

# Come Now, Let Us Reason



**22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Standing in the Gap Lectures**

January 27-31, 2021 - Nesbit, Mississippi

Rick Popejoy, editor

# Dedication



This book of sermon outlines is being dedicated to the elders of the Nesbit Church of Christ (Trey Bledsoe, Billy Byrd, and Patrick Hughes). Men that I have come to greatly admire and respect for their love regarding the truth and the souls of men. These men are first time elders and were dedicated to this service under adversity. They accepted the responsibility and have served with distinction, to this point. This congregation, being without elders for a period of eleven years, now has the guidance and direction God intended for her to have. May God speed their influence.

Rick Popejoy, editor

# Preface



“Houses have porches and vestibules, and books have prefaces and introductions.” (Kendrick, 1890).

In a postmodern, hedonistic society, Christians are increasingly confronted with assertions that contradict the biblical principles. They need to be able to critically analyze arguments and know how to refute those assertions. To do this Christians will need three sets of skills: reading skills (a man that is unacquainted with the Bible he professes, is an ignorant and dangerous man, therefore, a set of reading schedules are provided at the end of this book for your benefit); hermeneutical skills (knowing how to accurately understand God’s word and be able to correct misunderstandings of Scripture); and sound reasoning skills (this book hopes to help fill a void in this last area).

The right margin has been deliberately left at two inches to allow the student to take his own notes while listening to the speaker. We hope that this helps in the utilization of these notes into the curriculums of many High School and Adult Bible classes.

This book is sent forth with the prayer that it will be blessed of God and useful in the training of men for both proper reasoning and divine service.

Rick Popejoy, editor

# Come Now, Let Us Reason

22<sup>nd</sup> Standing in the Gap Lectures - January 27-31, 2021  
Nesbit Church of Christ - 685 Nesbit Rd. Nesbit, MS 38651

## Wednesday, January 27, 2021

7:00 PM Come Now, Let Us Reason (Omari French)

## Thursday, January 28, 2021

7:00 PM The Law of Identity (Jason Rollo)

## Friday, January 29, 2021

1:00 PM Context Matters & Matters of Context (Joshua Rodriguez)

2:00 PM The Law of Rationality (Michael Light)

3:00 PM The Law of Excluded Middle (Joshua Rodriguez)

7:00 PM Teaching the Next Generation to Think (Keith Mosher)

8:00 PM The New Testament as A Pattern (B.J. Clarke)

## Saturday, January 30, 2021

1:00 PM How Do We Come to Know Things (Israel Rodriguez)

2:00 PM A Clear & Present Need (Tom Wacaster)

3:00 PM Right Reasoning (Israel Rodriguez)

## Sunday, January 31, 2021

9:00 AM Exegesis vs Eisegesis (Terrance Brownlow-Dindy)

10:00 PM The Law of Non-Contradiction (Michael Light)

11:00 AM Fellowship Meal

1:30 PM Singing

2:00 PM Reasoning from the Master (Omari French)

One of the most needed global subjects for modern man. Thirteen powerful lessons. Nine godly speakers.  
Booklet produced, perfect for quarterly Bible classes. Wonderful fellowship. Amazing sing.

Leadership roundtable possibilities on Thursday.

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# COME, NOW LET US REASON

Omari French

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Through the God given reasoning process mankind has the ability to consider his own unrighteousness and embrace the infallible justification scheme of God.
  - a. The thought processes of God are unassailable and superior categorically to what we can conjure. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9)
  - b. The irrefutable proofs of God’s righteous attributes are designed to prick our hearts and facilitate repentance as they demonstrate His goodness. “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him” (Psa. 103:11)
    - i. The strongest arguments that mankind devises categorically fail when pitted against God’s reasonings in the scriptures. “And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain” (1 Cor. 3:20).
    - ii. As followers of God, we must be receptive to identify and eradicate any imaginations that contradicts with the revealed reasoning of God. “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” (2 Cor. 10:5).
2. The gospel message is the ultimate refutation of man’s wisdom, which seeks to justify apart from the counsel of God, and renders every other thought process as inconsequential or errant. “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent” (1 Cor. 1:19).

## DISCUSSION:

- I. **GOD’S POINTS OF ARGUMENTATION REQUIRES MAN TO ABANDON HIS CONTRARY IMAGINATIONS**
  - A. Proposition- man has no access to future events that will transpire in this life or life to come, so that man is entirely dependent on the superior wisdom of God. “Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob” (Isa. 41:21).

- i. With full knowledge that all man's attempts to undermine God's thoughts and actions will be rendered futile, God invites man to the venue to challenge God's righteousness.
  1. "Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified" (Isa. 43:26).
  2. "Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD'S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel" (Mic. 6:2).
- ii. With this inability to critique God now established, God gives his platform of reasoning in the system that God has provided for man's justification.
  1. "With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding" (Isa. 40:14)?
  2. "For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counsellor, that, when I asked of them, could answer a word" (Isa. 41:28).
  3. God applies his superior reasoning to show that man must only believe and respond to what God has provided for the removal of sin.
    - a. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).
    - b. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isa. 43:25).
  4. We see then the process of our redemption as unattainable knowledge based on the unsearchable riches of God that we can obey without reservation.
    - a. "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man,

the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:8-9).

b. Romans 11:33-36.

B. Confirmation- since man cannot conjure, counsel, or undermine the thought process of God, all he can do is regard his own thought process as moot and embrace the reasoning of God. “Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:20-21).

## II. ALL OF OUR CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE FOR CONVERSION PROCESSES MUST UTILIZE THE REASONING IN THE SCRIPTURES FOR PROPER EVANGELISM.

A. The custom of the apostles was to use the method of “reasoning” through the scriptures to convict alien sinners.

i. See where Paul “went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures” (Acts 17:2).

1. The Greek word for reasoned here is “dialégomai” Strong’s NT #1256. This is a compound word from #1223 /diá, “through, from one side across to the other,” which intensifies #3004 /légō, “speaking to a conclusion”.

2. This word is properly understood as “getting a conclusion across” by exchanging thoughts (logic) - “mingling thought with thought, to ponder (revolve in the mind)” (J. Thayer).

