



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths... and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM #6 VIOLENCE

Adam Good

Having failed to persuade with reason, the prophet of Islam (Muhammad) turned to the sword. Islam cannot peacefully coexist with other religions. It must become religiously and politically dominant.

It is often argued that Islam is a religion of peace and that jihad is not properly understood as struggle (holy war) against infidels, but as a personal effort to submit more perfectly to Allah. President Bush spoke to the Islamic Center of Washington D.C on September 21, 2001. “The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam...Islam is peace.” Addressing the Islamic Society of Baltimore on February 3, 2016, President Obama stated “For more than a thousand years, people have been drawn to Islam’s message of peace.” He characterized the bulk of Muslims as “peace-loving,” before acknowledging there is “a small fraction of Muslims” who “propagate a perverted interpretation of Islam.” Islamic terrorists dispute these presidential statements. On March 5, 2009, Muslims being held at Guantanamo Bay issued a statement thanking Allah for “choosing us to perform the act of jihad for his cause.” They argued that “killing you and fighting you, destroying you and terrorizing you... are all considered to be great legitimate duty in our religion. These actions are our offerings to Allah.” Moreover, they considered it their “greatest religious duty to fight you over your infidelity.” The Times Square car bomb terrorist,

Faisal Shahzad, said during his 2010 trial “This is but one life, if I am given a thousand lives, I will sacrifice them all for the sake of Allah, fighting this cause... making the word of Allah supreme over any religion or system.” He held “jihad, holy fighting in Allah’s course” to be of the “utmost importance in Islam... by jihad, Islam is established... jihad is an obligation and duty in Islam on every Muslim.” Which understanding of Islam is correct and which is the perversion? Don’t be fooled!

Muhammad preached in his hometown of Mecca for about thirteen years with little success. After the death of several of his chief supporters and protectors, he and his band of 150 followers fled some two hundred miles north to Medina. Here, he recited the first verses about jihad. Having failed to establish his new faith through preaching, Muhammad adopted a different strategy. The Sira, the biography of his life, is overwhelmingly about jihad, documenting the prophet’s raids against merchant caravans and his military campaigns. From these battles, the fledgling Muslim community acquired wealth and slaves and attracted new converts. After about ten years of constant jihad, Muhammad brought Arabia

under the control of Islam.

The *Qur’an* contains dozens of verses calling upon Muslims to fight in Allah’s cause, that is, to wage jihad against anyone who does not accept Islam. “O Prophet (Muhammad)! Urge the believers to fight...” (Surah 8:65). Surah 2:190 urges Muslims to “fight in the Way of Allah [jihad] those who fight you.” “Kill them wherever you find them,” exhorts the next verse, “and turn them out from where they have turned you out. Al-Fitnah [disbelief] is worse than killing.” No turning the other cheek here! Muhammad used such teachings to incite his followers to wage holy war against Mecca.

Having failed to persuade with reason, the prophet of Islam turned to the sword. Muslims were to “fight them until there is no more Fitnah (disbelief and worshipping of others along with Allah) and (all and every kind of) worship is for Allah” (Surah 2:193). Although this surah’s historical context is the war between Muhammad and Mecca, the general principle it expresses is the great commission of Islam. Holy war must be waged until Islam rules supreme —

(Continued on page 46)

Christianity and Islam...



Editorial...

INSPIRATION & INERRANCY ACCORDING TO ANDY WALKER

Garland M. Robinson

“The authors of Scripture were not concerned about writing an inerrant document. They were simply recording their experience of God and lo and behold, people collected those writings, edited and arranged them into an anthology, and looked to them as sacred writings. ... If you can only believe in God if there is an inerrant Bible, then you have more faith in inerrancy than in God.” — **Andy Walker Blog**, *The Controversy Of Inerrancy* (3/30/2017) andy-walker.square-space.com

There is no question about it. We can say with all confidence that the Bible IS the all *Inspired* (God-breathed), *Inerrant* (without error) Word of God. Otherwise, who is to say which parts are inspired and which parts are not? However, a growing number have had their faith shaken and have become doubtful and unsure. Many are drinking from the cesspool of what’s called “higher criticism” (the study of the literary methods and sources discernible in a text, especially as applied to biblical writings). Sadder still is that many are listening to the siren call of these doubters and have become persuaded by their smooth words and fair speeches.

