratory system in another species is not a partial design, one step away. It's complete, an island separated from the more complex design by miles of ocean, without a single stepping stone in between. We never see the designer's workbench cluttered with failed prototypes.



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Wake up and face this question with the gravity it deserves, even if those around you continue to slumber. Those who’ve earnestly probed the subject of the afterlife have discovered that the truth is not hard to find. The problem is not lack of light or proof. The obstacles are carelessness, distractions, apathy, your loves and your hates. Your ship’s provisions won’t last. Arise, search for land, then head for it as if your life depends on it - because it does.

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Wake Up



A ship was adrift far out in the ocean, its provisions running out.

The captain, officers and sailors occupied themselves with their daily duties and preferred amusements, but surprisingly they gave little thought to reaching land. Furthermore, each man had a different opinion about reaching land, as to its direction, nearness and how to get there. Others weren’t sure it could be found or that it even existed, and still others thought land irrelevant.

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This is our society's attitude toward what lies beyond the grave. One man believes all will go to heaven, another says most, while another insists it will only be a few. This one thinks there is no afterlife, that one says we can't know, and a third doesn't care. Many expect not paradise but a recycling thru reincarnation. Some claim only an echo of us survives death, others believe we dissolve and are absorbed into God.

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Many presume they can mix divergent versions according to their own recipe. Some are uncomfortable with the topic, others say keep it out of public discussion, but the rare one preaches it from the rooftops. Still others regard the whole matter as unimportant, neglecting their future. Then there are those who insist it's unkind to accuse any of these erratic theories of being misguided. Lastly are those who profess a faith but refuse to practice what it requires.

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In the past, God would use pagan Gentiles as a rod to punish those Jews who strayed. Afterward, God would punish those same Gentiles for their own wickedness. Now, in love, Jew and Gentile are being reminded of those past judgments, to spur them on to turn to God, so that they may enter his promised paradise.

Don't make the mistake of those who cover their ears from God's warnings. They mock the very idea of a wrathful God, while raging at God's messengers, who were sent for their rescue. God's judgment has been plainly displayed, so you will have no excuse when one day you stand before your Creator. Make peace with him now through his Son. Otherwise, the same wrath tasted by the Jews will fall on you.

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The Wrath of God



It is commonly known that the Jews have been severely afflicted over the past 2000 years, underscored by the Holocaust. What is not commonly known is that Moses predicted this over 3000 years ago. Moses also gave the reason – God's wrath on his wayward children who would someday forsake him.

Read Leviticus chap 26 and Deuteronomy chap 28 in the Bible, where Moses forecast the Jewish exile to foreign nations and oppression by their enemies. All the Jewish prophets after Moses repeated this theme, that God would treat his people as their deeds deserved.



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And so, what Moses and the prophets warned of came to pass. Either this is proof of divine judgement, or Moses and the Hebrew prophets were very lucky guessers. Consider that:

Even the most skeptical historians will concede that the predictions were made well before the fulfilments.

The fulfillments were many, witnessed by thousands, and spread over two millennium right up until our day.

See how the God of the Jews has broadcast a message for mankind across the history of the world. We know it's God's message, because he announced well beforehand what he would do - and why. It's the message of his wrath on whoever rebels against him.



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The Jews were privileged to know about God first, so those Jews who spurned him were punished first, while other Jews throughout history have obeyed their God.

The Jewish Messiah, Jesus, told us there will be a similar final accounting for both Jew and Gentile. History shows that the promises and warnings which the God of Abraham gives through his messengers are not to be ignored.

Since God has warned us by means of the history of the Jews, what should you do? Turn from your evil ways and submit to him, whether you are a Jew or a Gentile. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but says, "Repent and live!" Seek God now while you still can, through the Jewish Savior he sent us, Jesus Christ.



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If you've been captive to a false prophet, you'll have to fight through these, but it can be done and many have done it.

Jesus said we'll know false prophets by their fruit (their words and deeds). Most of what they say and do seems fine, but mixed in you'll see things that are clearly out of bounds. Watch for this rotten fruit.

False prophets come in all shades, from those who boldly break from the biblical faith to those who unknowingly slip in a few false doctrines. Be aware that your favorite Bible teacher may fall somewhere in that spectrum, if they deviate from the original message. Let Moses, David and Isaiah - Jesus, Peter and Paul be your teachers and you can't go wrong.

