




REASON & REVELATION

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Should **Christians** **Accept** Evolution and an **Old Earth** to Win **Converts**? **Part 2**



How to
TREAT
False
Teachers

DVD
Liquidation

Q&A:
Why the Delay on
Writing the N.T.?



[**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Part I of this two-part series appeared in the April issue. Part II follows below and continues, without introductory comments, where the first article ended.]

REASON #4: WE WANT TO BE RATIONAL.

SCIENTISTS pride themselves on being rational, basing their conclusions on the evidence. Christians wish to do so as well, in keeping with Scripture's teaching on the subject (e.g., 1 Thessalonians 5:21; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1). "Blind" (i.e., evidence-less) faith is unbiblical.¹

So, if Creation as it has been taught for thousands of years is correct, we want to know that fact, because we want to be rational, drawing the right conclusions. If Creation as it has been taught is incorrect, we want to know that, too! We want the truth, because we want to be rational. We want to, "Prove/test all things, hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Is the pursuit of sound conclusions a worthy reason to oppose Evolution when Evolution has proven to be an irrational theory?

REASON #5: WE WANT TO TEACH THE TRUTH.

IT is clear that "truth" is a theme in Scripture, on par with faith: coming to know the truth (1 Timothy 2:4); believing the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:12); obeying the truth (1 Peter 1:22); preaching the

truth (Ephesians 4:15); telling the truth (Ephesians 4:25); walking in truth (2 John 1:4); doing the truth (John 3:21); working for truth (3 John 8); practicing the truth (1 John 1:6); following the way of truth (2 Peter 2:2); standing in the truth (John 8:44); girding our waist with truth (Ephesians 6:14); rightly dividing the truth (2 Timothy 2:15); worshipping in truth (John 4:24); and rejoicing in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6). The truth is what sets us free (John 8:32). Jesus is described as "the Truth" (John 14:6).

According to 2 Thessalonians 2:10, **loving** the truth leads to salvation. Do we love the truth? If a person **loves** the truth taught in God's Word—be it the truth about Creation or the Cross—will he not want to oppose those ideas he believes to be false and only teach true ideas to others (regardless of their popularity)?

REASON #6: TEACHING ERROR IS SINFUL.

THE Bible is explicit in its condemnation of teaching error regarding biblical matters. "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment" (James 3:1). When we want to believe or do what we want to believe or do, it is tempting to try to force the Bible to say what we want it to say, injecting our own ideas into the text (eisegesis), instead of letting the text interpret itself without our

own preconceived biases (exegesis). Peter, however, warns about the result of "untaught and unstable people" **twisting** the Scriptures to fit their agenda. It will bring on their own "destruction" (2 Peter 3:16). Genesis 1 is as much Scripture as the rest of the Bible. Teaching error about Creation is just as wrong as teaching error about anything the Bible teaches.

In Job 13:7, Job defends himself against the accusations being made by his friends, who had claimed that God was punishing him for sinning. He warns his friends about putting words in God's mouth saying, "Will you speak falsely for God?" (ESV). Would we want to attribute something to God that He did not do, or say He did something that He did not say? Would we want to claim that He did something—like Creation—in a way that He did not do it? In so doing, we become false witnesses for God!

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul gives a defense of the fact that, in the end, there will be a resurrection from the dead. Souls are not annihilated at death: there is an afterlife. Paul argues that, if there is no afterlife, then, contrary to the testimony of Paul and the apostles, Jesus was **not** resurrected. "Yes, and we are found **false witnesses of God**, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not raise" (vs. 15). Would we want to be false witnesses of God, claiming He used Evolution, the Big Bang, and deep time, if **He did not do so**? If God did not use Darwinian Evolution, and Christians say He did, then are they not giving false testimony for God?

Undoubtedly, some people simply have not thoroughly examined the evidence concerning Evolution, deep time, and the Bible. Perhaps they have no opinion on the sub-

jects because they do not care or because they humbly recognize that they currently have insufficient evidence to draw a conclusion. Perhaps they lean for or against belief in Evolution due to the evidence they currently possess. We would not suggest that every person must necessarily passionately believe in a young Earth and a literal Creation to be saved. However, the moment a person begins definitively teaching and encouraging others to accept as true a particular position with biblical implications, he is bound by Scripture to “speak the oracles [i.e., utterances (NASB)/very words (NIV)] of God” (1 Peter 4:11). No matter the topic, a person should be careful to speak the **truth** in all things. If the truth can be known about something, the truth should be taught. If a person knows he is not, or cannot be, certain what the truth is on a subject, he should be careful not to speak definitively, instead using disclaimers (e.g., “might be,” “could be,” “seems,” etc.). On the other hand: if the evidence conclusively substantiates a truth, he should unashamedly teach it. We have yet to see a solid, reasonable case made for how Evolution and deep time should be drawn from the biblical text or injected into it. On the contrary, they have been shown to be lacking in essential scientific and biblical evidence. Should we not, therefore, if desiring to speak the oracles of God, teach against them?

REASON #7: EVOLUTION IS A DANGEROUS DOCTRINE.