Romans 16:17-18 tells us what to do with those who sow discord, dissension and unbelief. “...*Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*” To “mark” means to observe, direct one’s attention to, to look at. In this text, the point is to call attention to them in order to avoid them, not follow them, not fellowship them. To bid them God speed makes one a partaker of their evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

Such elites do not want us to refer to the Holy Scriptures. They would tell us that it’s a dreadfully bad case of “proof-texting” when we appeal to the Bible. And according to them, since the Bible has errors, it’s not valid to point to a verse(s) to prove anything because we may be using a passage that is not inspired of God. Why do they not want people to turn to the Bible, read it, understand it and follow it? Why do they hold with such great disdain God’s inspired word? Any number of reasons could be the case. Let me suggest two: 1) because the Scriptures create faith instead of doubt (Rom. 10:17), 2) because the light of God’s word exposes their evil deeds (John 3:19-20). However, the Bible is still God’s holy, inspired, inerrant Word and will always be regardless of their efforts to prove otherwise. Heaven and earth will perish, but God’s word will last forever (Matt. 24:35). Without God’s word, no one can know the will of God. Without it, no one can be right with God. The Bible tells us what is right, how to get right and how to stay right as we give glory and praise to God.

God also says, “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them*” (Eph. 5:11). The word *reprove* means to expose, correct, convict, admonish, rebuke. We shall not be counted faithful before God unless we do what he says. Shall we then just sweep error under the rug and pretend that it will go away? You know the answer. It is a resounding NO. We are commanded to have NO fellowship with any and all teachings and practices that are contrary to sound doctrine (cf. Titus 2:1); and obviously, those who spread and support such error.

Andy Walker (in the quote above) says, “The writers of Scripture were not concerned about writing an inerrant document.” The word inerrant means, “without error or fault in all its teaching.” So, Andy would have us believe the

writers of Scripture weren’t concerned about writing without error or flaw? Would you be so bold as to say the same? Is that the way you would handle the precious word of God? God’s word is the “power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). If you take the Word away, you take away God’s power to save! If you take the Word away, we don’t know how to worship and please God. If you take the Word away, I have nothing to say and truth be known, you don’t either. Consequently, we would be of all men most miserable without the all-inspired Word!

Please allow me another example of “proof-texting” (I love those words). When we quote Scripture, we’re quoting the all-inspired, divine will of God. Therefore, God says, “...*no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy Ghost*” (2 Peter 1:20-21). No part of Scripture ever came about by man’s own explanation, idea, opinion, or thinking. The prophets were not “simply recording their experience of God,” as Andy says. The writing of Scripture did not come about by man’s own will. “Holy men of God” spake as they were guided, directed, carried, borne along by the Holy Spirit. When they wrote, they did so by the direction, guidance and supervision of the Holy Spirit. Now, which will you believe: 1) those who say the writers of the Bible were “simply recording their experience of God” or 2) the writers of Scripture who wrote under the inspiration (direction) of the Holy Spirit? The “doubters” would tell us it’s more complicated than option #2. And guess what, they’re here to guide us through it. All we have to do is listen to them. God says, don’t believe a word they say! (Rom. 16:18; Gal. 1:6-9)

Notice these passages and decide for yourself whether or not the writers of the Scriptures were concerned about truth. David said, “*The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word [was] in my tongue*” (2 Sam. 23:2). “*For David himself said by the Holy Ghost...*” (Mark 12:36). “...*This scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus*” (Acts 1:16). David, “*being a prophet...spake of the resurrection of Christ*” (Acts 2:30-31; cf. 2 Sam. 7:12-13; Psa. 132:11). God “...*spake by the mouth of his holy*

prophets, which have been since the world began” (Luke 1:70). Jesus told the apostles, “*But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you*” (Matt. 10:19-20). “*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*” (Acts 2:4).