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False Prophets



"Many false prophets will appear and deceive many. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves." Jesus

Most would agree with Jesus, that false prophets exist. Our first response should always be to ask ourselves, "Could I possibly be following a false prophet?" It takes courage and humility to say, "Maybe I've been wrong all these years." It can't hurt to consider it. It's not doubt; it's being careful. If you think it fundamentally impossible for you to ever be wrong on this topic, then there's no benefit in you reading any further.



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For two thousand years, from Abraham to the apostle Paul, dozens of Jewish biblical prophets described their encounters with God. The Jews wrote it down as it happened. In every case, their portrayal of God's nature and message agree.

Centuries later a man arises saying, "I am a prophet of God like them, but my message skews in a new direction and supersedes theirs. I know what happened back then in Israel far better than those who witnessed it firsthand and recorded it. Trust me instead of the Bible (although there's no evidence of large-scale changes to the Bible.)" Common sense screams for us not to be taken in by such an obvious con man.



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These false prophets almost always stand alone and disagree with each other, completely unlike the biblical

prophets who reinforced each other's words. Who are you going to trust? Will it be the large group of men who were eyewitnesses of God acting and speaking among the ancient Jews? Or will you pick one of the lone prophets who was not there, and who tells us to ignore all the others and trust him alone.

Throughout history many false teachers have splintered off from Christianity. Most attracted only small followings. A few have believers in the millions, and one has over a billion.

Why are so many led astray, as Jesus predicted? People are deceived by the same defects that cause all of mankind's ills: pride, stubbornness, apathy, greed, hatred, foolishness, evil desires, selfish ambition, delusions, etc.



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But no one bothers to do this because they are sure they are right. A creature without lungs steps behind the curtain of time and out the other side with lungs. No one ever explains what happened behind the curtain, or how it could breath all that time.

Think about the many steps in how a fetus grows. We can't wait the thousands of generations that randomness plus natural selection requires to redesign this system from one in a simpler animal. It must be completed in *one* generation, or the new species perishes. All of our critical organs must work on the first try, or we're dead.

Consider that you may be an idol worshiper who believes that mud plus chaos plus time created all living things.

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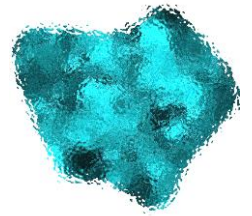
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The Idol Of Chaos

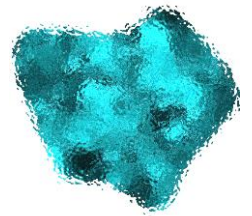


Throughout the history of mankind, many cultures have invented and believed in idols. A statute is fashioned which is thought to have special powers over nature. Its devotees are convinced of these powers because certain events are wildly misinterpreted as proof. Once this belief is ingrained in a society, its deeply buried roots are very hard to dislodge. Sceptics are ridiculed.

In truth, the statue is a dead piece of stone which cannot see, think or move. Yet, everyday events are assumed to be under its control, and are even interpreted as proof of its powers.



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Idols exist today, even in western culture. If not, then in what year did we magically break free of mankind's propensity to deceive itself? Is our culture too arrogant to see the idol we've invented?

Many are convinced that chaos plus millions of years has special powers over nature, a power that created every living thing. This presumed power, this idol, is called evolution. Museums are its temples, preaching its message. Scientists are its priests and prophets, assuring us that we can trust them. Sceptics are ridiculed.

In truth, this lifeless idol has no powers. Chance and disorder never create anything, no matter how many years you give it. The creative power of chaos plus time is assumed, its proofs no better than the proofs for other idols.



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One proof given for evolution is common designs between living things, but this does nothing to explain how deaf, dumb and blind randomness designed them. "Many small steps over millions of years" is a completely inadequate scientific answer, like a vague political campaign promise.

Some point to an animal's lengthening limb or color change. This is literally one step out of the one million needed, and a trivial one. If an infant sketched a rectangle, would this prove that he could design the rectangular smart phone in your pocket?

If evolution really worked as believed, all living things would have partially designed stomachs, brains and kneecaps all over their body. You'd realize this if you spent ten minutes thinking how the process could possibly work.



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Watch out for assuming that you already know what the answers will be. The biggest challenge will be purging your mind of all the doctrines you've heard all your life. You want to start with a blank slate.

Once you finish this neutral sampling of the Bible, summarize your notes down to one page or less. Almost certainly you will find that your conclusions differ from what you thought was the gospel, so you will be glad you did this exercise. Of course, it's not enough to understand the map, you must walk on its trail to reach the treasure. Most people never get around to searching for the true gospel in this way. Do not put it off because of laziness or distractions. You do not want to be wrong on this topic!

