

TRUTH

“. . . Your word is truth” (John 17:17)

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EVOLUTION VERSUS THE BIBLE

The theory of evolution is traced back to the 1800's. It wasn't until Charles Darwin published his book, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, in 1859, that the movement of evolutionary belief would eventually be catapulted into scientific "fact."

Darwin built on past ideas and added his own peculiar perspective. In the observation of selective breeding in animals, and in seeing the small changes in the finches and tortoises of the Galapagos Islands, he concluded that with enough time (millions of years) whole new types of animals could evolve naturally. This has brought about the doctrine that man, over millions of years, evolved through a series of ape-like creatures.

The theory of evolution has been so perpetuated over the last 150 years that many who believe the Bible to be inspired, and thus infallible, have decided that it is necessary to compromise the Bible's message of the creation. The desire to combine the Biblical account with evolution has brought about multiple fallacies of "theistic evolution." Evolution has been decreed "God's method of creation," and the account of creation in Genesis has been interpreted to place a "gap" of immense time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, or by stretching the "days" of creation into the "ages" of evolution.

In contrast, in the twentieth chapter of Exodus we read the text of the ten commandments that would later be written by God on tablets of stone (Exodus 31:8). One of the commands was to "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*" (Exodus 20:8). In His explanation of why Israel was to honor the seventh day of each week, God compares the creation week: "*For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it*" (Exodus 20:11). Placing this alongside what is read in Genesis 1 leaves no doubt as to the time frame of the creation of all things. In plain language, we read that the creation of the world and man took place within six twenty-four-hour days.

The Bible message does not allow for any of the tenets of evolution. We read in Scripture that death came into the world because of the sin of man (Romans 5:12) and that the entire creation labors under a curse as a consequence of sin (Romans 8:22). Also, that Christ is the last Adam, who came to redeem us from sin brought into the world through the first man, Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22,45).

When Jesus was explaining marriage to the Sadducees, He stated that Adam and Eve existed from the beginning of creation (Mark 10:6). In Matthew's account of the same discussion, Jesus said, "*Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so*" (Matthew 19:8).

According to Genesis 6-8, the global flood brought about by God in Noah's day was responsible for burying what we know as the fossil record. "*So the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them'*" (Genesis 6:7).

As a belief system, the theory of evolution stands in opposition to the Bible. It denies the clear message of Scripture and the very existence of God. An important factor in the debate of creation versus evolution is that most scientists who believe in evolution are also atheists or agnostics, and, for many, there is a spiritual motivation at work. For atheism to be true, there must be a different origin than a Creator Who brought all things into existence. If there is no Creator, there is no accountability to Him. Evolution provides a "safe" substitution for God!

Evidences prove that we can trust the Bible's record of history and science. We can also trust what has been revealed about Jesus, the Son of God, and that He came to provide salvation from sin. If we allow the pressure of conforming to worldly beliefs to sway us, there is nothing or no one to whom we can turn. As Paul wrote regarding the Gentiles in the first chapter of Romans, if we reject God and give Him up, He will give us up to do what we will. Then we will be held accountable in judgment before Him!

-- Dave Leonard

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF KING SOLOMON

The record of Solomon's forty-year reign over Israel is found in the Bible in 1 Kings 2:12-11:43, 1 Chronicles 29:23-25, and 2 Chronicles 1-9. Solomon, who also was called Jedediah (2 Samuel 12:24,25) left his mark on humanity: not only on the nation of Israel, but also on other countries in the ancient Middle East. Via his biblical writings, he continues to have an influence on modern-day mankind as well.

- Solomon was blessed to receive great instructions from his dad, David (1 Kings 2:1-4). David told Solomon that the way to have true success/prosperity is to walk in the ways of Jehovah. He also charged Solomon to serve the Lord with all his heart and soul. That is great spiritual guidance in every generation! Are *you* trying to get this same message across to your children, grandchildren, and others?