Unless the Bible is inerrant (infallible), how do we know everything David spoke concerning the Lord’s resurrection was the truth? We know it is truth because he was writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. More than 3,800 times in the Old Testament alone, the Scriptures claim to be the word(s) of God.

The Bible is its own best interpreter. Who would be so brazen to question God about what he said and meant? When New Testament writers use and quote Old Testament Scriptures and tell us ‘this is what they were talking about,’ that settles the matter (cf. Acts 2:16). There is no more question about it. Can mere men be so smart that they attempt to refute New Testament prophets and say they misapplied Old Testament passages? That is what the philosophy of “higher criticism” would have us believe! Do you want to buy into that? Not me — please don’t let it be you!

In another blog, Andy wrote about inspiration, saying:

“Passages like John 14:26 are often cited to show that the Spirit would bring words of remembrance to the apostles. However, the promise is ambiguous and Jesus never specified whether that process also worked for writing, preaching, or anyone in addition to the apostles who were originally present to hear the promise. Although God did supply the words to some authors, it is a mistake to assume that this was the process for every biblical author because the evidence does not support it.” **Andy Walker Blog, How Is The Bible Inspired?** 9/9/2013

Jesus said, “*But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you*” (John 14:26).

In what world could you ever imagine that the Holy Spirit would teach the apostles “all things” but that such divine revelation may not have been available for them in their writing and preaching? Obviously, the purpose of inspiration was to enable them to communicate it to others. Am I missing something here? Paul knew his words were God’s words. He said, “*...I have the Spirit of God*” (1 Cor. 7:40). He wrote to the church at Ephesus and declared, “*...when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit*” (Eph. 3:3-5). What had been concealed in the past was now revealed. He certified “*...that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither receive it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (Gal. 1:11-12). He also made this clear in 1 Corinthians 2:9-13 when he said, “*we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God: that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth....*” In fact, he concluded in verse 16, “*...we have the mind of Christ.*” He made clear to the church at Corinth (and the whole world) that the things he wrote “*are the commandments of the Lord*” (1 Cor. 14:37). Whenever he gave his counsel or wisdom on a matter, it was inspired counsel and wisdom! It was given by the permission and approval of the Holy Spirit because it is truth.

Notice these passages (proof-texting, GREAT!) that describes inspiration. Isaiah 51:16, “*I have put my words in thy mouth.*” Jeremiah 1:6-9, “*whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. ... I have put my words in thy mouth.*” Jeremiah 50:1, “*the LORD spake...by Jeremiah the prophet.*” First Thessalonians 2:13, “*when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God.*” Look at the emphasis God places on his word in Psalm 119. Of the 176 verses, the Word of God is mentioned 182 times. Such distinction, reverence, respect and honor is paramount in the words: law (25), testimony(ies) (23), commandment(s) (22), statutes (22), precepts (21), judgment(s) (19), word(s) (42), way(s) (8). I have

never in my lifetime heard anyone say that the Old Testament was of no value and useless. According to Romans 15:4, it was written for our learning. Though it was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14) so that we are no longer under it (Gal. 3:25), it is still of great benefit and profit. The Old Testament sheds light on the New Testament and the New Testament sheds light on the Old Testament.

With all the inspired evidence before them, digressives still dare to make light of the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Bible and anyone who believes it. In their view of the Bible, they are able to diminish God’s commands as though they are not really all that important anyway. If we listen to them, we don’t know which Scriptures are inspired and which are not. I bet they can tell us though! That makes us dependant on them and they love it. Jesus had something to say about those who love “*...the praise of men more than the praise of God*” (John 12:43).

Read what Jesus said in Luke 10:16: “*He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.*” The Lord says that when we despise (set aside, cast off, reject) those who spoke and wrote by divine inspiration (those who gave us the Bible), we are despising and rejecting Jesus himself. How then can any man say the writers of the Bible “*...were simply recording their experience of God and lo and behold, people collected those writings, edited and arranged them into an anthology, and looked to them as sacred writings*” (Andy Walker). Will you believe God or men?