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Figuring Out The Map



Many people around the globe have concluded that the Bible is a sound historical record of how God spoke to a lost world through the ancient Jews. They view this book as a map to God's promised paradise. Presented here is a method to understand this map, so you can find the treasure. Specifically, this method navigates through the sometimes conflicting doctrines of different Christian groups, in order to discover what God is really saying. Each follower of Jesus ought to try something like this method, because in the end you, not your teachers, will answer to God for how you lived your life.

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From the beginning of the Old Testament, pick every 5th chapter (or 20th, or 100th, as you wish), through the end of the New Testament. Each day study one chapter (or a third of the chapter, etc., as you wish). It's vital you don't deviate from the pattern to make samples random and prevent bias.

As you study, determine how the passage answers only this question: What does it tell me about God and how he interacts with mankind. Write down the answer but only in a couple sentences. Too many notes hinder the process and will inject your own ideas. Look only for one main point in the passage as it relates to the question.

Apply these principles: First, set personal preferences aside. Approach each passage with zero bias, as if you had never heard any Christian doctrine.



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Give each passage equal weight. Do not let a few verses dominate. Determine the passage's main point without being influenced by what other parts of the Bible say. This will prevent manmade doctrines from coloring your interpretation. For the rare section you can't understand, don't force it; move on.

We must assume that God speaks to us in the Bible using the same rules of communication that we use everyday with each other. If not, then what rules would we use? Therefore, apply these well known and common sense rules for things like how to understand figurative language or being careful to not read too much into what is said. It helps that the main points are often repeated and given from different angles, making the heart of the message hard to miss.



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You might be thinking, “Why are you so eager to douse our fun? This rules out a big chunk of the Sunday comics, and a lot else. My life would be dreary if I couldn’t chuckle over slander, strife, violence, cheating and a lot else that God hates.” If you haven’t figured it out by now, this also bans all teasing. “What! How could I possibly enjoy time with my friends without making fun of them, snickering at their failures, and pretending that I despise them?” And practical jokes are out too.

God requires morally purity, and that always takes priority over having fun. When you choose fun over virtue, you provoke him to anger. You may think, “Oh, he’ll laugh it off, like I would.”, but you are dead wrong.

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That’s Not Funny



When a child makes an inappropriate joke, their parent says, “That’s not funny.” No one should joke about the Holocaust or child molesting. Most people understand this, yet many are still comfortable with telling and listening to inappropriate or carnal humor. By staying away from the dirtiest jokes, they may even claim that they practice clean comedy.

Do you laugh when people insult one another, ridicule a person’s stupidity or someone falls on their backside? Do you enjoy jokes based on vices like cruelty, drunkenness or sexual promiscuity?



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Do you giggle for stories about death, theft, greed or bathroom functions? You might say, “I can’t help it. It’s funny.” It’s time to ponder why you find bad behavior and people’s misfortunes so entertaining.

This pamphlet is targeted at those who seek to be “pure in heart” like Jesus taught. Those caring little for that virtue will scoff at this. Yes, there are many sins more serious than unclean comedy, but “pure” means free from all contamination.

The rule of thumb is this: never joke about behavior that is not morally acceptable when done for real, no exceptions. Humor never sanctifies unethical conduct. Maybe you already do this in some areas. Perhaps you never joke about sexual topics. Extend that rule to everything that is foul in God’s eyes.



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Unfortunately, many who profess Christian faith will laugh at off-color banter. Or do you alter your standards based on the audience? If so, you are a hypocrite who is more concerned with how you look to men than to God, who is always listening in. This is not just about the jokes that you tell, but also the ones you laugh at. When you so much as grin at a funny story centered around an impure deed, you tell everyone around you that impurity is not a big deal and it’s even a little delightful.

Do you forget that Jesus had to die to deal with all our depravities, both big and small? Or maybe you mistakenly presume that God’s moral standards are as low as yours. Now, for those of you who are not Christian you maybe don’t care about all this, but God does, and he will still hold you accountable.



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Then why not believe all religions? First, know that the claims and warnings of many religions are of no significance. Second, how many eyewitnesses do they have, if you can even find one? The Bible contains a huge number of eyewitnesses. You're not being asked to believe the words of one crackpot, like with a cult. The biblical witnesses were spread over many centuries and locations, making it impossible that there was any collusion or conspiracy.

The claim that copies of the Bible sustained wholesale changes to its message is untrue. You can easily check this out by comparing old copies of the Bible with today's. Read the whole Bible and judge the eyewitness accounts for yourself. Millions have, and they concluded that it is true history.