3. The context of this use is the OT scriptures that prophesied of the requirement for Christ to suffer and rise from the dead.

ii. This word occurs 13 times in the New Testament:

1. Mark 9:34 (apostles disputing between themselves on who is the greatest);

2. Acts 17:17; Acts 18:4 (Paul reasoning in synagogue);

3. Acts 18:19 (Paul disputing with the Jews);

4. Acts 19:8-9 (Paul disputing for 3 months);

5. Acts 20:7- 9 (Paul preaching till midnight and described as long preaching on the first day of the week);



6. Acts 24:12 (Paul explaining that the accusations against him are not accurate as nobody found him even in the temple disputing with any man);
  7. Acts 24:25 (Paul reasoning with Felix of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come);
  8. Hebrews 12:5 (the word of exhortation speaketh to us as sons);
  9. Jude 1:9 (Michael disputed about the body of Moses against the devil).
- iii. This terminology refers to usually of believers exercising "dialectical reasoning."
  - iv. This is the process of giving and receiving information with someone to reach deeper understanding - a "going back-and-forth" of thoughts and ideas so people can better know the Lord (His word, will).
  - v. This process is critical for a Christian that is growing and is the root of the English word "dialogue".
    1. We then establish that the word makes reference to "getting a conclusion across" by exchanging thoughts (logic) - "mingling thought with thought, to ponder (revolve in the mind)" (J. Thayer).
    2. We now understand so that the word of God pricks and we have to use it to teach the world how to develop internal reasoning with the word of God.
    3. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).
- B. Additionally, our custom as followers of the apostles' doctrine must be to avoid improper reasoning and properly add up the conclusions that are presented by the word of God.
- i. See Luke 3:15 where the people mused in their hearts whether John was the Messiah.
    1. This word here is "dialogizomai" Strong's NT #1260 which makes reference to properly, go back-and-forth when evaluating, in a way that typically leads to a confused conclusion.
    2. The term implies one confused mind interacting with other confused minds, each further reinforcing the original confusion.

3. This word is used 16 times in the New Testament, and it is always used in reference to reasoning that occurs exclusively within the heart of man which inevitably leads to improper scriptural reasoning.
    - a. John 21:25 (Pharisees unwillingness to cite the inspiration of John);
    - b. Matthew 16:7-8 (apostles reasoning that he was referring to bread in the leaven of the Pharisees);
    - c. Mark 8:16-17; Mark 2:6-8 (Pharisees reasoning on how Christ could forgive sin);
    - d. Luke 5:21-22; Mark 9:33 (apostles by the way reasoning who would be the greatest);
    - e. Luke 20:14; Luke 1:29 (Mary casting in her mind what the salutation of the Angel was);
    - f. Luke 12:17 (rich man concerned with building barns in the future rather than the will of God for his soul).
  - ii. From this we establish that man cannot rely in any capacity on his reasoning process in his heart apart from integrating the thoughts of God. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it” (Jer. 17:9).
- C. This decision-making process to facilitate proper biblical reasoning occurs in the setting of a figurative tribunal in the mindset of man.
- i. Consider the Greek term “diakouó” Strong’s NT #1251 meaning to “hear to the end, hear with care, hear fully of a judge trying a cause” (cf. Acts 23:35).
  - ii. This is the lone reference to the word in the New Testament; however, the concept can be applied to the entire system of judges in the Old Testament that was designed to facilitate this concept (Deu. 1:16; 16:18; 25:1; Pro. 31:9; John 7:24).
  - iii. The setting of the mind is the place for the adjudication to let God’s word be true in our mind. “For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7).

- D. In this setting of “diakouó” it is necessary for all to engage in critical discernment or “diakrinó”.
- i. Strong’s NT #1252 which makes reference to judging "back-and-forth" which can either (positively) refer to close-reasoning (discrimination) or negatively "over-judging" (going too far, vacillating).
  - ii. Only the context indicates which sense is meant:
    1. Matthew 16:3 (Jesus reproving the teachers who could only discern) the face of the sky);
    2. Matthew 21:21 (Jesus citing the miraculous power that they needed faith and doubt not);
      - a. Mark 11:23; Acts 10:20; (Peter responsive to the Holy Spirit to go unto Cornelius without doubting);
      - b. Acts 11:12; see Acts 11:2 (Jewish Christians contending with Peter for going unto the Gentiles);
      - c. Acts 15:9 (Peter recounting the Holy Spirit put no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles);
    3. Romans 4:20 (Abraham staggered not at the promise of God); Romans 14:23 (he that eats meat against his conscience is damned because he doubteth);
    4. 1 Corinthians 4:7 (Paul’s discussion about not being elevated as who makes one differ from another);
    5. 1 Corinthians 6:5 (set him to judge that is least in the church);
    6. 1 Corinthians 11:29 (not partaking of the Lord’s supper properly is condemnation for not discerning the Lord’s body);
    7. 1 Corinthians 11:31 (exercising proper judgement on ourselves enable us not to be judged);
    8. 1 Corinthians 14:29 (the prophets who keep silence beyond the two or three who speak judge the content of the speakers);
    9. James 1:6 (praying without doubting is described as not wavering);

- 10. James 2:4; (the mistreatment of the poor in seat assignments described as being partial in thoughts);
  - 11. Jude 1:9 (Michael contending with the devil over the body of Moses); Jude 1:22 (on some heretics have compassion making a difference).
  - iii. The vehicle of the God given ability to rightly judge enables us to accept God and His word in our hearts. “God forbid, yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that thou mightiest be justified in thy sayings and mightiest overcome when thou art judged” (Rom. 3:4).
- E. Lastly, the cognate “diakrisis” Strong’s NT #1253 which makes reference to a thorough judgment, i.e., a discernment (conclusion) which distinguishes “look-alikes,” i.e., things that appear to be the same.
- i. See Romans 14:1 (receiving brethren but not to doubtful disputations);
  - ii. 1 Corinthians 12:11 (miraculous gifts include discerning of spirits);
  - iii. Hebrews 5:14 (mature Christians have their senses exercised to discern good and evil).
  - iv. “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that thou mightiest be justified in thy sayings and mightiest overcome when thou art judged” (Rom. 3:4).
  - v. The discernment in the righteous judgement is necessary to grasp the subtle distinctions that separate the word of God from error. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:1; 6).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Man has the God given faculty to embrace the reasoning of God through the scriptures. Compare James 1:21 - “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” with 1 Corinthians 2:14 - “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