WHEN a person thinks about Evolution academically and superficially, without considering its heinous implications and inevitable, deleterious effects on a society, he might fail to see the inherent danger in not speaking against it, much less promoting it. One might think that Evolution and morality can co-exist, especially if Theistic Evolution is accepted, instead of Naturalistic

Evolution. However, as mentioned in Part I, belief in Theistic Evolution is a “gateway doctrine” which tends to lead towards faithlessness and belief in pure naturalism, as it did for Charles Darwin. While Darwin was a self-espoused orthodox Christian when he first wrote *Origin of Species*, upon dwelling on Evolutionary ideas, he “very gradually, with many fluctuations, became weaker” in his faith, ultimately becoming an agnostic. Later, he stated, “Then arises the doubt, can the mind of man, which has, as I fully believe, been developed from a mind as low as that possessed by the lowest animals, be trusted when it draws such grand conclusions [i.e., belief in God—JM]?”² Evolution devastates faith, as it did its “Father.”

We have documented extensively elsewhere³ that when Evolutionary thinking is carried to its logical implications, society becomes dark, indeed. If students are taught their whole life that Evolution is true and, therefore, only the most fit will tend to survive by tooth and claw, what would we expect those students to be like after roughly two decades of indoctrination? If they are taught that “might makes right” in the Evolutionary paradigm (as opposed to Scripture defining what is right) and that humans are merely hairless apes, why would we not expect the emergence of a society populated by violent animals? Why would we not expect an immoral populace that uses weapons instead of intellects and takes what they want if they have the power and opportunity to do so?

Is it coincidence that over the last several decades, as Evolution (including Theistic Evolution) began being taught in earnest in U.S. public schools and churches, that the percentage of Americans who believe the Bible is the actual Word of God and is to be taken literally has steadily declined, while the percentage of Americans who believe the Bible to be a book of fables, history, and moral precepts recorded by man has steadily increased?⁴ Simul-

taneously, starting in the 1960s and 1970s, the U.S. index crime rate, which includes the reported crimes of murder/manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft, began to skyrocket. The crime rate climbed from a steady yearly average of roughly 700 crimes per 100,000 people in the 30s-50s, to 6,000 crimes per 100,000 people—over 800% growth in 20 years.⁵ No doubt there were several contributing factors to the explosion of crime, but one would predict that the widespread teaching of Evolution would result in immorality and violence, since, as leading Evolutionists have acknowledged (including Darwin, himself), Evolution and morality are incompatible.

Famous evolutionary biologist, Richard Dawkins said, “Absolutist moral discrimination is devastatingly undermined by the fact of evolution.”⁶ Cornell University evolutionary biology professor William Provine, keynote speaker at the Darwin Day event at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, said, “Naturalistic evolution has clear consequences that Charles Darwin understood perfectly. 1) No gods worth having exist; 2) no life after death exists; 3) **no ultimate foundation for ethics exists**; 4) no ultimate meaning in life exists; and 5) human free will is nonexistent.... The first 4 implications are so obvious to modern naturalistic evolutionists that I will spend little time defending them.”⁷ Charles Darwin said, “A man who has no assured and ever present belief in the existence of a personal God or of a future existence with retribution and reward, can have for his rule of life, as far as I can see, only to follow those impulses and instincts which are the strongest or which seem to him the best ones.”⁸ Is it any wonder that more and more people in society would live out the implications of Evolution if they are taught to believe that it is true?

What kind of things are implied by Evolution that would lead to a

dark society? Consider Darwin's own words in *The Descent of Man*:

With savages, the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. We civilised men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to small-pox. **Thus the weak members of civilised societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man.** It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, **hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed.**

The aid which we feel impelled to give to the helpless is mainly an incidental result of the instinct of sympathy, which was originally acquired as part of the social instincts, but subsequently rendered, in the manner previously indicated, more tender and more widely diffused. Nor could we check our sympathy, even at the urging of hard reason, without deterioration in the noblest part of our nature.... **We must therefore bear the undoubtedly bad effects of the weak surviving and propagating their kind;** but there appears to be at least one check in steady action, namely that the weaker and inferior members of society do not marry so freely as the sound; and this check might be indefinitely increased by the weak in body or mind refraining from marriage, though this is more to be hoped for than expected.⁹

But why must we "bear the undoubtedly bad effects of the weak surviv-

ing and propagating their kind," if there is no morality if Evolution is true? From serial murderer Jeffrey Dahmer¹⁰ (who murdered and dismembered 17 men and boys) to Pekka Auvinen (who massacred eight people in his school in Finland in 2007), calling himself a "natural selector" eliminating "all who I see unfit...., failures of natural selection,"¹¹ many have carried out the logical implications of their belief in Evolution. In 1999, Columbine High School shooter Eric Harris made his plans to put on his "natural selection" T-shirt and enter his high school to shoot dozens of students and teachers, stating in his personal writings that he would "kick natural selection up a few notches," killing "whoever I deem unfit."¹² Nazi Germany was, of course, the most notorious of those carrying out the implications of Darwinian Evolution, killing 6,000,000 Jews in Europe for being, in their view, "unfit."¹³

As Richard Dawkins said concerning Evolution, "My own feeling is that a human society based simply on the gene's law of universal ruthless selfishness would be a very **nasty society in which to live.**"¹⁴ If Evolution is false (along with its necessary foundation of an old Earth), would not a rational, moral person do everything in his power to oppose it?