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Eye Witnesses



Is this you? "I don't believe what the Bible says, so I'm not at all worried about its warnings." If your neighbors raise an alarm, is it wise to ignore their voices, unless you have a sound reason to do so?

Some will say their reason is that they don't trust anyone but themselves, yet they don't actually live that way. None of us are omniscient, and most of the information we live by each day we learned from others. This is how society operates and it works well. We give criminals a life sentence based on eyewitnesses. Likewise, you will plan a vacation to Australia without ever having seen it.



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“Yes, I know that, but it’s different with the Bible.” No, it is not. A jury isn’t allowed to arbitrarily pick which witnesses to believe. And don’t be lazy and fall back on some empty Bible objection you once read.

“So, should I believe everything I’m told?” Of course not. For topics that matter, you have learned to sift truth from error. Now do the same with the Bible. Why bother? A lot of sincere Christians are shouting, “You should listen to this.” That should count for something. If the Bible is true, you really don’t want to ignore it! God is not giving each of us a personal interview in his throne room. If God choose to speak through a few dozen biblical prophets, why fight him?



This is not just about eyewitnesses who lived 2000 years ago. You can find genuine Christians today who

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experience the supernatural as the Bible promises. Yes, you must filter out bogus claims and coincidences, which are the vast majority, but God expects you to use your brain to do that. You may end up with only a few cases of undeniable miracles that corroborate the Bible, but they still count.

Some won’t accept the Bible’s miracle stories, arguing there’s no evidence for miracles, but that is circular reasoning. Eyewitness testimony is valid evidence, and the Bible should not be judged by special rules. That is the main point of this pamphlet. Miracles are rare, like the Jewish Holocaust, but that alone cannot be a reason to disbelieve. Demanding an extraordinary level of evidence is putting your fingers in your ears. What matters is the evidence that we do have, not the evidence we don’t.



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But because of his great love for us, he promised a new creation, one which will not be cursed. It will be the future home of those who have ended their rebellion against him.

God's Jewish messengers and his son, Jesus, tell us that you can only serve one master. If the worldly treasures of door B are all that you value, then you are not a servant of the one true God, and you will not inherit the vastly superior benefits of door A. Since these benefits will come mostly in the renewed earth, they are delayed. This requires you to trust God's plan and to wait patiently. Even though the treasures of door A far exceed those of B, many desire only B's brief rewards. What about you?

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Creator or Creation



What would you rather have, what's behind door A or door B? Behind door A is one who lives forever, never growing old or frail. Behind door B is a lover whose wrinkles and warts will start appearing within 20 years. Inside door A is he who has already promised to build and maintain a new and incorruptible planet earth. B has financial investments that could easily evaporate next month. Through A is a father with ideal qualities like integrity, wisdom and compassion. Through B are your deeply flawed friends and family.

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A has a shepherd supplying a rich variety of delights forevermore. B has one plate of food, and you'll be hungry again in 6 hours.

By now you've figured out that door A is our Creator God, while door B is his creation. Why can't we have both? What's behind door B is not forbidden, but the crucial question is this: who is your god? If each day you seek only after what is behind door B, then that is your god. If you do not give our Creator God the honor, trust and obedience he requires, then you do not have both. You only have B.

What would you rather have, the king who can place a crown on your own head, a crown that will never fade? Or do you want
 recognition from some man who in a few years will either quit, be replaced, or die?

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Will you pick the one who loves you perfectly and who knows what's good for you even more than you do? Or will you pick a new car, house and clothes, dead objects incapable of love and knowledge? Do you want him who offers us immortal bodies which will never again get sick? Or do you want an empty Hollywood fiction that is incapable of healing the simplest illness and can never raise you from the dead? We could do this all day.

In the long run, you are always better off being connected with the maker instead of the thing he made. The maker can keep on making more and better things, but the thing itself will wear out.

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But God, in his mercy sent Jesus to rescue those who will turn from all evil. Jesus came to “take away the sin of the world”, to “cast our sins into the depths of the sea”, so that we would “die to sin”. His purpose is much more than just forgiveness.

Whether you are a non-Christian or a churchgoer, you are not safe living in the middle of the graph. The only escape God gives is Jesus. Beg Christ to make you pure, then work with him. He will require you to join with other servants of his.

Believe what God said, that total obedience is not only possible, but is the only path that brings salvation, joy and peace. Your thoughts, words and deeds can be clean - in this life. That is good news!