- a. Man must use this ability to distinguish the words of God from the words of man in order to be saved. “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, 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, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 The. 2:13).
  - b. God’s word must then be obeyed from the heart. “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (Rom. 6:17).
    - i. This can only be accomplished through the acknowledgement of the truth that man’s anger and emotion in his heart can never undermine the truth of God’s commands. “Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Heb. 4:7).
    - ii. This acknowledgement is the catalyst for why we obey the gospel. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22).
2. The cross of Christ refutes the wisdom of man and requires our obedience as it is truly where we meet the mind of Christ which is the intention of God from the foundation of the world.
- a. This is why it chose God through the foolishness of preaching to save some and that preaching was Christ and Him crucified as the obedience and passion of Christ is the optimal example for us to live faithful (Phi. 2:5-8; 1 Cor. 1:23).
    - i. “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18);
    - ii. “Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought” (1 Cor. 2:6);
    - iii. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16).

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# THE LAW OF IDENTITY

Jason Rollo

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Has the world gone mad?
  - a. Yes—of course. But the world has been “mad” for a long time.
    - i. John 8:44; 1 John 3:8; 1 John 4:19.
    - ii. See It (OT): (Cain) Gen. 4:8; (Flood) Gen. 6:5, 11; (Judges) Jud. 17:6/21:25; Israel & Judah (Jer. 7:30-31/32:35).
    - iii. See It (NT): (Gentiles) Rom. 1:20-32; (Jews) Rom. 2:1-2; (Paul Spoke of it often) 2 Tim. 3:1-12; Acts 17:16; cf., Col. 3:6-7; Eph. 4:17-24; Gal. 5:16-24; Rom. 6:20-23.
    - iv. See It (Now): Look at the entire world/USA, both! Baby murder “abortion,”; theft; gambling; fornication (all types); biblical nakedness; alcohol/drinking/drugs; party life; false religions (all types); YES, we see it more and more (2 Tim. 3:13).
    - v. This should not surprise us—ALL SIN—is that way—it is/always has been—PROGRESSIVE IN NATURE (Old law showing it; Rom. 5:20; 7:13; Gal. 3:19). Note: Jam. 1:13-16 with Heb. 10:24-31, 35; 6:4-6; 1 Jn. 5:16 (Jer. 7:16).
  - b. What does the above have to do with our topic? More than one might think!
2. What is the only solution for this madness?
  - a. Jesus and His saving plan of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1ff; Acts 14:21; 15:7; 16:10, 20:24).
  - b. But sin/error has blinded many a heart (2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:24f; Rom. 11:7; Mark 4:15f).
  - c. We must help the light(s) shine much brighter (John 8:12; 9:5; Mat. 5:13f; Luke 12:35).
3. What about our immediate subject? What does the Bible say?
  - a. Historically, we refer to 3 main laws of thought:
    - i. Law of Identity
    - ii. Law of Excluded Middle
    - iii. Law of Contradiction (or Non-Contradiction)

- iv. All are involved in the Law of Rationality (1 The. 5:21; Isa. 8:20; 5:20).
- b. Let us never forget that the true and living God is rational and logical. God is truth!
  - i. John 1:1-2, 14, 17-18; 14:6; 15:1; 18:37; Rev. 3:7; 19:11; cf., Isa. 9:6 with 1:18-20).
  - ii. We are made in God’s image, and while we are not the truth, we are certainly rational/logical beings and are expected to understand/comprehend and know truth.
    - 1. The Old Testament (Deu. 29:29; 32:29; Neh. 8:7-8; Psa. 94:8; 119:27; 100; Dan. 9:2; Pro. 2:1-6; 28:5).
    - 2. The New Testament (John 7:17; 8:32; cf., 17:17; Eph. 3:3-5; Luke 1:4; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:13; Mat. 4:4f (Jesus clearly understood that one can “understand” and know/quote Scripture correctly vs. incorrectly). cf., 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12-14).
  - iii. In addition to being expected to understand/know truth, we are expected to OBEY that truth (Rom. 6:16-18; Heb. 5:9; Mat. 7:21f; 11:29; John 10:10; 2 The. 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:10; John 5:28-29; etc., cf., Heb. 3:19 with Jos. 5:6; Deu. 32:20).
- c. Key: truth, understanding/knowing, obeying all go back to God’s word (1 Cor. 1-2)!
- d. The above notes are relevant; our specific analysis deals with “The Law of Identity.”

**DISCUSSION:**

**I. THE LAW OF IDENTITY**

**A. What is the Law of Identity?**

- i. So many concepts and definitions; yet, actually, “simple,”  
The Main Word:

- 1. We could get technical (and with Jesus, the Apostles/Inspired Writers, we clearly could—after all, God (cf., the Holy Spirit, John 16:13; John 17:20-21) is the One Who created our minds/reasoning ability)—Cf., Affirming the antecedent; Modus Ponens; Valid Arguments; Denying the consequent; Modus Tollens; Proposition; Implied proposition; premise; inference; explicit proposition; verbal dispute; Square of opposition; contrariety; sub-contrariety;



contradictions; apparent contradictions; hypothetical syllogisms; E-form (Universal negative); A-form (universal affirmative); O-form (particular negative); etc., etc., **BUT...**

2. Mark 12:37, of Jesus, the Bible says, "...and the common people heard him gladly." (cf., Especially this context wherein Jesus is logically destroying the "esteemed scholars" of His day; Also, cf., Jam. 2:5 with Rom. 10:17 and Heb. 11:6). Study also, Acts 4:13 and 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.
3. Matthew 11:5 reveals of Jesus work, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (cf., Luke 16:29-31).
4. Matthew 11:25 says of Jesus in prayer, "...I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (cf., 1 Cor. 1:18f; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 5:13-14; 4:12; 1 Tim. 4:13 with 16; Also, cf., Luke 19:46-48 - Jesus saying, "It is written..." with the end of vs. 48, "...for all the people were very attentive to hear Him." Why?
5. **Because THE WORD used WORDS that could be understood by those seeking to find/know/obey truth. Yes, THE TRUTH taught simple plain TRUTH.** Jesus was/is logical—Logic equals right reasoning. Logic involves words. Words are VEHICLES OF THOUGHT. Words have meanings and can be understood. Words connect with other words (terms—which have meanings within a context) that make a thought clear. Plain (simple) words do just this! Vague and deceptively used words cause confusion and frustration and lack of clarity. Jesus used PLAIN WORDS—This is why they nailed Him to a cross (cf., John 5:47).
6. John 7:46, "The officers answered, Never man spake like this man." Matthew 7:28-29 reads, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine; For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (cf., Mat. 22:46)!

