



THE LENEXA EDIFIER

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE BIBLE?

Jim Stauffer

I recently witnessed and participated in a discussion on an internet message board about the actual authority, veracity and intended influence of God's word, the Bible.

One individual raised the question in light of current cultural and legal changes in our society regarding homosexuality, whether Romans chapter 1 constituted "hate speech".

As you can probably imagine this brought many and varied responses. Some challenged the concept of following the word of God without reservation. Others were just as adamant about totally submitting to His will.

I was particularly interested in the attitude toward God's word indicated by the content of the responses.

There is always the atheistic view that rejects God as the Creator of the Universe. While this person demands visible proof of God's power in creation, he is equally unable to present real evidence of any theory he subscribes to as the explanation of our existence and that of the world. He therefore lives and expresses defense of his life on the basis of what he thinks is right. Strangely, for someone with no real evidence for his choices, he is rather adamant he is right. He does not *fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* (Mat. 10:28) He rejects the premise of **Romans 1:20** which says, *For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse:*

Another response that may be even more puzzling is the response of the agnostic. He claims to doubt God's existence due to a lack of evidence or that he is still considering the evidence in order to decide. He might ask himself how long it will take him. He will only live something like 60-80 years on the earth. This person needs to admit to himself one of three things. 1) He does not believe there is ample evidence to decide. In that case he can never make a decision and must be committed to the conclusion there is no God. 2) He has not had sufficient time to weigh the evidence. If this is the case, again, we ask, how long will it take. 3) He simply has no serious intention to come to a conclusion.

If this is the case, he has made a decision to live as though there is no God. The fact is there is ample evidence available in the Scriptures along with debate provided by their detractors. God says the evidence can be *clearly seen*. Man is not so sure. God says your soul's eternal home is dependent upon your decision. (Mat. 7:13,14; 25:46) Man says not to worry about such extreme things. A decision will be made. If you delay to decide, you have decided.

The most troubling response is that of the person who claims to be a Christian. Now this person has concluded the evidence is there to be *clearly seen*, that God is real and He is the Creator of heaven and earth. However, when it comes to the Bible, he rejects portions of it as cultural bias infused by the men who wrote it. He will even attribute the words in the Bible to the interpretation of God's ideas by the men who wrote it, thus affected by the impulses of mankind. He does not believe in the verbal inspiration Paul claimed he and others had. (1 Cor. 2:10-13) How can you claim to believe the Bible is God's word and then not believe what it says? As a result, his conclusion is that the various denominations, established by such men as Luther, Calvin, Wesley, etc., are valid expressions of God's will for us delivered by men who lived holy lives, but were not inspired. These men, he believes, are completely within the right of mankind to establish a religion according to their understanding or feelings about God's word. This is patently false and incongruous with Scripture. Even Jesus insisted all He taught was from God. **John 7:17** *If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself.*

There is only one response to God's word, the Bible, that will please Him. He has told His people of all dispensations without equivocation the response they must have to Him and His word. **Deut. 6:4** *Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: 5 and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* **Matt. 22:37** *And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* We must believe, as Peter did, *And Simon Peter answered*

and said, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* (Matt. 16:16) As all believers must, we too, have to accept the Scriptures as God's will for man supported by the evidence attested to while He was on earth. **John 20:30** *Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.*

When we have done this we will submit to His will. Not ours. Not the guesses of pseudo experts on the science of the creation. Not on theologians who inject their own thinking into the religious service of God. But solely and completely to the word of God as Jesus did as an example for us to follow. **1 Pet. 2:21** *For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Good Heart-Keeping

Dan S. Shipley

In his popular little book *Flesh And Spirit*, William Barclay recounts an interesting history of the Greek word akatharsia. He reveals that when transferring ownership of a house in ancient Greece, the sales contract would often require the outgoing tenant to leave the house clean of all akatharsia (dirt). Later, in medical parlance, this same term was used to denote impure substances in sores and wounds. In the Septuagint, ritual and ceremonial impurities were referred to as akatharsia. Such uncleanness could cause one to be cut off from Jehovah (**Jer. 22:5**).