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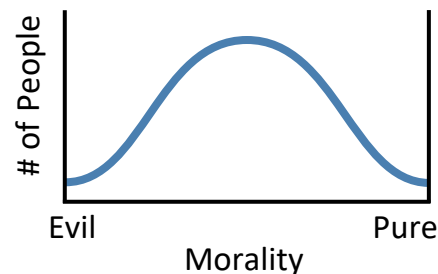
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Cozy With Sin

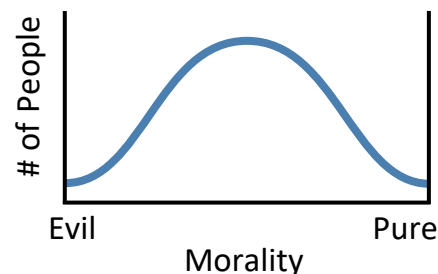


The above histogram portrays mankind's acceptance of sin in their own behavior. On the left are the few given to unrestrained wickedness. Those on the right tolerate nothing less than 100% purity. Most people are quite comfortable living in the middle.

We'd never hold up a store but will cheat on our taxes. We punish children for lying, but we won't fight our own vices since, "nobody's perfect". We expect our spouse to be faithful, but lust at strangers because "I can't help it."



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We're indignant over violent acts in the news, yet we slander our neighbor because, "That's not nearly as bad." This is the usual flip flopping, double minded attitude toward sin.

This doesn't make any sense! Why is only the left side of the graph heinous? Why can sins on the left be stopped but not those on the right? The existence of criminals on the left does not make the middle acceptable. Is wrongdoing wrong, or isn't it?

Mankind has spent thousands of years getting cozy with a measure of evil. We figure we only have to abhor the more vile atrocities. For the rest we make excuses: It's too hard to stop, I'm not that bad, everybody's doing it, I need my vices to cope, I'd be mocked (even in church) if I tried to be perfect.

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This lax attitude toward depravity was long ago dragged into the Christian church by Jesus' enemy, the devil. For centuries theological arguments have been amassed for why the right side of the graph is unattainable and even to be avoided. Christian, do you intend to stand before God and explain why you permitted immoral deeds in your life, while saying out the other side of your mouth, "But I believed in everything you stand for."?

Christians protest, "We can't be blameless. God knows that, and he is totally okay with it." Men told you this. Go back and study the whole Bible, without any hint of preconceptions, and see if God actually said it. God is not okay with sin, and he is coming to judge the world (including those in the pews) because of men's corrupt morality.

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This same warning to distance ourselves from all evil is repeated throughout the entire Bible. For the sake of the eternal destination of your soul, and for those you love whom your example is swaying, run from whatever smacks of “Babylon”; run as fast as you can.

“Woe! Woe, O great city! In one hour your doom has come!”

God’s will release his wrath quickly and unannounced, just like he did to the literal city of Babylon 2500 years ago. Do not allow even the slightest chance that you might be found on the wrong side of the line, being swept away with the godless city. Do not delay. Flee!

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Babylon



“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!” So begins the 18th chapter of the biblical book of Revelation, where Babylon’s violent destruction by God is vividly recounted, as judgment for its wickedness. Among its crimes are: excessive pursuit of riches, luxury and glory, adultery (spiritual, literal or both), defiant boasting, enticing the world into sin, and attacking God’s people. Most of the chapter is devoted to describing Babylon’s complete overthrow. All of its wealth, prosperity, commerce and splendor will come to an abrupt and final end, causing shock and grief in everyone who loved her.



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As with much of the book of revelation, there are multiple views among sincere Christians as to what this is predicting and when it might happen. However, what it warns us of is clear enough. Many areas of our present culture match the description of the devilish city presented in this chapter. Next century or next week, the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth. With the splendor of his majesty, he will bring a sudden and violent end to all evil, fulfilling for the very last time the predictions of this chapter. It also says:

“Come out of her my people, so that you will not share in her sins, and not receive her plagues; for her sins are piled to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.”



If you know that the Bible is God’s message to us, what should you do?

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If you know that the Bible is God’s message to us, what should you do?

Separate yourself from everything that might possibly be part of the “Babylon” that God will judge. Otherwise, like Lot’s wife, you will be dragged under when it’s annihilated. Go read the chapter. Then cry out to God to open your eyes and show you what you must “come out of”. Then do it!

“Babylon will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.”

“Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea and said: ‘With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.’”

If this is how God will dispose of all the vile places, practices and peoples of this world, why would you participate in them for even one more minute?



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Chris: I'll think about what you've said.