Inspiration applied to all writers of Scripture. “*All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The word “inspiration” literally means “God breathed.” The Scriptures are the product of the creative breath of God, not the result of human genius or ability. Therefore, we refer to the Bible as being the *inerrant, plenary, verbal, inspired* word of God. “Inerrant” means the scriptures are incapable of teaching error. “Plenary” means that all parts of the Bible are inspired alike. “Verbal” means that the actual “language” of the Scriptures was directed within those

who wrote by inspiration, i.e., the very words written were approved by the Holy Spirit.

God's Word is true and is for our benefit. *"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever. ...My heart standeth in awe of thy word"* (Psalm 119:160-161). *"For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast"* (Psalm 33:9). *"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times"* (Psalm 12:60). *"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple"* (Psalm 119:130). *"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple"* (Psalm 19:7). *"For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth"* (Psalm 33:4).

Jesus gives his stamp of approval upon the entire Old Testament when he said *"...These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me"* (Luke 24:44).

Please don't swallow the words of the doubters. It will make you doubt as well. If we doubt, we can't please God. Hebrews 11:6 says, *"But without faith [it is] impossible to please [him]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

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THE BIBLE AND ONLY THE BIBLE HAS THE ANSWERS

Marvin L. Weir

People should avoid speculation about religious matters, but most folks place more confidence in their feelings, thoughts, and opinions than they do in the Word of God. The cost for doing such is the loss of the soul. Jeremiah, God's faithful mouth-piece to Israel, said, *"O LORD, I know that the way of man [is] not in himself: [it is] not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 10:23). Nothing has changed under the New Covenant that would allow man to successfully worship and serve God without having access to divine guidance (the Holy Scriptures). It was the Lord who warned, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48).

An eternal principle is this: *"Thy word [is] a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Psa. 119:105). Barnes comments on this verse as follows:

[Thy word is a lamp unto my feet.] The Hebrew word means a light, lamp, candle. The idea is, that the word of God is like a torch or lamp to a man in a dark night. It shows him the way; it prevents his stumbling over obstacles, or falling down precipices, or wandering off into paths which would lead into danger, or would turn him away altogether from the path to life.

[And a light unto my path.] The same idea substantially is presented here. It is a light which shines on the road that a man treads, so that he may see the path, and that he may see any danger which may be in his path. The expression is very beautiful, and is full of instruction. He who makes the word of God his guide, and marks its teachings, is in the right way. He will clearly see the path. He will be able to mark the road in which he ought to go, and to avoid all those bypaths which would lead him astray. He will see where those by-roads turn off from the main path, often at a very small angle, and so that there seems to be no divergence. He will see any

obstruction which may lie in his path; any declivity or precipice which may be near, and down which, in a dark night, one might fall. Man needs such a guide, and the Bible is such a guide.

Some people claim special revelation from God. They allege that God has spoken directly to them or that they have received a vision from God instructing them to worship or act in a certain way. God says, however, that His Word is final, authoritative, and complete. Why will people believe in the claims of men while rejecting a *"thus saith the Lord?"* The Scriptures affirm: *"All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). *"...It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you] that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 3). *"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and [from] the things which are written in this book"* (Rev. 22:18-19).

Some people today claim they have experienced "out of body" occurrences that has placed them in Heaven or in God's presence. Have people not considered the fact that those who died and were raised from the dead during the age of miracles never commented on what they saw or heard? In a book entitled *"Early Writings,"* Ellen G. White in chapter two describes her alleged visit to Heaven (www.ellenwhite.com). It should be noted that her claim was published two years after the Great Advent disappointment of 1844. She claimed she saw the ark of God and a special halo encompassing the fourth commandment. It was also revealed

to her that the “Sabbath was not nailed to the cross.” One must simply try and forget that the apostle Paul and inspired writer of Ephesians declares, “*For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition [between us]; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [even] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, [so] making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby*” (Eph. 2:14-16). One may choose to believe either the inspired words of an apostle or the lies of Ellen G. White and the Seventh-Day Adventist church!

Any student of God’s Word will recall that the apostle Paul was “...caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Cor. 12:4).