CONCLUSION

Should a Christian accept Evolution and an old Earth to make the Bible more "palatable" and win more converts? Worded another way: if the Bible does not teach something, should we claim that it does if it will make more people happy with it? Should Christians adjust and compromise **every** Bible teaching that people have a problem with? Is that how God wants humans to treat Scripture?

One would think that the fallaciousness of such an approach would be self-evident. People have a problem with many more biblical doctrines than Creation and a young Earth. From miracles to the divinity of Christ to the Bible's teaching about sexual immorality and divorce—the bulk of the world will not **choose** to accept God's way. It has **always** been that way. Should Noah have adjusted his teachings to "save" more people on the Ark with him? We should not go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6). We should not twist the Scriptures, or we are inviting our destruction (2 Peter 3:16).

Jesus certainly did not adjust His teachings to make them more palatable to people (which, ultimately, is why He was killed). Should we? Certainly not. In fact, Jesus directly warned His disciples that the world would **hate** them and their message (John 15:18-20). It will be considered **foolishness** to the world (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). It will be laughed at. Peter warned that scoffers who wish to live immoral lives will "willingly forget" Genesis 1 (Creation) and Genesis 6-9 (the global Flood of Noah's day). They will belittle and make fun of the teachings of Christians on those subjects (2 Peter 3:3-6), but Peter warned that God "is not slack concerning His promise": Judgment Day is coming just as certainly as Creation happened and the judgment of the Flood came, whether or not they wish to "willingly forget" that truth (vss. 7-13).

Few passages more directly apply to the mindset of those who advocate for Evolution than 2 Timothy 4:3-4: "For the time will come when they **will not endure sound doctrine**, but according to their **own desires**, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and

be turned aside to fables.” “Sound” doctrine refers to teachings that are healthy, logical, and rational—reasonable conclusions that follow from the evidence. Paul warns that some people would not just reject the evidence, they would not **endure** (“put up with”—NIV) it. By implication, they would actively try to fight it, because the implications of that evidence run counter to “their own desires.” They want to live the way they want to live without being accountable. They want to do that which is right in their own eyes. Their solution: surround themselves with “experts” who will tell them what they want to hear. With enough “smart people” bolstering their view, they can, with little bother from their conscience, believe in something that is not supported by either the Bible or legitimate scientific evidence.

If we are warned that many people will not accept the truth (regardless of how it is packaged), the Christian should realize that the packaging is not the real issue. Some people will not accept the truth. Period. So, why try to change the packaging to suit those who are not searching for the truth anyway and invite our own judgment? Why join the anti-Christian, ungodly forces of the world who wish to “suppress the truth [including Creation—JM] in unrighteousness” so that they can live as they want (Romans 1:18-32)? A Christian should never forget that Evolution is, first and foremost, a theory championed by “haters of God” (Romans 1:30). One should be very certain Evolution is true before endorsing such a dangerous doctrine (Romans 1:32) and supporting its promoters (2 Chronicles 19:2).

Christians should understand that most people are not going to like or accept what the Bible teaches on many subjects (Matthew 7:13-14), but boldly and lovingly teach them anyway. “Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech” (2 Corinthians 3:12).

We should not be ashamed of the Bible’s teaching on any subject, nor should we be shaken by those who scoff at us. Evolution not only has no evidence to support its most basic tenets, it actually stands against mounds of scientific evidence which refutes it.¹⁵ Belief in Evolution is, therefore, not only dangerous, but irrational. “Buy the truth, and do not sell it” (Proverbs 23:23). Defend the truth (1 Peter 3:15), contending earnestly for it (Jude 3). “Preach the word” always (2 Timothy 4:2), regardless of its popularity.

ENDNOTES

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- ¹⁴ Richard Dawkins (1989), *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 2-3, emp. added.
- ¹⁵ Jeff Miller (2017), *Science vs. Evolution* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