Tom: Thanks. I appreciate your humble and teachable spirit. And it blesses the Lord.

Now the two brothers of Sam whom Tom had mentioned were named Canada and Australia. And their father was England. Everybody knows Sam's other name.

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The Rebel



Long ago there was an elderly man with several grown sons. They all lived on a large estate in the countryside. One son, Sam, had a rebellious nature. He hated his fathers rules and wanted more autonomy. He didn't agree with his wages. This finally erupted into a series of violent confrontations. Wrongs were committed and limbs were lost. Finally, Sam seized some of his father's property and left home for good, settling down in another land.

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Tom: Chris, do you ever think about what your grandfather, Sam, did years ago?

Chris: Absolutely. I'm very proud of what grandpa did. He was in the right.

Tom: Are you seeing this from a Christian perspective? Sam was insubordinate to the one God put over him. He did awful things. Blood was shed.

Chris: You're ignoring what a terrible father he had.

Tom: That may or may not be true, but how does that excuse what your grandfather did? You gladly celebrate his defiance of authority, and his violence. Is that the way Jesus taught us to live? What message does it send to your children? I don't expect your non-Christian brothers will understand, but you should. The meek will inherit the earth, not the rebels.

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Chris: You know full well that some of the local militia joined Sam in his fight for freedom. Why are you dishonoring our brave men in uniform?

Tom: What? I've said nothing about them. Isn't it you showing disrespect by hiding behind them to deflect my uncomfortable words?

Chris: Yeah, maybe.

Tom: You know about your grandfather's two brothers who were patient and submissive. They gained independence the right way, over time and without bloodshed. They left home as peacemakers.

Chris: What's your point?

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not treating everybody with equity. They value and bow down to people with the most wealth, beauty, talent and status. But the Kingdom of God is never to operate that way, and devout followers of Christ should know better.

So what are believers to do? Of course they should give special attention to their family and close friends. But with the rest, treat the famous just like you would the unfamous. To learn how you or your church may be unconsciously falling into this sin, notice how the non-Christians play favorites, because regrettably the church tends to copy the nations around them, but with a partially sanitized version. This showering of attention on a select few needs to stop. As James said, it is evil.

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FAVORITISM

“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?” James ch 2 NIV



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This world loves highlighting heroes, those with exceptional rank or talent. However, God does not esteem one person above

another based on this world's criteria. Therefore, his church cannot either and favoritism is not allowed. Unfortunately, this isn't always put into practice. When the church does give added attention to select Christians, they are telling other believers, "The rest of you are not as important. Sit on the floor by my feet."

Who does the church favor? Those with formal titles and colorful garments, leaders with high profile ministries, gifted orators, celebrity musicians, dead saints.

How are these "great ones" shown partiality? With lavish introductions on a spotlighted stage, special days, recognition ceremonies and dinners when they visit or for their accomplishments or retirement, pictures and statues (if you can believe it) in the church lobby or on the website.

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They are given excessive media coverage. Their books and music are prominently displayed in the book store.

One of more common ways this ungodly behavior shows up is when a prominent (i.e. favored) Christian dies. Thousands who never met the man travel miles to lay flowers at his "shrine". Condolences pour in from around the world. Well know Christians across the country lament our great loss. That same day another believer dies, an ordinary man. He has no shrine bursting with cards and bouquets from complete strangers, no one outside his family and close friends will mourn this loss. It sends a clear message that some Christians are "more equal" than others.

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Because most of this world dismisses the idea of a wrathful God, they will be totally unprepared and shocked on the day of Jesus' return. Jesus said that day will be just like the days of Noah, when the flood came and destroyed them all except those few who were ready. Are you ready?

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Does God Cause Calamity?



Yes, but not all of them. Does he get angry at us? Yes, but slowly. If a calamity comes on an individual, group or nation, people ask, "Where is God in this?" The Bible teaches in dozens of places that God punishes the wicked by sending disaster. It's a common theme throughout the Old Testament, the words of Jesus, and the predictions of Revelation. The Lord's judgments also serve to push the wayward to repent, although some never respond.

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So, some calamities are from God and are deserved, but there are other causes like the Devil, evil men and our foolishness. This is a fallen world, so the righteous will also suffer, like Job, Paul and Jesus.

Our response to every calamity should always be to first examine ourselves and ask the Lord if it is from him because he is angry with our rebellious behavior.