Is it not amazing that Paul could not reveal his experience in the heavenly realm but Ellen G. White can reveal her so-called experience to the world? But, then, it has already been established that God’s Word is complete and final with no new revelation forthcoming.

Lazarus, a beloved friend of the Lord, died and was raised from the dead. There is, however, no report from Lazarus about what he thought (his soul was alive) or saw during his death. People always wonder if those who have passed from this life are aware of what their friends and loved ones on earth are doing. The rich man of Luke 16 was keenly aware of how his brothers were living before he died, but it is not implied or stated that he knew what was happening in their lives after his death. It is reasonable to conclude that those who pass from this life do not know what

is taking place in the lives of those left behind.

God has revealed to us what He would have us to believe and teach. This revelation is the inspired Scriptures, the Holy Bible, or the Word of God. The writer of Hebrews is clear in stating, “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son...*” (1:1-2). The Holy Spirit came and brought to the apostle’s remembrance all that Christ had taught them (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit guided them “*into all the truth*” and declared unto them “*the things that are to come*” (John 16:13). The Bible and only the Bible has the answer to religious matters!

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A PLEA FOR UNSWERVING LOYALTY TO THE BIBLE

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Complete acceptance of the Bible as God’s Word is our plea — in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4:2).

1) The Bible is **inspired**. This is not “natural inspiration” such as we have in Milton, Browning, Longfellow or Shakespeare. It is not “thought inspiration” where God supplied the thought, allowing all Biblical penmen total freedom of word choice. The bottom line of this is that we have inspired thoughts clothed in fallible words or NO Word from God period! It is not “partial inspiration.” Paul makes this matter crystal clear in 2 Timothy 3:16 by affirming ALL Scripture is inspired of God. It still is! It is “verbal” or “Word inspiration” as affirmed by David in 2 Samuel 23:2 and by Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:13. Verbal inspiration is our plea. Plenary inspiration is our plea with NO compromise in either of these fundamentals. Thousands of times, Biblical penman affirmed they wrote by Holy Spirit inspiration. They delivered what they received even as Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 11:23 and 15:3. They did not alter or add. They did not subtract or substitute. Truth was 100% safe in

their holy hands and from their humble hearts. We cannot walk the old paths unless such can be said of us.

2) The Bible is **infallible**. The statutes of the Lord are right as per Psalm 19:8. Israel’s Sweet Singer affirmed, “*For the word of the Lord is right: and all his works are done in truth*” (Psa. 33:4). Precisely penned in Psalm 119:128 are these words of weight and wisdom, “*Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.*” “The Bible is right” was a fond and frequently stated affirmation of the late and lamented Marshall Keeble. None of his peers believed it any stronger than did the sainted Keeble.

3) The Bible is **authoritative**. Isaiah 8:20 so attests; so does Jeremiah 22:29; so does Colossians 3:17. There is a royal recognition of Scriptural authority in the words, “It is written” uttered by Jesus to Satan in Matthew 4 and Luke 4. I am fond of the statement, “The Bible says it; that settles it; I believe it.” Creed books are not worth the paper on which they are written. There is not an iota of authority in the aggregate of all which

have been written.

4) The Bible is **all-sufficient**. In John 16:13, Jesus promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them “into all truth.” Paul says that we are furnished completely to all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Scriptures fit us and outfit us. They fit us in developing character and reputation; they outfit us in doing the work of the Lord. This is the unique way the late and lamented Guy N. Woods analyzed 2 Timothy 3:17. We have been given all things pertaining to life and godliness as per 2 Peter 1:3. Creeds add, subtract, alter, modify, change and substitute. For these cogent reasons, we reject them in total, period!

5) The Bible is **powerful**. The words of Jesus are spirit and life (John 6:63). God’s glorious Gospel is His declared power to save (Rom. 1:16-17). The Word of God is quick (alive) and powerful as per Hebrews 4:12. Begetting power resides in the Gospel (1 Cor. 4:15; James 1:18,21). The Gospel is God’s dynamite, dynamo and dynamic power.

6) The Bible is **profitable**. Paul details how in 2 Timothy 3:16 — in

doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness.