- Solomon's time on the throne of Israel got off to a great start. Why do we draw that conclusion? At that stage in his life, "*Solomon loved the LORD*" (1 Kings 3:3). Nothing is more important in our lives than loving God . . . Nothing! Under the old covenant, God's expectation for all of His children was for them to love Him with all of their being (Deuteronomy 6:5). When a person loves the Lord, how does he show that? By obeying what God says (John 14:23,24). Please contemplate this statement: "Love for God moves faith in God to obey God" [Frank Chesser, *Thinking Right about God*, page 42].

- Solomon initially showed a humble spirit. How? God basically told Solomon to ask for anything that he would like (1 Kings 3:5). If people today were given such an opportunity, many would ask for material riches. Solomon asked for something different. Counting himself as "*a little child*" (3:7) and servant, Jedediah made this request of God: "*Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and evil*" (3:9). Solomon knew that he needed help that only the Lord could give. He asked for wisdom: not wisdom to make wise financial investments so he could become wealthy, but wisdom to discern between good and evil and wisdom to lead God's people in the right manner. To be exalted by God, one must *remain* poor in spirit (James 4:10).

- In its history, the land territory that belonged to Israel was at its peak when Solomon was king. In fulfillment of His promise, the Lord gave Solomon and Israel the territory from the Euphrates River to the border of Egypt (Genesis 15:18; 1 Kings 4:21). Thanks to the work done by Solomon's father, David, Solomon never had to engage in military warfare and Israel was at peace under his reign. It was a time when

God's people were "*eating and drinking and rejoicing*" (1 Kings 4:20). From a worldly point of view, Israel was a mighty force in Solomon's day. In reality, military and economic power prove nothing about character. Righteousness exalts a nation, not financial or military might (Proverbs 14:34). Are we listening? When God's people have more concern for a nation's economy than they do its morality, something is terribly wrong.

- Solomon's material wealth did not translate into spiritual riches. His wealth was undeniable: (1) his throne was made out of ivory and gold (1 Kings 10:18), (2) his drinking vessels were made out of gold (10:21), (3) his riches and wisdom exceeded everybody else's (10:22,23), and (4) silver was as common in the land as stones were (10:27). Can you imagine such prosperity?! In the law of Moses, the Lord plainly forbid the kings of Israel to multiply their horses, wives, or silver (Deuteronomy 17:16,17). Solomon violated all three of those instructions (1 Kings 10:26,27; 11:3). By doing so, Solomon's behavior said to the nation, "It is okay to disregard what the Lord says." What a horrible example.

- Despite the fact that the Lord blessed Solomon abundantly, the king departed from Him (1 Kings 11:1-13). Solomon's scenario reminds us that a good beginning does not guarantee that one will continue to serve God faithfully. Solomon began his reign by loving the Lord (3:3). Sadly, that changed. What happened? His heart changed. "*For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of this father David*" (11:4). Today's faithfulness proves nothing about the choices a person will make tomorrow and on into the future.

- Solomon's marriages played a role in his downfall. To please his foreign wives, he constructed idolatrous temples and he himself served false gods (1 Kings 11:5-10). Make no mistake: Solomon was responsible for his own choices. Yet, it cannot be denied that his wives influenced his decision making. Yes, "*Evil company corrupts good habits*" (1 Corinthians 15:33). What kind of person should a child of God marry? First, last, and always, our answer never changes. A child of God ought to marry one who already is a faithful child of God . . . a person who loves the Lord more than anything or anyone. Marry someone who will help you go to heaven!

In the end, Solomon accepted and declared the truth that what really matters in life is to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

-- Roger D. Campbell

Jesus — the Lamb of God

Over twenty-five times in the book of Revelation alone, we see Jesus described as a Lamb. It also is written, “*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’*” (John 1:29).

Under the Law of Moses, various sacrifices involved the offering of literal sheep. With such an Old Testament background, it is easy to see why the Christ is depicted in the Scriptures as a “Lamb.” Each offering of a lamb under the old covenant was a shadow of the Lamb to come (Hebrews 10:1-4).