7. Yes, Jesus used valid arguments and proper syllogisms, but **ultimately**, He made it PLAIN—VERY PLAIN. Yes, of course, Jesus used different linguistic tools (Parables, figurative language, etc.) in dissecting the thoughts of people’s hearts (hard-hearted vs. seeking; Mark 2:8, 3:5; Mat. 13:14-15 (cf., Luke 9:43-45) vs. Mat. 5:8/9:36; Jas. 2:5), but Jesus did NOT die on Calvary’s Cruel Cross because He was some vague generic non-intelligible prophet (Mat. 21:45; Luke 19:45-48).

ii. The Law of Identity

1. For things: If a thing has a certain property, then it has it.
2. For propositions: If a proposition (i.e., a statement that something is or is not the case) is true, then it is true. It is true (in its context) for all persons, in all times and in all places. cf., It IS what it IS!
3. Common Sense (i.e., Seeing the obvious; correct vs. incorrect reasoning) seems to be an endangered species in our day and time. But with the ungodly it is always the case; Sinful men do not like the implications of LAW & TRUTH (1 Kgs. 22:8; Isa. 8:30; 5:20-21; Pro. 28:26; Yet, such is not true with those who love God and His Word (Psa. 119:104-105; 119:24, 80, 86, 92, 98-99, 133, 136; 142).
4. Example: I am in the building of the Nesbit Church of Christ. (Note: We often leave out via the use of elliptical statements things that are clearly understood, that is, I am “in” the pulpit area and standing and preaching, etc.). Again, COMMON SENSE! It is UNDERSTOOD by its very nature!
5. Example: Pharisees (Mat. 23:3b; 4a; etc.); Such Simple truth!
6. Practical Example: Have you ever heard someone say, “Well that may be true for you, but it’s not for me?” cf., Baptism for the remission of sins during the Christian Dispensation! (Acts 2:38; 8:35f; Eph. 4:5). The LAW OF IDENTITY rules such “false reasoning” out! Look back at the definition. Note: This is where propositions and the other laws of thought would come in: cf., Law of Excluded Middle (Every Precisely

stated proposition is either true or false) and Law of Non-Contradiction (No proposition can be both true and false at the same time and in the same respect). AGAIN—WORDS (cf., Law of Identity) HAVE MEANINGS.

7. Practical Examples:

- a. One might say, “Several hundred years ago Sodomy (cf., the LGBTQ nonsense) was not okay, but today (in our modern world of 2021), I guess it’s no big deal.”
  - b. “When Paul gave his New Testament Writings, women were under their husband’s rule and kept the home/kids, etc., but today (2021) that is not her primary role anymore.”
  - c. “Well, many people in the Bible had more than one wife without God’s condemnation, so I can have more than one wife today (in 2021).”
  - d. NOTE: All 3 of these examples are ignoring the Law of Identity, as it relates to the proper use of words (and context) and proper inference from what the Bible teaches explicitly and implicitly!
    - i. Example #1 - Sin (cf. Sodomy) in the first century condemned by the New Testament is still sin today (Rom. 1);
    - ii. Example 3 - Women’s primary role has not changed (1 Tim. 2:13-15);
    - iii. Example #3 - Exceptions under the Old Testament (during the early stage of humanity, Acts 17:30) do not justify clear and plain words/teaching from the New Testament (Mat. 19:8-9; Col. 3:18).
- iii. Jesus—The Master Logician! (AFTERALL—JESUS is THE WORD (Jn. 1)!
1. Quotes/Notes from Article: Is Christianity Logical (Part 1 & 2) (Miller).

2. Illustration: Written in 2011 but compared to something in 2020!
3. “Truth is truth and will be truth; regardless of any man’s attitude toward it or ignorance of it,” as heard quoted from a sound preacher.

B. Where Does This Law Come From?

- i. All law/truth is from God (John 17:17; 18:36-37; 8:32; 17:20-21a; 16:13).
- ii. Let us ask: Is God logical? Where did grammar/language come from? Was Adam created a grunting caveman? Are humans created with the ability to understand, learn, and know? If not, what does such imply about God? What are Hermeneutics (cf., science of interpretation)? What is a syllogism (cf., bringing reasoning together)? Where does authority come from and how does it work? What do words like: explicit, implicit, and expediency mean?
- iii. Again, ALL Truth (cf., Laws of thought, of science, etc.) are from GOD! Key:
  1. Old Testament (cf., Book of Deuteronomy) - examples: fear, know, heart, remember, obey, etc.
  2. New Testament (cf., Writings of John) - examples: written, words, believe, know, life, etc.
  3. Study only “good” helps - examples: cf., Dungan’s Hermeneutics (Dungan).
  4. It is CRITICAL to study and understand things like the use of: Conclusion indicators (ex, “therefore,” John 6:45); conjunctions (ex, “and,” Mark 16:16); definite articles (ex, “the,” Acts (the faith/the church)); possessive pronouns (ex, “my,” Mat. 16:18); Use of numbers (ex., “one” (vs. two) Body, Eph. 4:4f); etc. Also: Things like literal vs. figurative language; immediate vs. broad context, etc. must be studied and understood; and it can be (Dan. 9:2; Mat. 24:15c).
- iv. WARNING: If you allow a man to define his own terms, he will teach ANYTHING he wants to teach. False teachers major in defining their own terms! Also, they will often “quote” Scripture (incorrectly—intentionally or unintentionally) in the process (Mat. 4:1ff; 1 John 4:1; Mat. 7:13ff).