7) The Bible is **precious**. It was in the days of aged Eli and youthful Samuel (1 Sam. 3:1). Each testament, book, chapter, verse, word and syllable should be deemed precious to every lover and practitioner of the old paths. It was to Jeremiah; it was not to his defiant peers who hated God, Mosaic law, prophetic pronouncements and God's saintly Seer — Jeremiah. The Godhead is not precious to us unless Their Word is precious likewise.

8) The Bible is **indestructible**. The Psalmist says that "his truth endureth to all generations" (100:5). Isaiah expressed it eloquently in these words of weight that "the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40:8). In the very midst of the great Olivet Discourse, as He was concluding pre-

dictions relative to Jerusalem's destruction and before declarations began concerning His second coming, Jesus stated, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*" (Matt. 24:35). In 1 Peter 1:23,25, Peter stamped God's Word as abiding or enduring for ever. Its enemies have tried in every conceivable way to destroy it; they are gone; it remains.

9) The Bible is **inexhaustible**. Humanly produced books, as a general rule, lose their challenge after one or two readings. We do not read them daily or for a lifetime. We do the Bible. We never master the Bible. It is an ocean of divine truth and each of us has come to its edges with a teaspoon seeking to dip in a bit of it.

Jesse L. Sewell was a great preacher in Tennessee during the nineteenth century. He once wrote, in

essence, "I can read a book written by a man once or twice. Then it loses its challenge because I think he has taught me all he can. Not so with the Bible. When the last verse is completed, I know I need to turn back and begin reading and meditating upon it again."

This is my sentiment precisely after reading the Old Testament through about sixty times since the early 50s and the New Testament nearly seven hundred times. Memorization of Scripture is of the same order of priority. We retain Scripture when we go over it again and again.

Seekers of the old paths subscribe to all the foregoing relative to God's Book.

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Christianity and Islam...

(Continued from page 41)

today Mecca, tomorrow the world. Allah "sent His Messenger (Muhammad) with guidance and the religion of truth [Islam] to make it victorious over all (other) religions" (Surah 61:9-11). As Muhammad's power grew, so did the extent of his ambitions. He declared, "I will expel the Jews and Christians from the Arabian Peninsula and will not leave any but Muslim" (Muslim 1767).

Following the death of Muhammad, Islam exploded out of Arabia. During the reigns of the first four caliphs (chief civil and religious ruler, 632-661 AD), Islam prevailed across the Middle East, from Egypt to Persia. The second caliph sent forces against Persia. When the Muslim invaders were confronted by a Persian host, they explained "Our Prophet, the Messenger of [Allah], has ordered us to fight you till you worship Allah alone or give Jizya (tax on non-Muslims); and our Prophet has informed us that [Allah] says 'Whoever amongst us is [martyred], shall go to Paradise...and whoever amongst us remain alive, shall become your master'" (Bukhari 3159-3160).

The *Qur'an* sanctions brutality and torture. "To those who disbelieved, I will punish them with a se-

vere torment in this world" (Surah 3:56). Muslims are to "cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, because they joined others in worship with Allah" (Surah 3:151). This targets polytheists (belief in many gods), but in Islamic thought it is also applicable to Christians who hold to the Trinity and proclaim Jesus to be the Son of God. Surah 9:29-30 substantiates this point. Jihad is to be waged against those "who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (Islam) among the People of the Book (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah [an exorbitant tax on non-Muslims] with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued." Islam cannot peacefully coexist with other religions. It must become religiously and politically dominant.

Jihad is framed as a physical struggle between the forces of Allah and the forces of Satan (Surah 4:76). Islam dehumanizes the enemy and instructs Muslims to be "harsh against them" because "their abode is Hell" (Surah 9:73). Consequently, Muslims are to have no friends or allies among the unbelievers and are instructed to kill anyone who leaves Islam (Surah 4:89). The *Hadith* affirms Muhammad's order, "Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill

him" (Bukhari 6922). Unbelievers must be fought without mercy "until there is no more Fitnah (disbelief and worshipping others besides Allah) and the religion will all be for Allah" (Surah 8:39). Muslims are to "strike" infidels "over the necks" and "smite over all their fingers and toes" (Surah 8:12).