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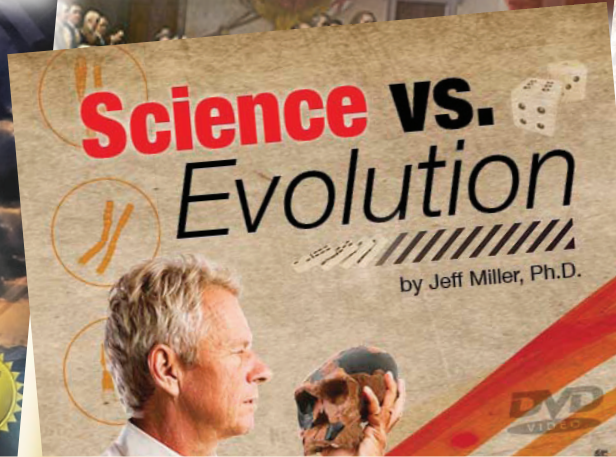
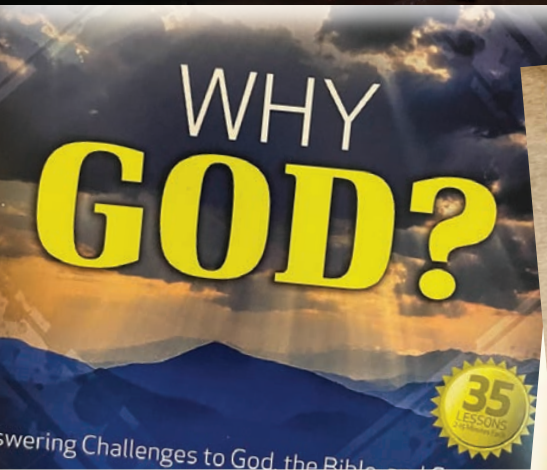
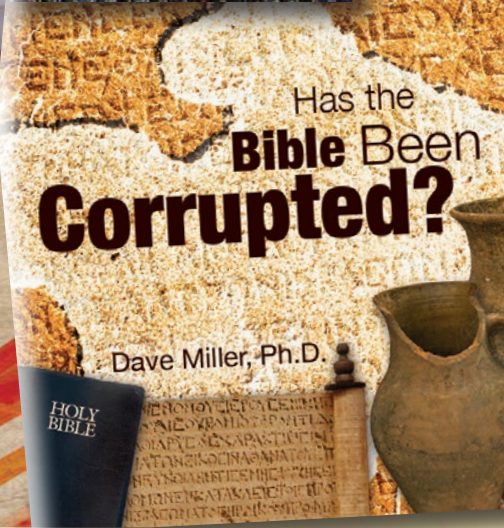
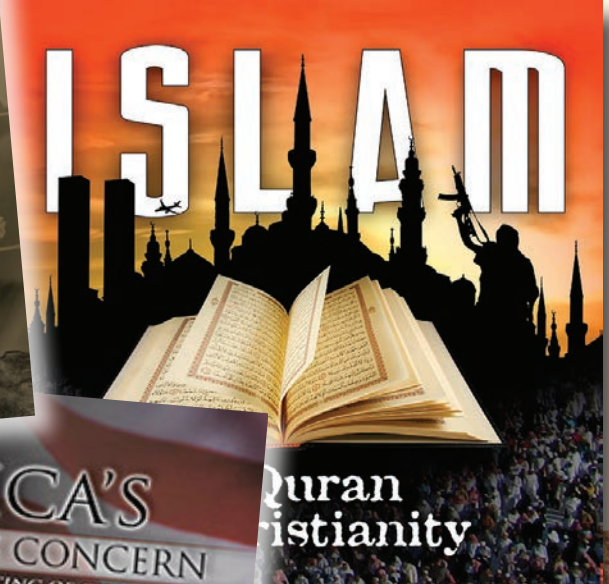
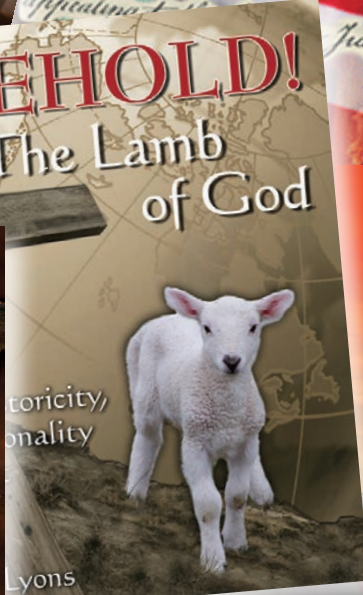
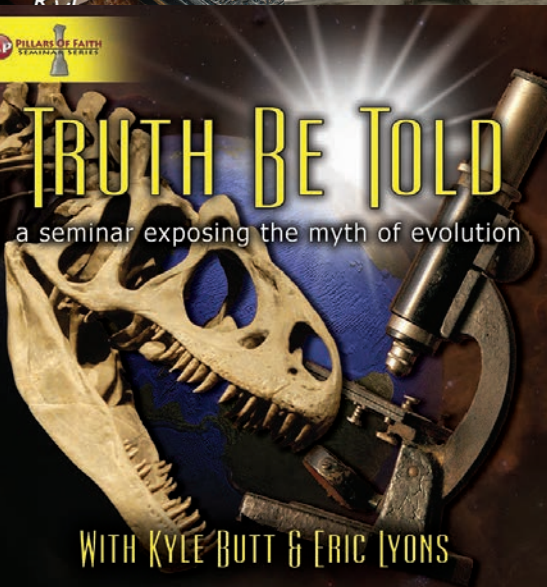