- v. Jesus & A Brief Review of Several Passages with the Law of Identity (Mat. 12:1-9; 16:6-12).

C. Why Does This Law Matter?

- i. Because God, truth and eternity (cf., Jesus, His plan; His beautiful saving plan; our faith and obedience; Heaven and Hell) ALWAYS Matter (John 20:30-31)!
- ii. Because without it, there is chaos, uncertainty, no purpose to life. In other words, insanity!

## II. THE LAW OF INSANITY

A. Reference humanism notes and series - from Satan to the Manifestos to today.

B. Seen even in the Lord's church. What are we "thinking?" (Hos. 8:7).

- i. Liberalism's terrible seed has been sown; Its ugly crops have grown well.
- ii. Illustrations connected with The Law of Identity: Old Testament; New Testament; and current!

C. Always require them to define their terms:

- i. As the old debater once said, "I will not have a discussion with you unless you FIRST define your terms." Ask questions and determine their standard!
- ii. Words can be and must be defined (Context; Type of language used; etc.)
- iii. Nehemiah 8 - A Case Study (vs. 2, 7-8, 12, 15, 18); cf., Deu. 27:8; Hab. 2:2; Luke 24:25-27, 32, 45; Acts 17:2-3; 28:23). The Law of Identity matters!
- iv. Atheism, Humanism, Liberalism, Postmodernism, Modernism, Deconstructionism and Non-Judgment—vs. Truth & The Law of Identity.

## III. THE LAW OF (THE) I-AM

A. Our Great God & His Great Book:

- i. God Is: The GREAT I AM (Exo. 3:14; John 8:58, 24; 13:13; 18:6; 1 Cor. 15:24)
- ii. God Gave: His Son (John 3:16; Phi. 2:5f; 2 Cor. 8:9); His Word (Jas. 1:18-25).

- iii. God Wins: (1 Cor. 15:24); We Win: (1 John 5:4; cf., Heb. 11:6 with Rom. 10:17).
  - iv. Don't Give Up! Victory Is Coming. We have a Pattern and Hope (2 Pet. 1:3).
- B. Judged by truth (cf., Jesus & His Word(s) - not a bad thing if obedient!
- i. Acts 17:30-31; John 12:48; Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Galatians 1:10f; Revelation 20:12f.
  - ii. The Law of Identity is essential in understanding and obeying the Law of God.
- C. The world needs converting. Jesus and His truth so needed! What will we do?
- i. Example's: Politics/COVID/Weak Brethren/Sinful Men/False Teachers/etc.
  - ii. You matter and your actions matter (Jer. 5:1; Mat. 5:13-16; 2 Cor. 2:12-17).
  - iii. See Acts 2:40; 1 Timothy 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; 1 Timothy 4:6; Romans 10:18 and Ephesians 5:6!

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Summary of 3 Main Points: Law of...
2. Logic & The Bible (Warren); When Is An Example Binding (Warren); Ascertaining Bible Authority (Deaver); Hermeneutics (Dungan); How Implication Binds & Silence Forbids (Beals); Etc. are helpful/sound tools. BUT—The BIBLE is all you need (2 Tim. 3:16-17)!

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# CONTEXT MATTERS AND MATTERS OF CONTEXT

Joshua Rodriguez

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Unlike the familiarity we possess of our nation's history, culture, and law, the Pages of Inspiration are replete with ancient events, traditions, and precepts foreign to our frame of reference. Still further, biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, regarded as "dead tongues," pose a great deal of difficulty to us who have only known our society's language and idiom.
  - A. The Bible is a complex book, composed of 66 individual books written over thousands of years.
  - B. The Bible was written by approximately 40 different authors.
  - C. The Bible was written in different historical, geographical, and cultural settings.
  - D. The Bible was written in different languages.
2. Because the Bible is an ancient book containing several elements of difficulty, we must become proficient in the rules of interpretation lest we become a law unto ourselves (cf. 2 Pet. 3:15-16).
3. To know and understand the truth, a sound and trustworthy method of interpreting the Scriptures is necessary. Any workman who will stand approved in the eyes of God must 1) have a thorough knowledge of the Bible, and 2) skill in interpreting and applying the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15). We must keep in mind, "the best results of Christianity come from the most accurate explanation of the Scriptures!" (Conner 5). If we do not understand the Bible, then the less likely we are to live in accordance with God's Will. If we are made to understand the Scriptures through an accurate interpretation, then we will know specifically what God demands of us (cf. Eph. 5:17).
  - A. It is important to know hermeneutics and exegesis in order to accurately preach and teach the Word of God. Teachers are given the awesome responsibility of "speaking as the oracles of God" (1 Pe. 4:11).
  - B. Thus, to preach does not mean to tell stories, but to clearly draw out the meaning of God's precepts. The bible teacher must comprehend the ancient text, arrive at a correct meaning, and most importantly convey its significance (cf. Jas. 3:1; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim.

4:1-5). The teaching role requires responsible hermeneutics to provide people with an accurate understanding of Christian doctrine.

4. It cannot be overstressed; hermeneutics and exegesis are very important! The above reasons simply introduce headings under which many more topics would be introduced. J. S. Lamar, a Restoration preacher (1800s A.D.), wrote on the subject of interpretation saying, “For we attribute our disagreements not to the Bible, nor yet to the depravity or the incompetence of those who have studied it, but to the imperfections and perverting influences of the methods which have been followed...Hitherto this important work has not been accomplished. And until it be, it is evident that the formidable evils existing in, and growing out of, disunion and partyism cannot be removed. Until then, skepticism must revel and destroy, beyond the reach of argument or hope of correction. Until then, church will be arrayed against church, and Christian against Christian....” (Lamar 17).