Muhammad practiced what he preached. Ibn Ishaq, the earliest biographer of Muhammad, described the prophet's treatment of the Banu Qurayza (a Jewish tribe living in Medina). After the tribe's "surrender" in 627 AD, Muhammad determined that "the men should be killed, the property divided, and the women and children taken as captives." He "went out to the market of Medina (which is still its market today) and dug trenches in it. Then he sent for [the Jewish men, including adolescent boys] and struck off their heads in those trenches as they were brought out to him in batches... There were 600-700 in all, though some put the figure as 800-900" (The Life of Muhammad, 464). ISIS and other Muslims are obeying the *Qur'an* and emulating their supreme example, Muhammad, when they torture and behead captives.

The Muslim who dies in jihad is assured the forgiveness of sins and immediate entry into Paradise (Surah 61:12). After all, "Allah loves those

who fight in his cause” (Surah 61:4). Muslims are encouraged to “sell the life of this world for the Hereafter” by “fighting in the Cause of Allah [jihad]” (Surah 4:74). Theirs is “a great reward.” Surah 9:111 teaches that those who die for Allah “rejoice in the bargain” and have found “supreme success.” Martyrs do “not feel the pain of being killed, except” as “a pinch” (Nasa’I 3161). Those who “are killed in the Way of Allah [jihad], He will never let their deeds be lost.” Having become heroes, they will be admitted to Paradise where they will dwell “under the shades of swords” (Surah 47:4-6; Bukhari 2818). Such promises explain why Muslims agree to suicide attacks. Fanaticism is as old as Islam. The *Hadith* records that upon hearing Muhammad teach upon the rewards of martyrdom, that a Muslim warrior charged the enemy, fighting to the death (Muslim 1902). The prophet expressed how he would have “loved to be martyred in Allah’s cause and then made alive, and then martyred and then made alive, and then again martyred in His cause” (Bukhrai 36; 2797).

While violence and war is inherent to the practice of Islam, it is the antithesis (direct opposite) of Christianity. Muhammad killed his enemies in the name of his god. Jesus the Christ gave His life in order to save

His enemies (Rom. 5:10). Allah’s prophet tortured, maimed, and killed. God’s Son was tortured, maimed and killed. Yet during His life, He healed the sick and raised the dead. Jesus pronounced this proverb “*all they who take the sword shall perish with the sword*” (Matt. 26:52). Violence begets violence. The Savior pronounced a blessing on “*...the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God*” (Matt. 5:9). The command to “love your neighbor as yourself” rules out beheading them (Matt. 22:39). The Lord set a higher standard for His people when he said, “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven...*” (Matt. 5:43-45). Jesus did not even permit His followers to defend Him (John 18:11). He informed Pilate “*My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence*” (John 18:36). If God’s people could not wage physical war to deliver His Son, for what cause may they rightfully take up arms?

The cause of Christ prevailed without Christians exercising force. Muhammad only prevailed because Muslims took up the sword. Violence and war are not perversions of Islam. Islamic terrorists are devout orthodox Muslims practicing what the *Qur’an* and the *Hadith* teach. They are following the example of their founder, the warlord Muhammad, and waging jihad until Islam rules supreme. Jesus warned, “*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither [can] a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them*” (Matt. 7:15-20).

The fruit of Muhammad’s religion is violence, oppression, terror and stagnation. It is a scourge on the world. Only the religion of Christ offers hope for peace in this life and guarantees peace in the life to come (cf. Matt. 11:28-30).

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POSTMODERN THINKING #6 PRAGMATISM

Victor M. Eskew

In this series of articles, we’ve been examining the pillars of postmodern thought. We have looked at four pillars thus far: *pluralism, relativism, tolerance, and secularism*. In this concluding article, we will analyze the last foundational element of this thinking process that has invaded the United States and the world. The last pillar is *pragmatism*.

Pragmatism is the idea that truth is to be tested by the practical consequences of belief. If something works, that is, has a positive outcome, then it is truth. If something does not work, then it is not considered to be the

truth. Notice, everything is centered upon outcomes when one is pragmatic. The pragmatic individual is not so much concerned with the process as he is about the outcome of the process. If it works, it is right in their eyes.