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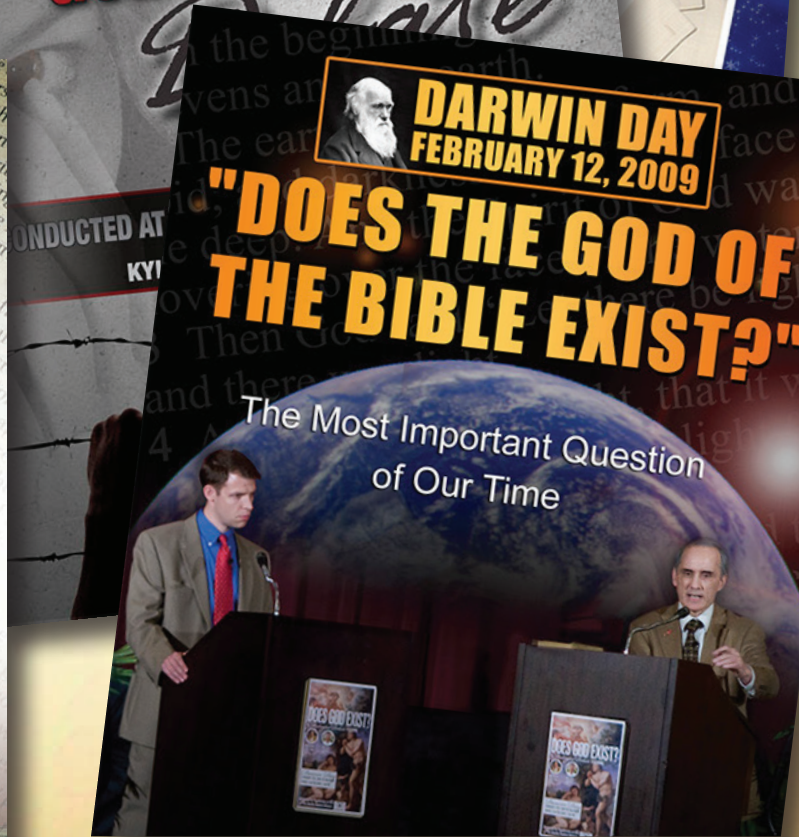
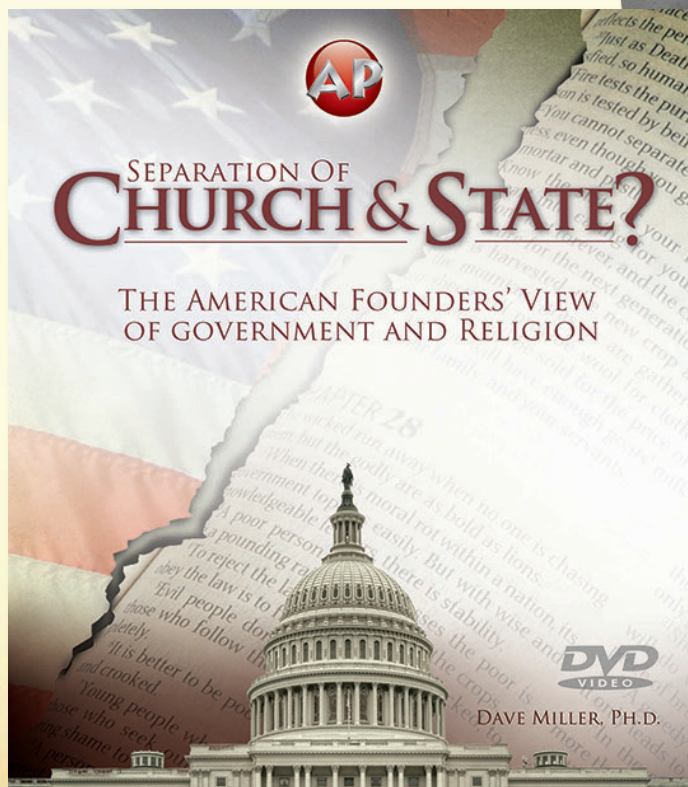
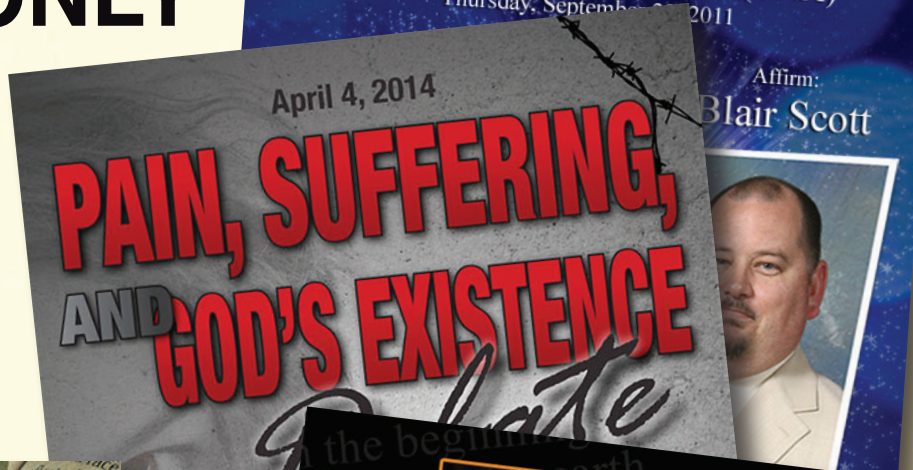
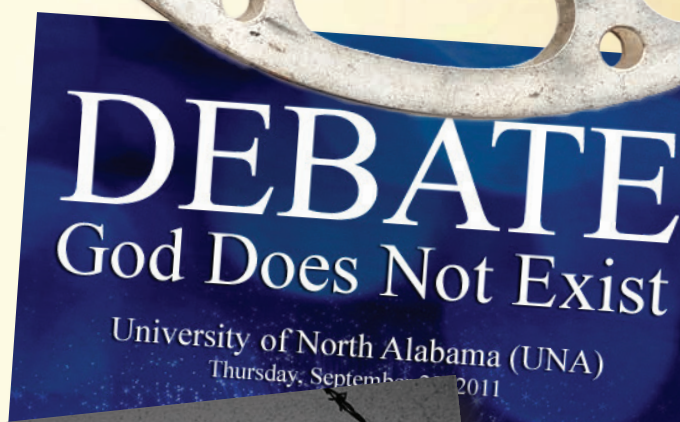
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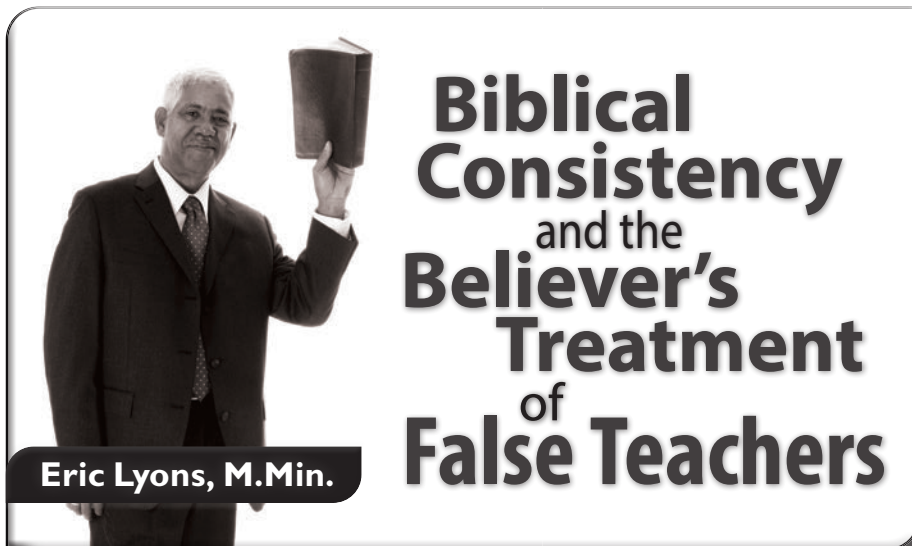
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Eric Lyons, M.Min.