In the New Testament, akatharsia appears as uncleanness and is found in company with such words as fornication, lasciviousness and covetousness. Such uncleanness is listed as a work of the flesh (**Gal. 5:19**), to be repented of (**2 Cor. 12:21**), not to be named among saints (**Eph. 5:5**), and can keep one from heaven (**Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5**). Thayer defines akatharsia as the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living. Considering all evidence, it becomes apparent that in this word is conveyed the idea of a general moral uncleanness such as to be avoided by the people of God.

From other New Testament teaching we learn that defiled lives are but the products of defiled hearts. *For out of the heart cometh forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man...* (Matt. 15:19,20). As the seat of man's moral nature, the heart—house is to be kept clean from all akatharsia. *Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life* (Prov. 4:23). Heeding the admonition to keep thyself pure begins with the heart — it requires good heart-keeping.

Man's heart—house has many doors through which uncleanness may enter and defile; such as those of seeing, hearing and thinking (**note 1 Cor. 2:9**). Leaving these doors open to all sorts of indiscriminate traffic degrades the heart to little more than a moral trash dump. Through the open eye—door is tracked in the smut of salacious literature, immodesty, and even the respectable pornography of television to defile the purest of hearts. Other pollution enters through the ear—door left open to obscene, vile, and evil language. In addition, there passes through the unguarded heart—door the re-runs of this seen and heard filth, plus such soil—soiling guests as lust, greed, hate, envy, and jealousy. No heart-house can host such company without flavoring ones conduct accordingly — a lesson that many have not yet learned. It is useless to think of attaining a clean heart without first controlling these sources of defilement.

Accordingly, good heart—keeping demands diligence; the continual exercise of will power and self-control. Satan and his polluting devices only need resisting (**Jas. 4:7**); with God's help we endure (**1 Cor. 10:15**).

As man repents and obeys in faith, God cleanses the heart-house with His forgiveness, thus making it fit for the King who seeks a dwelling place there (**Eph. 3:17**).

HOW RELIABLE IS THE TEXT OF THE BIBLE?

Have you ever heard anybody question the reliability of the Bible? By that I mean have you ever heard anyone confidently assert that we can't be sure that we have the original words of the Scriptures, that we just can't be sure that the text is reliable? It has always amazed me that such comments are usually made by fairly well educated people who use such reasoning to defend their rejection of the authority of the Word of God. I say it amazes me because these are often the same people who have studied the works of Aristotle and Plato in philosophy classes. or labored over the works of Pliny the Younger or Caesar's Gallic War in History of Western Civilization courses.

The Bible is a work of antiquity. Even its most noted and vehement critics assign it a place of prominence among other ancient writings. It seems to me that when we are talking about something as fundamental as textual reliability, all words of antiquity must be judged by the same criteria. Let's see how the textual reliability of the Bible stacks up against other famous works of antiquity when the same standard is used.

This is a test used by scholars when dealing with ancient writings that is meant to determine the reliability and the validity of the text of such writings. It is called the Bibliographical Test. This test is an examination of the way the original documents we now have, came to us. In other words, since the original documents no longer exist, or at least haven't been found, how reliable are the copies that we do have in regards to the number of manuscripts we now possess and the time between

the original writing and the earliest copy in our possession?

There are over 13,000 ancient manuscripts of the New Testament. Now that is not to say that they are all complete, but at least 13,000 manuscript copies of at least portions of the New Testament do exist. There are approximately 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate translation and close to 1,000 manuscripts for the other early versions. Add to that 5,000 Greek manuscripts and that is how we arrived at the figure of over 13,000. Besides all of these partial and full manuscripts, almost all of the New Testament can be found in quotations of early Christian writers from the second and third centuries.