Most Churches won't teach this. If disaster comes, they say God feels our pain, or he can use it for good, or it's a mystery. They will never propose that God may be displeased with us. Since God's role may be unknown, some use this as an excuse to never bring up his wrath. Others teach falsely that God never gets angry. Still others presume that only the very wicked are judged, but not us; we're the good guys.

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Christians who suggest that events like 9-11, a hurricane or the Holocaust could be a judgment from God will usually be rejected and persecuted both by the culture and by many churches, just like the prophets, apostles, and Jesus were mistreated.

When national tragedies happen, rage is misdirected at the perpetrators of evil, instead of seeing them as a tool in the hand of God, like Babylon was. The Lord will judge the Babylons that attack us, but that's his business not ours.

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In the heat of battle, some have chosen to obey their leaders and commit atrocities just to save their own neck, and in doing so they lost their eternal soul.

Followers of Christ with strong patriotic sentiments need to consider this before joining the service and also while in it, keeping in mind who their true Lord is. If their nation's orders ever disagree with God's, they must obey the latter, even at the risk of losing everything.

Those who choose not to fight are shamed as cowards, and in some cases this is true. In other cases, it may be a wise servant of Jesus refusing to worship the beast or its image and take its mark upon his forehead.

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The Mark of the Beast



The Bible's book of Revelation speaks of a "beast" who is esteemed by many and has great authority. This beast is presented as a rival kingdom to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, so it is an enemy of God and his servants. The beast requires a mark (666) on its subjects. Those who refuse are oppressed or killed. God warns of eternal wrath on those who take this mark and bow to the beast or its image, since they reject the true God and his eternal Kingdom.

Revelation is highly symbolic and deadly serious, so the safest way to understand the beast and his mark is to consider anything, literal or figurative, that may fit.

The Mark of the Beast



The Bible's book of Revelation speaks of a "beast" who is esteemed by many and has great authority. This beast is presented as a rival kingdom to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, so it is an enemy of God and his servants. The beast requires a mark (666) on its subjects. Those who refuse are oppressed or killed. God warns of eternal wrath on those who take this mark and bow to the beast or its image, since they reject the true God and his eternal Kingdom.

Revelation is highly symbolic and deadly serious, so the safest way to understand the beast and his mark is to consider anything, literal or figurative, that may fit.

This means you do not swear allegiance to any person, place, thing or institution that competes with God. Be careful you aren't led astray by teachers who insist the beast can only be a man, the mark can only be a literal imprint on your body, and this can only happen in the future. It's long been known that one key to understanding Revelation is through its hundreds of Old Testament references. The book of Daniel mentions a beast and then explains that it represents a nation.

History is filled with beastlike nations who rejected God's morality and launched destructive wars on undeserving neighbors. The nation's supreme leader receives most of the blame, but he could do nothing without an obedient army. Now, when a person joins the military, they must pledge obedience to their country's superiors.

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As a soldier, they can do a lot of good in defense of their loved ones and assisting the oppressed. On the other hand, they could be signing on to serve a beast, taking its mark of ownership on their forehead.

We easily recognize when other countries do evil, but some have a blind spot and are convinced that their own country could never do wrong. They think their nation is infallible, while in fact only God is. They see absolute loyalty to their country as a great virtue, not grasping the point of the beast narrative which is that loyalty to God must supersede all else. Because of this, many soldiers have obediently carried out a beast's evil schemes.

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Linda: He did! I never took him to mean he was canceling my free will. Okay, don't read extra things into what the prince says, just because he is honest and all powerful.

The next day, Carol went to her weekly Bible study. A woman read from John 10:28, "I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." The woman shared, "What a comfort. Jesus says it's impossible to ever depart from him. My salvation is eternally secure. Does anyone have any thoughts on this?"

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There once was a kingdom with a young prince, who one day would be the king. He proposed to a woman from a neighboring kingdom, whose name was Linda. As the wedding drew near, Linda visited her long time friend Carol.



Linda: Carol, I've got to talk to you about the prince. His kingdom has enemies, and there's a danger of me being kidnapped. So the prince told me, "We were destined to be together. Nothing will separate you from my love. No one can take you from me."

Carol: How sweet.

Linda: It is, and I love the prince, but not enough to surrender my ability to choose.

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Carol: What are you talking about?

Linda: What if he turns out to be a monster, and I want to leave him and go back to my native land. He clearly said that option is impossible. I will have no choice in the matter. I'll be a prisoner. It's creepy.

Carol: You're adding way too much to his words. He didn't say he would block you from leaving. He's only assuring you that he will do everything in his power to protect you. If my brother said that to you, would you take it the same way?