Biblical Consistency and the Believer's Treatment of False Teachers

IF Christians are to be kind and loving to everyone (Luke 10:29-37), some question why 2 John 10-11 teaches, “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine (‘the doctrine of Christ’—vs. 9), **do not receive him into your house nor greet him**; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.”¹ Also, why did Paul instruct Timothy to “shun profane and idle babblings” (2 Timothy 2:16; 1 Timothy 6:20-21)? Are Christians to shun those with whom we disagree, and even go so far as not to greet them or allow them into our homes?

First, Scripture, indeed, repeatedly calls for Christians to love everyone—whether family, friends, fellow Christians, or enemies (Matthew 5:43-48; 22:36-40; Romans 12:9-21). We are to “[r]epay **no one evil for evil**” (Romans 12:17), but strive to “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave” us (Ephesians 4:32). But Christian kindness and love are not antithetical to such things as, for example, punishing rule breakers. A father who loves his son, and would even die for him, will promptly discipline him for unruly conduct (Proverbs 13:24; Ephesians 6:4). A school principal may genuinely love and care for every student under his

oversight, but he may occasionally have to expel a disorderly child from the school for at least two reasons: (1) so that the hundreds of other students who want to get an education can safely and successfully do so, and (2) in hopes that such drastic measures will cause the unruly child to awaken to his senses before it is too late (and he does something far worse as a teenager or as an adult). An **uninformed outsider**, who

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sees a father disciplining his son or a school principal punishing a student, may initially think less of these adults and wonder how they could call themselves Christians. The **logical, more informed bystander**, however, will quickly size up the situation and easily see the consistency in loving, disciplinary actions.

In the epistle of 2 John, the apostle expressed his concern for

the eternal destiny of Christians, saying, “Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward” (vs. 8, NASB). John was alarmed because deceptive false teachers who denied the incarnation of Jesus were a serious threat to the salvation of Christians. “For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh” (2 John 7). These false teachers (known as Gnostics) alleged that Christ could not have been incarnated because the flesh is inherently sinful. And, since the flesh is supposedly intrinsically evil, Gnostics taught that Christians did not need to resist fleshly temptations. Just “do whatever feels good” and know that such wicked actions are only physical and not spiritual. Allegedly, the soul could still be pure, even if the individuals themselves participated in wicked activity.²

The apostle John (who had “seen” and “handled” the actual body of Christ—1 John 1:1-4; i.e., Jesus **did** come in the flesh) repeatedly condemned the central teachings of certain Gnostics who were confusing and misleading first-century Christians.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because **many false prophets have gone out into the world**. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world (1 John 4:1-3).

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is

no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil.... Whoever has been born of God does not sin (1 John 3:4-9).

False doctrine was a real and present danger in the first-century church, just as it is today. Christians were (and are) to be on “guard” because “some have strayed concerning the faith”—profane and idle babblers and teachers of contradictory doctrines of “what is falsely called knowledge” (Greek *gnosis*; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; cf. 2 Timothy 2:15-26). Denying the physical life, death, burial, and resurrection of the body of Christ was heresy, and thus John and others warned the early church of such deception. What’s more, claiming that “all unrighteousness is **not** sin,” was to directly contradict the Law of Christ. In truth, “the works of the flesh are evident,” and “those who practice such things will **not** inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19,21). John wrote: “Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God,” because “all unrighteousness **is** sin” (1 John 3:10; 5:17).