#### **DISCUSSION:**

- I. **THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION. THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION NECESSITATES A SENDER AND A RECEIVER.**
  - A. The sender prepares a message based upon his frame of reference and sends his message through intelligible language (spoken, written, code, etc.). In the message a variety of things are sent like body language, vocal tones, emphasis, etc.
  - B. The receiver retrieves the message of the sender and begins to interpret based on his personal frame of reference. Along with words, the receiver also interprets body language, vocal tones, emphasis, etc.
  - C. If there is an obstacle between the sender and receiver then communication is not possible. For example, if the sender spoke Spanish and the receiver spoke English there would be a language barrier. If the sender were of higher intelligence, and the receiver of lower, frames of reference would not match.
  - D. In the process of communication between God and man, God is the sender of a message. He has communicated in such a way that His message can be understood or interpreted. Man is the receiver of the message. God created man with the ability to decipher the message He would send. Regardless of time, race, dialect, or culture God has made it possible to know the meaning of His message (cf. Isa. 1:18; Eph. 3:3-4; 5:17).



**II. AXIOMS OF HERMENEUTICS. AXIOM IS DEFINED AS, “AN ESTABLISHED RULE OR PRINCIPLE OR A SELF-EVIDENT TRUTH; A STATEMENT ACCEPTED AS TRUE.”**

Fundamentally, the axioms, which have been accepted, are established rules of communication used by everyone, even God. Below are a few axioms associated with context. The following axioms have directly come from Principles of Interpretation by Clinton Lockhart.

- A. The true object of interpretation is to apprehend the exact thought of the speaker or author.
  - i. An interpreter cannot impose his own thoughts upon the words of an author, nor in any way modify the author’s meaning.
  - ii. The interpreter’s only duty is to apprehend the precise thought imparted by the speaker or writer and leave the speaker or writer responsible for the character of their thoughts. To do otherwise is to make the author say what the interpreter desires. Consider Eph. 3:3-5.
- B. Usage determines the meaning of words.
  - i. By usage is meant, “The way in which words and phrases are actually used in a community of language.”
  - ii. A word may change meaning or may have many meanings. A word or a certain meaning of a word may become partially or completely obsolete.
- C. The function of a word depends on its association with other words.
  - i. When preparing lexicons (a dictionary which describes the usage history of a certain language), research determines the meaning of words mainly by examining all their occurrences in literature and noting the associations of each word.
  - ii. In each case the meaning of a word depends on the connection in which the word is found.

**III. UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT AND ITS USE IN HERMENEUTICS.**

- A. The context in which a word or sentence is located is essential to interpretation. Context is defined, “the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning” (Merriam-Webster). Etymologically the term refers to the connection of words that precedes or follows, to weave together. The interpreter must be aware of two types of context. Immediate context - the parts of a discourse which are closely connected in the

- sentence or paragraph. Remote context - the parts of another paragraph, chapter, or book. The immediate context in some books or passages in the Scriptures may not assist the interpreter by providing any clues of explanation (cf. Proverbs, Revelation, etc.).
- B. An expression or word must be interpreted to suit the context. The meaning of a word should harmonize with its adjuncts. As an illustration of this rule the biblical term “faith” is given two different senses depending on the adjuncts of the context. To express the personal belief that an individual obtains as a result of hearing, the word “faith,” without a definite article, is employed (cf. Rom. 10:17). Yet, when expressing the objective system of belief the Scriptures speak of “the faith,” making use of the definite article (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1; Jude 3). As an adjunct, “the” is a definite article which indicates a particular person, place, or thing in mind.
  - C. If a reason is connected with a statement, the meaning of a word in one part of the statement may be known by the second part. John 17:17 demonstrates this rule well: “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” We are made to know what truth is by the second statement. Poetry in the Old Testament utilizes parallelism which often necessitates application of this rule (cf. Job, Psalms).
  - D. An answer given to a question will often disclose the meaning of a certain word in the context. The parable of the Good Samaritan was prompted by the question “who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29-37). A further reading of the context interprets the meaning of the question as anyone needing our care and concern.
  - E. Words must be interpreted according to the usage determined by the context. The definition of a word cannot violate or contradict the apparent meaning of the immediate context. Acts 8:38-39 is an example of baptism as a burial, submersion or immersion in water (cf. Col. 2:12-13; Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism to be defined as a sprinkling or pouring would violate and contradict the immediate and remote contexts. Philip and the eunuch, “they went down both into the water...and he baptized him.” The definition of baptism is reinforced by the context, and, “when they were come up out of the water,” a burial or submersion is implied.
  - F. When interpreting the Bible, the history and original meaning of a word should be used instead of its current usage. A fundamental and an established rule in language is, “usage determines the meaning of words.” Etymology, the root and earliest significance of a word, is the proper way to begin a careful study of usage. This is especially true of the Bible knowing the Old and New Testaments were written in ancient languages which are no longer spoken. The original

meaning of a word may evolve over time. The current usage of the word “wine” is understood as alcoholic beverage. Because the rule to use the original meaning of a word is not known or neglected, “wine” in the Scriptures is almost always interpreted to mean alcoholic beverage based upon current usage. In the Bible “wine” is a generic term which basically means the product of the grape and must be interpreted in light of the context, whether alcoholic or non-alcoholic (cf. Pro. 23:31-32; Psa. 104:14-15).

- G. Always interpret a sentence according to the known purpose of the author. How may we come to know the author’s purpose of writing? Sometimes the speaker or writer states just what he wanted to accomplish by speaking. Luke states the purpose of the parables Jesus spoke in Luke 18. The first was spoken “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). The second because of “certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (Luke 18:9). The context should be carefully considered. At times the purpose of the writer is not easily understood. Thus, the entire message or book must be investigated—the structure, the outline, the plan, the thought, etc. The context of the entire book will be necessary.
- H. When interpreting a sentence help may be given by examining the statements of other writers on the same subject, who are of equal authority. Matthew 7:7-11 gives an exhortation to “ask,” “seek,” and “knock” for good things from the Heavenly Father. Yet, according to Luke 11:9-13 Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit. The interpreter is assisted by the statements of Luke who wrote on the same subject and was also of equal authority. Cross-referencing is a useful technique of exegesis and is developed over long experience in the Scriptures. However, several reference works provide cross-referencing by key word, topic, or verse and are very useful to the interpreter.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Hermeneutics is the knowledge of interpreting literal and figurative language. However, this knowledge must be applied. If we ever hope to reach a level of soundness or strength, then each member of the Lord’s body must become practical exegetes. Every member must be able to interpret or draw out the meaning of Scripture for themselves.
2. Continue in the Word and truth shall be found (John 8.31, 32). “The Bible our only guide; the Bible we must rightly divide!”