In prophetic language, the Messiah “*was led as a lamb to the slaughter*” (Isaiah 53:7). When the eunuch from Ethiopia inquired about the application of that statement, Philip pointed him to Jesus (Acts 8:32-35). We are not redeemed by material substances, “*but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*” (1 Peter 1:19).

To secure our salvation, Jesus gave His life as a *sacrifice* for the sins of humanity. It was a *sin* offering (2 Corinthians 5:21). It was a *substitute* offering, as the Lamb took our place (Genesis 22:7,8,13; Isaiah 53:4,5). It was the *slaying* of a sinless victim (Hebrews 4:14,15). It was a *slaughter* of an innocent Lamb (Acts 8:32). It involved *shedding* of blood (Matthew 26:18). It has a *saving* effect (John 1:29). It came before God as a *sweet-smelling* aroma (Ephesians 5:2). As our Passover, the Christ “*was sacrificed for us*” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Jesus was a Lamb like no other! He did what no other lamb could ever do. He is identified as “the” Lamb of God (John 1:29). In the Revelation, we see heavenly beings declaring, “*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain . . . Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever*” (Revelation 5:12,13). Unlike the sacrifice of literal animals, the Christ voluntarily laid down His life (John 10:17,18).

The book of Revelation portrays the Lamb as the overcoming, conquering, victorious One (Revelation 3:21; 6:2; 11:15; 19:13-16). And the great news for Christians? Through the victorious Lamb, we, too, can overcome and be victorious! (Revelation 12:11).

One is either with the Lamb or against Him (Matthew 12:30). Where do you stand, friend? A person is either washed in the Lamb’s blood, or his sins continue to keep him separated from the Lamb. Continuing to walk in the light is the only way to have continual cleansing (1 John 1:7). Are you washed?

-- Roger D. Campbell

Lessons from 1 John 2:3-6

“Knowledge” is a key concept in 1 John. Two Greek words (*ginosko* and *eido*) indicating knowledge (or perception) are used 42 times in 36 verses in 1 John (a little over 34% of 105 total verses in the book). Among the numerous passages in 1 John that reference knowledge, 1 John 2:3-6 stands out with its brief, inspired discussion of “knowing” God. These four verses are the focus of this article.

Knowing God is of eternal importance! Through Jeremiah, God said there is no glory to be had in human wisdom, might, or riches but, rather, in understanding and knowing the Lord (Jeremiah 9:23,24). Jeremiah further prophesied of a new covenant, under which God said, “*They all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them*” (Jeremiah 31:34). Jesus said that to know Him is to know the Father (John 8:19; see also John 14:7). At Jesus’ second coming, He will take “*vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Knowing God is man’s only hope to obtain eternal life.

We can know God. Some people say we cannot know or be sure about much of anything. However, Paul said Timothy knew the Scriptures from his youth (2 Timothy 3:15), and Jesus said, “*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). The book of 1 John alone proves that knowledge of truth and of God is both possible and attainable.

How does one know God? Understanding the importance of knowing God, and realizing knowledge of God and truth is possible, 1 John 2:3-6 is an inspired commentary on how to know God and what that means. What do we learn?

- Knowing God means keeping His commandments. Jesus said, “*If you love Me, keep My commandments*” (John 14:15). Keeping His commandments means keeping/obeying His word, and we know we are “*in Him*” when we keep His word (1 John 2:5).
- To claim to know God while failing to keep His commandments is to lie/be void of the truth. Jesus once asked, “*But why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?’*” (Luke 6:46).
- If we truly are abiding in Jesus, we will walk—or live—as He walked. Jesus is our perfect example—our pattern—for how to live (1 Peter 2:21).

Knowing God is not merely knowing *about* God. Knowing God means keeping His commandments as found in His inspired word, the Bible. Those abiding in Jesus strive daily to live by His perfect example.