Christians are commanded to withdraw fellowship (lovingly, faithfully, and sorrowfully) from brethren who rebel against the teachings of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15). Such actions by Christians and churches are taken for at least two reasons: (1) to keep the church and the Christian families that comprise her from being harmed spiritually by the defiantly unfaithful (whose very tolerated presence would have even more damaging effects than an incessantly disruptive student in a school room; cf. 1 Corinthians 5:6-7); and (2) in hopes of causing

the wayward child of God to come to his senses (being “ashamed” of his sinful conduct; 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 1 Corinthians 5:5)—repenting of sin and being restored to the family of God.

Similarly, in 2 John 10-11, the apostle of the Lord instructed hospitable Christians to recognize the seriousness of greeting and housing deceptive false teachers. [NOTE: “The greeting was ‘*Chairo!*’ literally, *goodspeed* or *God speed*. This greeting was more than mere formality; it was an approval of the course being pursued by the one thus greeting, and included a desire for success in the effort attempted.”³] First-century roaming teachers



and preachers “**depended** on the generosity of the members of the church” for their housing and hospitality.⁴ John the apostle, however, wanted the church to understand the serious threat that these dangerous false teachers posed to the precious bride of Christ. Doctrinal error is not something to “play with,” especially when such error involves the foundation of the Church (the life of Christ—2 John 7) and the denial of sin (the very thing that results in eternal death for the impenitent—Romans 6:23; Luke 13:3,5). By refusing to house and bid God-speed to deceptive teachers,

the ungodly efforts of these misleading “messengers” would be greatly diminished. In time, they might choose to (or have to) stop their sowing of error altogether because of lack of opportunities, assistance, and encouragement. Such a result combined with genuine repentance would be the very thing for which Christians hope and pray.

Anyone who can see the reasonable and loving consistency of parents telling their children to “be nice to everyone,” **but** “don’t listen to these dangerous people” (showing them pictures of known child molesters), should be able to see the consistency of God’s message concerning Christian love and hospitality, and the way Christians react to false teachers who espouse damnable error. Children who shun dangerous sexual predators are protecting their own innocence, as well as keeping themselves and their families from a moment (or a lifetime) of grief. What’s more, the avoided, dangerous strangers are not given the opportunity to continue in their sins. Thus, the children’s obedient avoidance of them could be of great help to the sinful strangers in the highest way possible—if they awoken to their spiritual senses.

Christians are actually fulfilling the Law of Christ to “do good to all” (Galatians 6:2,10) even as we identify and refuse to embrace and fellowship false teachers. We are “doing good” to the “household of faith” by helping keep her pure and unaffected by cancer-spreading deceptive teachers (2 Timothy 2:17-18). Allowing error to spread would be tantamount to “rejoic[ing] in iniquity,” which is unloving (1 Corinthians 13:6). What’s more, the false teachers themselves are in no way encouraged to continue down the road of deceit. Rather, it is the hope and prayer of Christians that false teachers would become con-

victed of the error of their ways and repent before the Master Teacher (Luke 2:47; John 7:46) returns and judges them eternally for their doctrinal deceit (2 Peter 2).

[NOTE: Near the conclusion of his excellent commentary on 2 John, Guy N. Woods made an appropriate observation that both Christians and critics of 2 John 10-11 should consider: “John does not here forbid hospitality to strangers, or, for that matter, to false teachers when, in so doing, false teaching is neither encouraged nor done. Were we to find a teacher known to be an advocate of false doctrine suffering, it would be our duty to minister to his need, provided that in so doing we did not abet or encourage him in the propagation of false doctrine.... **What is forbidden** is the reception of such teachers in such fashion as to supply them with an opportunity to teach their tenets, to maintain an association with them when such would involve us in the danger of accepting their doctrines.... The test is, Does one become a partaker by the action contemplated? If yes, our duty is clear; we must neither receive them nor give them greeting; if No, the principle here taught is not applicable.”⁵]

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Cf. Steve Wells (2015), “Should Believers Discuss Their Faith with Nonbelievers?” <http://www.skeptic-sannotatedbible.com/contra/discuss.html>.
- ² For more information, see “Gnosticism” (1982), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 2:484-490.
- ³ Guy N. Woods (1979), *New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate), p. 349, italics in orig.
- ⁴ I. Howard Marshall (1978), *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), p. 74, emp. added.
- ⁵ Woods, pp. 349-350, emp. added.



Q: Why did God wait approximately 20 years after the Church was established to begin writing the New Testament? Why such a long span of time?

A: Normally when we discuss the penning of the New Testament, we do so in view of the fact that God inspired men to write about Jesus and His will for the Church within **only** about 20-65 years of the Savior’s death and resurrection. Perhaps even more impressive is the abundant amount of evidence for the New Testament’s first-century origin. Due to the volume of ancient manuscripts, versions, and citations of the New Testament documents, even many liberal scholars have conceded the fact that the New Testament must have been completed by the end of the first century. Whereas the extant copies of Plato, Thucydides, Herodotus, Tacitus, and many others are separated from the time these men wrote by 1,000 years, manuscript evidence for the New Testament reaches as far back as the early second century, which has led most scholars to rightly conclude

that the New Testament is, indeed, a first-century production.¹ As Irwin H. Linton concluded regarding the gospel accounts: “A fact known to all who have given any study at all to this subject is that these books were quoted, listed, catalogued, harmonized, cited as authority by different writers, Christian and Pagan, right back to the time of the apostles.”²

Still, some wonder why God chose to wait approximately 20 years to begin writing the New Testament. Why didn’t the first-century apostles and prophets begin penning the New Testament as soon as the Church was established?