3. For a more comprehensive discussion over the rules of words and sentences, Hermeneutics by D.R. Dungan, Principles of Interpretation by Clinton Lockhart, and Biblical Hermeneutics by Milton S. Terry will provide a resourceful knowledge in the study of hermeneutics and exegesis. Much of the material discussed in this outline have directly come from these books.

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# THE LAW OF RATIONALITY

Michael Light

## INTRODUCTION:

1. We live in the world “as it is.” Often, we take things for granted. And often we do things without being conscious of our actions.
2. We “are” rational beings whether we ever examine that fact or not.
3. There are serious consequences that occur when wisdom and truth are forsaken. We witness odd and even foolish results when people (or societies) reject rational thought.
4. We are going to look briefly at the Law of Rationality, primarily as it applies to God and truth.

## DISCUSSION: *The Law of Rationality...*

### I. WHAT IS IT?

- A. Simply stated, “We ought to justify our conclusions with adequate evidence.”
  - i. The Bible certainly teaches the principle of “oughtness” and moral “obligation.” Both of which are denied by most in the world.
  - ii. The key element in the discussion of this definition is the phrase “adequate” evidence. People often affirm conclusions... but the “evidence” they provide is inadequate. Example: answering the question of origin with the assertion of evolution.
- B. The Biblical way (God’s way) demands we fulfill this law.
  - i. 1 John 4:1, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
  - ii. 2 Tim. 2:15, we are to study the word of God; 2 Tim. 3:16-17 we are obligated to apply what the word teaches to our own lives and our own situations.
  - iii. We are obligated to reason correctly - to prove the truth...
    1. 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:15; John 19:35.
    2. 1 Peter 1:16; Acts 17:3.

3. John 4:42; 9:41; 20:26ff.
  - iv. They heard evidence and were converted.
    1. Acts 6:7; 8:33.
    2. Acts 9:22 - “proving”.
  - v. In all of these verses (and hundreds more could have been cited) the Law of Rationality is being applied. The prophets; Jesus; the apostles; and you and I today - prove our positions (in truth God’s positions) by justifying our conclusions with adequate evidence.
- C. We live in “anti-rational” times. People deny plain biblical truth about:
- i. The one church (Mat. 16:13ff).
  - ii. The one plan of salvation.
  - iii. Gender specific language being outlawed (mother, father etc...).
  - iv. “Novel Definitions” - “novel doctrines require novel definitions.”
    1. An affair; misappropriation of funds...
    2. Gender assignment; gay lifestyle; pro-choice etc...
    3. Those who control definitions control the debate, set the issue.
    4. “Amen and “awomen”.

## II. CONFUSION ON RATIONALITY LEADS TO CONFUSION IN OTHER AREAS

### A. Misunderstanding of Faith.

- i. “Faith” - “I believe”.
- ii. Statements like, “If you know it, you don’t have faith”.
- iii. Some basically aver - “faith in the absence of proof”.
- iv. They interpret “we walk by faith not by sight” as “we walk by faith and not by knowledge” (a tragic mistake).

### B. Biblical Position.

- i. We cannot have faith in what God has not said (Rom. 10:17; Rom. 14:23).

- ii. The Bible teaches that we have faith, “because” of the evidence/proof that God provides. Example; Jesus and miracles (John 20).

C. Biblical faith extends my knowledge.

- i. The word of God is true making wise the simple (Psa. 19:7).
- ii. Psalm 119:97, 105, 113.
- iii. “logophobia” - fear of logic. I’d fear logic also if I held some of the nonsensical positions that some do.

**III. HOW DO WE OVERCOME ANTI-RATIONAL ATTITUDES IN OUR COUNTRY AND CONGREGATIONS?**

A. Must teach and recreate an understanding of faith and reason being compatible (2 Tim. 2:2-4; Mat. 28:18ff).

B. We Need Courage.

- i. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Daniel; David; Esther).
- ii. Refuse to accommodate sin.
- iii. Speak up and call out the false teachers (religious and secular).
- iv. Those who deny God and deny truth; imply that they are “wrong” in demanding we accept their perversions. We must question why. We must refuse to be intimidated. We must fight back with the armor of God.

C. “Do thyself no Harm (Acts 16:28).

- i. You (a nation) cannot survive if we are irrational.
- ii. Righteousness exalts a nation.... (Pro. 14:34).
- iii. Jonah 4:11 - many do not know their right hand from the left. We are here to help them see more perfectly the way.
- iv. Cannot be righteous and irrational (Rom. 10:1-3).
- v. The world has reality whether man acknowledges it or not.
- vi. The truth is the truth whether anyone believes it or not (John 8:32; 10:10).

**IV. GENERAL POINTS RELATED TO THE TOPIC**

A. John Locke popularized empiricism.

- i. The idea of our brain being a blank slate upon birth.
  - ii. That all knowledge come through the 5 senses (experience supersedes thought).
- B. Rene' Descartes - stressed thought over experience.
- C. Before we can make sense of the world, we must have some knowledge with which we can evaluate the world we observe.
  - i. "Rational" in two senses. First, the normal sense, we are creatures of reason that carry out our daily activities.
  - ii. Second, we have "objective" rational thought. We can reason (cogitate) about outside our consciousness. The "object" of our reasoning and outside of personal experience.