-- Chad Dollahite

THE CHALLENGE TO MOVE ON IN MY LIFE AFTER A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE

In life we have so-so days, good days, and *really* good days. We also must face bad days and *really* bad days. On the same day we can have a great morning, but a horrible evening, or vice versa.

It would be silly to think that no child of God ever has painful experiences. Part of the journey through life on earth is to hurt inside, that is, in our heart. That is true for non-Christians and Christians alike.

Sometimes the pain we go through is mild and temporary. We go forward in life and that unpleasant feeling we had is soon forgotten. At least, it does not continue to dominate our thoughts. In other cases, though, it feels like we cannot let go of some painful experience and it keeps on hindering our happiness.

So, how can we move on in life after we have experienced something that brings us great pain? The pain is real, so we should not deny it. It hurts to lose employment, have a relationship end badly, receive a disappointing result on an exam, not do well in a competition that was important to us, lose a loved one, face the embarrassment and other consequences of a sinful decision, go through a divorce, watch our parents' marriage fall apart, struggle with sickness or recovery from a surgery, be mistreated, be part of a congregation which divides due to internal strife, experience identity theft, or have our grown child tell us that he/she no longer believes in God or the Bible. Regardless of the cause, the hurting is genuine.

Look around you. Do you think you and I are the only ones in the whole world who experience pain, or could it be that other folks are in the same boat? Not only do others suffer, but in a lot of cases, their suffering and pain is at a level that I have never experienced. I hope such a realization causes me to be more understanding, more sympathetic, and more longsuffering with others (Philippians 2:3,4).

If you want to look back in history, consider the painful experiences of Moses, Naomi, David, Peter, and Paul. In one brief portion of his life, Moses lost his sister (Miriam), his brother (Aaron), and his right to enter the promised land of Canaan. Naomi struggled with a bitter spirit after she lost her husband and two sons. After David sinned with Bathsheba, he was devastated. He then was tortured to see portions of his family self-destruct. Peter was crushed when he fulfilled Jesus' prediction by denying Him three times. And Paul? He suffered shipwreck multiple times, several imprisonments, severe beatings, and betrayal by brethren in the Lord. Through it all, he never whined or whimpered.

What about us? How in the world can you and I move on after a painful experience, or in some cases, back-to-back or ongoing painful experiences? Please consider the following in light of the Scriptures.

- Communicate with God. “. . . *with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God*” (Philippians 4:6) and casts your cares on Him (1 Peter 5:7). Why? He cares for you and every aspect of your life, including your pain. Pour out your soul to Him.

- Remember that God never promised us that, if we will serve Him faithfully, He will prevent us from having unpleasant or painful experiences. Three times Paul asked God to remove a thorn in the flesh. God basically said, “*The thorn stays, but My grace will make it bearable*” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

- Remind myself how blessed I am. When it comes to material needs, “. . . *God shall supply all your need*” (Philippians 4:19). And, He keeps on bestowing all spiritual blessings in the Christ, even on stormy days (Ephesians 1:3). I am a blessed person!

- Learn to trust in God. The Bible frankly states, “*If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small*” (Proverbs 24:10). There is a path to be strong and overcome weariness. What is it? “*But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and now be weary, they shall walk and not faint*” (Isaiah 40:31). Fully trusting in our Maker does not eliminate pain, but it helps us take matters one day and one breath at a time, knowing that He will not allow us to be tested or tempted above our breaking point, so to speak (1 Corinthians 10:13).

- Try to keep a proper perspective. This matter that has me so torn up and struggling to function, in the big picture of life, is it something minor or is it extremely important? Is it something that I should allow to ruin my optimism and mental well-being or threaten my relationship with my God? When life hurts, our Bible still says, “*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!*” (Philippians 4:4).

- Think often about our hope of eternity in heaven. Earthly affliction is real, but let us recall that it is temporary and cannot diminish what the Lord has prepared for us (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). Brethren, rather than lose heart, let us press on to the goal!

-- Roger D. Campbell

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