Here is how the Bibliographical Test works. Let us consider the famous Gallic War of Caesar. It was written between 58 and 50 B.C. The earliest copy still existing was written in approximately A.D. 900, making a time span of 1,000 years from the original to our earliest copy. There are ten copies that are any good at all in existence today.

Consider Plato's famous Tetralogies. Plato lived from 427 to 347 B.C. The earliest copy we have of his work is dated from around A.D. 900, making a time span of 1,200 years from the date of writing to the earliest copy. There are seven ancient manuscripts of this work. Philosophy students have been studying Plato for years, and the professors don't seem to worry about or question the "textual reliability" of this work.

How about Pliny the Younger's History? It was written between A.D. 61 and 113. The earliest known copy is from A.D. 850, making a time span of 750 years. There are seven manuscripts total of this work.

Now, what about the New Testament? It was written between A.D. 50 and 95. The earliest manuscript that we have is the John Ryland MSS, dating A.D. 130. It is a portion of the Gospel of John. That is a time span of 40 to 50 years.

There is the Chester Beatty Papyri, dating A.D. 200. It contains major portions of the New Testament. Here is a time span of 110 years.

On and on we could go, from A.D. 150 to 500, including the Codex Sinaiticus of A.D. 350, containing almost all of the New Testament and over half of the Old Testament. There is the Codex Vaticanus, dated A.D. 325 to 350. It is currently in the Vatican Library and contains nearly the entire Bible. Also existing is the Codex Alexandrinus from A.D. 400. It is in the British Museum and contains almost the whole Bible. When it is all put together, with time spans ranging from 50 years to 410 years, there are over 13,000 manuscripts of the New Testament. To deny the textual reliability of the New Testament is to reject every single work of antiquity, because there is not one that comes even close to being as well attested to as the New Testament text. Even skeptics must be honest as to what is found in testing the texts of antiquity.

By Greg Litmer in *That You May Grow Thereby*.

GRACE

Salvation Is Conditional

The idea that salvation by grace frees one from the necessity of performing any conditions thereunto has become so thoroughly embedded in the hearts of some that it is hard for them to see that salvation may be by grace and yet conditional; but that salvation is conditional is clearly taught in the Scriptures. Jesus said, *Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.* There can be no salvation out of the kingdom of heaven, and only those who do the will of God can enter the kingdom.

The doctrine of conditional salvation runs through the entire Bible. *But if the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. (Ezek. 18:21) For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah' wherefore turn yourselves, and live. (Ezek. 18:32)* The sinner is dead in his sins. The question of all ages has been, "How can we live?" Israel of old raised that question: *Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we pine away in them; how then can we live? (Ezek. 33:19)* "You can do nothing", say some; but the Lord answers, *Say unto them, As I live saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn away from his way and live. (Ezek. 33:11)*

But what is the doctrine of Jesus? A certain man asked him, *Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* This man understood salvation to be conditional, and Jesus did not rebuke him for so thinking. He confirmed the idea by saying, *If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments. (see Mat. 19:16,17)* The same principle holds good now, for Paul affirms that Jesus *became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation. (Heb. 5:9)* If you do not obey Jesus, he is not the author of your salvation; and without him there is, there can be, no salvation. Heathen though he was, the Philippian jailer understood that he had to do something to be saved. *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Paul did not try to show him he was wrong in so thinking, but replied, *Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. (See Acts 16:29-31)*

Numerous other passages teach that men are lost on account of their wickedness. Now no man can prove conditional damnation, and unconditional salvation. If one is unconditional, so is the other; the converse is also true. If men are lost because of a certain course of life, then the opposite course would bring salvation, for the simple reason that the cause of their damnation would not exist. If disobedience brings death, then the absence of disobedience, which is obedience, would bring life. In fact Jesus so teaches in the contrast which he gives in **Matt. 7:24-27**, *Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall thereof.*

The same fact is present in Paul's contrast in **Rom. 2:4-11**.
Sound Doctrine, Vol. 1 Pages 146,147,148, C.R. Nichol and R.L. Whiteside

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10