In the 2012 Presidential campaign, a well-known Senator went to the floor of the Senate and accused Mitt Romney of not having paid his income taxes for the past ten years. The statement was completely false. When the Senator was asked about his claim, his reply was: “Romney didn’t win, did he?” The Senator’s end

was to keep Romney from being elected. Any means whereby that could be accomplished was acceptable to the Senator. His lies are an example of pragmatism. Sadly, in the political arena both Republicans and Democrats have accepted pragmatism as the means to keep their political positions and political power.

Pragmatism has invaded the precious church of our Lord. Individuals have seen numerous problems facing the body of Christ: declining numbers, loss of interest in worship, the loss of our young people, the lack of involvement in the local congregation, etc. To

correct these problems, many leaders in the church have embraced pragmatism. They will use whatever means necessary in order to solve the problems of the local congregation.

Lack of attendance at the worship services is a huge challenge for many churches. The “traditional” service is said to be boring, irrelevant, and out-of-touch for many people, especially our youth. Church leaders, therefore, have embraced many pragmatic ideas to draw people to the worship services.

1. Hold a contemporary service
2. Use instrumental music in worship
3. Advertise to the public to just “come as you are”
4. Have dramas and skits instead of sermons
5. Have shorter sermons, 12 to 15 minutes
6. Decorate the stage with expensive backdrops
7. Invite speakers from all walks of life to speak
8. Give-aways to those who attend
9. Refusal to teach anything negative
10. Use women, as well as men, in leadership roles
11. Build large recreational facilities
12. Serve coffee and donuts before and during the services
13. Separate different age groups into age-appropriate worship services
14. Hold elaborate services on special days of the year
15. Use of all kinds of modern technology: lights, video, sound, music, special effects

The list of pragmatic ways to “build” the church continues to grow. Most people will look at these new innovations, see little harm in them, find that they work, and will praise them and participate in them. Remember, in their minds, it is the end that is important. The church becomes a mega-church. People are excited. The youth program is vibrant and active. Everything that is being done is working in their mind.

Dear readers, it is not always just about the “end.” The process does matter. The “end” does not justify the “means” (the process by which you arrive at the desired result). In Genesis 4, two men appeared before God to worship Him. One man’s worship was accepted. The other’s worship was not. The man who was rejected was Cain. He brought a very pragmatic gift to the Lord — the fruit of the ground. It was pragmatic because Cain was a tiller of the ground. His fruit represented his diligent effort. Giving the fruit to God represented a sacrifice on his part. Most likely, the fruit was beautiful, nourishing, and the best he had. His pragmatic approach, however, was rejected by God. The Biblical text says: *“But unto Cain and his offering he had not respect”* (Gen. 4:5). According to verse 7, he had not done well. The writer of Hebrews gives us much insight into this situation. He reveals that Abel’s worship was accepted because it was done “by faith.” *“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh”* (Heb. 11:4). Faith comes by hearing God’s Word (Rom. 10:17). Abel heard and did what God authorized. Cain heard but did not do as God authorized. Thus, he was rejected. His pragmatic approach did not please God.

Pragmatism has caused members of the church to reject the truth. It has caused them to violate the Word of

God. Pragmatism appeals to the fleshly man, not the spiritual man. Pragmatism has turned worship into a period of entertainment. It has turned the local congregation into nothing more than a social club. Oh yes, the numbers are up. Interest and excitement are present. The question, however, is: “Is God well-pleased with such sacrifices?” In God’s eyes, the end does not justify the means. God has revealed the “means” to bring about the “results” He desires. It is found in the pages of His divine Word, the Holy inspired, inerrant, Scriptures.

Our society is a long way from where it used to be. The reason is because the public has embraced the many tenets of postmodern thought. As long as we continue to let this type of thinking dominate our society, we will continue to change. We will continue to drift farther from God. Paul sets forth the cure in Second Corinthians 10:4-6. *“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.”*

My friends, the cure is simple. God’s thinking must replace postmodern thinking!!!

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