The simple, straightforward answer is that we cannot say for sure why God waited two decades to begin penning the New Testament. [NOTE: Conservative scholars generally agree that the earliest written New Testament documents, including Galatians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians, were likely written between A.D. 48-52.] We could ask any number of things regarding why God did or did not do something: Why did God wait some 2,500 years after Creation and some 1,000 years after the Flood to write a perfect, inspired account of these events? Why did God only spend 11 chap-

ters in the Bible telling us about the first, approximately 2,000 years of human history, and 1,178 chapters telling us about the next 2,000? Why did God discontinue special, written revelation for over 400 years (between Malachi and the New Testament)? There are many questions, even specific ones about the makeup of God's written revelation, that we would like to know about that He simply has not specifically revealed to us.

Having made that disclaimer, we can suggest a few logical reasons why God waited to inspire first-century apostles and prophets to pen the New Testament. First, the early Church had the treasure of the Gospel "in earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7). That is, the apostles were miraculously guided by the Spirit in what they taught (Galatians 1:12; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16). The Spirit of God guided them "into all Truth" (John 16:13). Also, those on whom the apostles chose to lay their hands in the early churches received the miraculous, spiritual gifts of prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, etc. (Acts 8:14-17; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11). Even though the Church was without the inspired writings of Paul, Peter, John, etc. for a few years, God did not leave them without direction and guidance. In a sense, they had "walking, living New Testaments." When the miraculous age ended (1 Corinthians 13:8-10),³ however, the Church would need some type of continual guidance. Thus, during the miraculous age, God inspired the apostles and prophets to put in permanent form His perfect and complete revelation to guide the Church until Jesus' return (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Second, it was necessary for God to wait a few years to write the New Testament, and not pen it immediately following the Church's establishment, because the books and letters that make up the New Tes-

tament were originally written for **specific audiences** and for **specific purposes** (though they are applicable to all Christians). For example, the epistles that Paul wrote to the church at Corinth could not have been written until there **was** a church at Corinth. If the church at Corinth was not established until the apostle Paul's second missionary journey (ca. A.D. 49-52), then Paul obviously wrote to the Christians in Corinth after this time. Furthermore, since in 1 Corinthians Paul dealt with specific problems that had arisen in the church at Corinth (e.g., division, immorality, etc.), he could not have explicitly addressed these matters in detail until after they had come to pass. Thus, there was a need for time (i.e., a few years) to pass before the New Testament documents were penned.

Although some may be bothered by the fact that God waited approximately 20 years to begin penning the New Testament through His inspired writers, we can rest assured that He had good reasons for this relatively brief postponement. Admittedly, God did not

explicitly indicate why He delayed putting His last will and testament in written form. Yet, logical reasons exist—most notably, the fact that the documents that make up the New Testament were written to specific peoples and for specific purposes.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Cf. F.F. Bruce (1953), *The New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), fourth edition; Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix (1986), *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody), revised edition; Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett (2001), *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House).
- ² Irwin H. Linton (1943), *A Lawyer Examines the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), sixth edition, p. 39.
- ³ Cf. Dave Miller (2003), "Modern-Day Miracles, Tongue-Speaking, and Holy Spirit Baptism: A Refutation—Extended Version," Apologetics Press, <http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&article=1399>.

SPEAKING SCHEDULES

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Eric Lyons

May 8-11 Brighton, CO (303) 659-1420

Dave Miller

May 8 Montgomery, AL (334) 264-2985

May 18,25 Richmond, CA (510) 306-2726

Jeff Miller

May 3,5,10 Denver, CO (334) 272-8558

May 12,17,19 Denver, CO (334) 272-8558

May 22 Montgomery, AL (334) 264-2985

May 29-June 3 Branson, MO (417) 334-3866



NOTE FROM

The Editor



Drastic DVD Liquidation

For many years, AP has provided the public with a host of DVDs that address a variety of topics and critical issues. It's hard to believe that the DVD is now going the way of the audio cassette tape and the VHS tape. They are being phased out by "the powers that be" as technology continues to expand, develop, and improve. Most computers and cars being sold on the market these days no longer have DVD or CD slots. While many people will continue to hold on to their DVD players as long as possible, nevertheless, the time is coming when they will be completely obsolete.

We thought this might be a good time to reduce our DVD inventory so that the material preserved on these disks might be accessed while the market still supports the format. Hence, we are implementing a "drastic DVD liquidation" sale in hopes that these materials will find interested individuals who will acquire and view them.

In the meantime, AP has been gradually moving toward online access to our videos where people can view them without charge. Since we are a

nonprofit organization—our sole purpose is to spread the Word of God around the world—we seek to accommodate the electronic trend of providing video viewing without cost. We depend on our gracious supporters to "take up the slack" so that we may be able to make this transition without reducing our productivity and effectiveness as an evangelistic outreach.

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