Linda: Of course not, but this is the prince talking, not your brother.

Carol: Should the prince's words be translated with a special code, just because he's royalty? What code would you use?

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Since no such code exists, will you invent one, and then put words in his mouth?

Linda: But there's a difference between the rest of us and him. With his army, he actually has the power to imprison me in the castle for life. So, he could have meant he would make me into a puppet.

Carol: Him having that power does not change the meaning of his words, nor does it give you license to add your own ideas to what he said.

Linda: There's more. You know the royal code of ethics; they don't lie.

Carol: Again, that doesn't . . .

Linda: I know, I know. His honesty doesn't change how his words are to be understood.

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“God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.”

Terms like “sir” were left out for simplicity.
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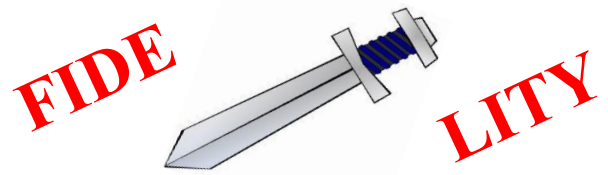
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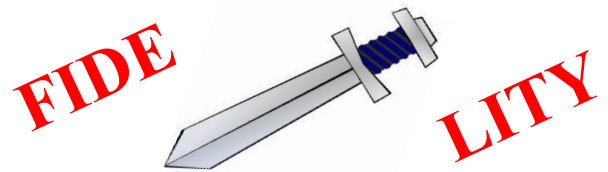
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There was a soldier on a Marine base who created a popular website. He loved the Marines, so his site hyped up its virtues and benefits. However, the homepage had an odd introduction. It described how the Marines on his base, including himself, would not complete their daily duties, that they would not follow orders, and that they were neither loyal nor humane to their superiors or to each other. It insisted this was their regular practice. The rest of the website preached the merits of discipline, obedience and fidelity for every Marine.

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A general got wind of this. He flew to the base and sat down with the Marine.

General: Soldier, are you aware of the exceptional standard expected by the Marines?

Marine: Oh yes! That's what attracted me to join up, their integrity, courage, self-control, and their loyalty to each other.

Gen: Then how do you explain this irreverent blasphemy on your website?

Mar: Well, uh, it's not just me. Most everyone in our camp agrees with me, including the base commander.

Gen: Yes, I'll be sitting down with him as well. But I'm starting with you since your heresy has infected the rest.

Mar: I'm not sure I'd call it that.

Gen: You agree that loyalty is a virtue, and then you say, "Except we don't practice it." You value obedience, and then in the next

breath say, "We often don't do what we're told." You admire kindness toward your fellow soldiers, yet you freely admit that, "We treat each other poorly, not nearly as well as we could if we really tried."

Mar: That is true. I can give you a lot of books by some brilliant service men who eloquently explain all this. And maybe you're not aware that we've been doing it this way for a long, long time.

Gen: Oh, I'm very aware. And that makes it okay? What astounds me the most is that you, and the rest of your upside down camp, don't see any problem with this. Explain yourself, soldier!

The Marine was speechless and had nothing else to say. The meeting ended. When the general finished his business at the camp, he flew home.

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The disciple came over to challenge the man again. However, when he heard their beautiful music, he was so moved in his spirit that it made him forget all about where they were positioned, and who it was they were overshadowing.

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forward and stood directly between Jesus and those worshiping him, facing the worshipers. One of Jesus' disciples saw this and immediately went to confront him.

Disciple: What do you think your doing!

Man: I'm here to help them worship Jesus.

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Disciple: These people are ten feet away from you and are looking straight at you while they worship Jesus. They're bowing to the ground and extending their hands. Doesn't that bother you?

Man: No, not at all. Besides, they aren't worshipping me. See how they close their eyes and tilt their head upward.

Disciple: Of course I know they aren't worshipping you, but it *looks* exactly like they *are* worshipping you. You have picked the worst possible place to stand.

After another miracle, the same man appeared and this time he was carrying a platform that was 3 feet high. He set it down halfway between Jesus and his worshipers. Then he stood on the platform.

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Disciple: (with exasperation) Why do they need to see you at all!

The man had no answer.

After yet another miracle, the man came out from the crowd again. This time there were several people following him. They all stepped up onto the platform.

Disciple: Where did you find anyone else beside yourself, whose conscience would allow them to stand right in front of Jesus while he is being worshiped?

Man: I told them they would be helping others worship God, and they got really excited. And it doesn't hurt that some people don't mind being in the spotlight.

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