## V. THE LAWS OF THOUGHT

- A. To be rational we must use some type of thought process.
- B. Aristotle first enumerated these "laws." He didn't invent them but recognized that they were implicitly present. They are the foundation for rational thought.
  - i. The Law of Identity - affirms, "A thing is itself."
  - ii. The Law of Non-Contradiction - "A thing cannot be both itself and not itself at the same time in the same sense." This also applies to propositions, "a precisely stated proposition cannot be both true and false."
  - iii. The Law of the Excluded Middle, "Things must either be itself or not itself." Also applies to propositions, "A precisely stated proposition must either be true or false."
- C. An Appropriate quote from Hegel on this point, "What is rational is actual, and what is actual is rational. On this conviction the plain man like the philosopher, takes his stand, and from it, philosophy starts its study of the universe of mind as well as the universe of nature.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. We are wonderfully and fearfully made. Let's dive deep into our own nature as we discover more about God's nature. Come let us reason together.



2. Recommend Reading List - There are many good sources to study for a much deeper probe into this topic. Here are but a few I have found useful over the years.
  - a. Understanding the Times, David A. Noebel.
  - b. Introduction to Logic, Irving M. Copi.
  - c. Ethics: Alternatives and Issues, Norman Geisler.
  - d. After Fundamentalism, Bernard Ramm.
  - e. No Apologies, Kevin Cauley.
  - f. Introduction to Philosophy: A Christian Perspective, Norman Geisler & Paul D. Feinberg.
  - g. Rightly Dividing the Word: Vol. I (General Hermeneutics), Vol. II (Special Hermeneutics) - Shenandoah Lectures (1990&1991 - Terry M. Hightower ed.).

# THE LAW OF EXCLUDED MIDDLE

*Joshua Rodriguez*

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Logic is the science which investigates the process of thinking, and “the business of thought is to furnish the mind with truth and knowledge” (Creighton 316). It is necessary to understand how the various parts of knowledge are inter-related and dependent on one another. The end result is judgement expressed through a proposition.
2. Judgement is the elementary process of thinking. It is an act of joining or separating two concepts or ideas. The ideas of which a judgement is composed are pieces of knowledge which precede the judgement itself. It is therefore concluded that logic begins with concepts, and the first logical act consists of apprehending the ideas or concepts. Each judgement made and concluded builds up a system of knowledge.
3. The Laws of Thought are foundational to the process of judgement. They help as a first step in the conception and simple apprehension of concepts, which are the elements out of which judgements are compounded. They express an absolute standard for correct thinking and reasoning.
  - a. The Law of Identity distinguishes and establishes the fixed characteristic of any concept. “Everything remains identical with itself’...What is meant by these statements is, that in all argument, we necessarily assume, if we are to reason at all, that each thing possesses a permanent character, and does not pass now into this, now into that at random. If any knowledge is to be possible at all, the character of things must remain fixed” (Creighton 343-344).
  - b. The Law of Contradiction demonstrates that “judgments contradictorily opposed to each other cannot both be true” (www.encyclopedia.com). Every statement is either true or false, it cannot be sort of true.
  - c. And the Law of Excluded Middle affirms that “judgments opposed as contradictories cannot both be false, nor can they admit the truth of a third or middle judgment, but one or the other must be true, and the truth of the one follows from the falsehood of the other” (www.encyclopedia.com). No judgement can simultaneously be true and false.
  - d. For example,
    - i. The Law of Identity: God is a God of truth (Deu. 32:4).
    - ii. The Law of Contradiction: God can not lie (Heb. 6:17-18).

- iii. The Law of Excluded Middle: There is no variance in Him (Jas. 1:17).
  - iv. Upon apprehending these concepts by the laws of thought, we make a judgement: God is true (John 3:33).
- 4. The Law of Excluded Middle is necessary to distinguish truth from error. We cannot believe what we choose at will, we can only believe the facts which are known to be true. Lest we become as heretics, subverted and self-condemned, we must learn that truth is truth, that there is only one truth, and that truth does not change.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. THIS THEN, IS THE FOCUS OF THIS STUDY:**

- A. “Teach me good judgement and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments” (Psa. 119:66).
- B. Teach - refers to the act of teaching or training another in a skill or concept. This term also refers to the act of training a soldier.
- C. Judgment - it is used for the act of eating food, which incorporates the process of “tasting” the flavor. This sense is employed in comparison with the function of the ear testing words (Job 12:11; 34:3). Hence, the word expanded to mean the idea of evaluation and decision, i.e., discernment.
- D. Knowledge - the contemplative perception of the wise man. Refers to the data one has collected or observed regarding the world around oneself.
- E. Believe - the act of believing something is true. The verb applies to ideas, facts, words, or people that can be depended on as reliable and trustworthy.

#### **II. CHRISTIANS MUST GOVERN THEIR MINDS ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF THOUGHT.**

- A. While the world advances in speculation and theories, we remain firm on the veracity of God’s word.
- B. Ephesians 4:17-21. As disciples of Christ, we are directed to develop a renewed pattern of thinking. We have “learned Christ.” We have “heard Him” and “have been taught by Him.” This means, Jesus has instructed us concerning the realities of life and the design of salvation. Since this is true, we should not be as the world who’s thoughts are without substance. An inability to discern between truth and error will prevent us from learning how to live in control

- of our passions. Disobedience cannot be good and evil at the same time. It's either one or the other. Yet, due to an inability to think logically many rationalize, "Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose damnation is just" (Rom. 3:8).
- C. Romans 1:21-22. The Laws of Thought are universal truths that ought to govern our judgments. Yet, the Scriptures reveal the nature of men who disregard these truths. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." The term "imagination" means, "to think or reason with thoroughness and completeness-to think out carefully..." (Louw Nida dialogismos). However, due to their unwillingness to accept the conclusion of the facts unreasonable men allowed themselves to follow foolish lines of reasoning. These words were written to inform us of denying the Law of Excluded Middle. Either the universe was created by Jehovah God or it was not; it could not create itself. The conclusion of self-creation violates a scientific law, the Law of Causality (cf. Psa. 100:3; Heb. 3:4).
- D. Job 5:27. Though Eliphaz called for the use of logic, he did not reason correctly concerning the activities of God (cf. Job 42:8-9). His statement nonetheless is true. We must search things out and conclude the truth for ourselves.
- E. Ephesians 5:17. God's word teaches us to think logically and critically. We must "understand" the will of the Lord. This means, "the assembling of individual facts into an organized whole, as collecting the pieces of a puzzle and putting them together" (Zodhiates suniemi). The Laws of Thought are foundational to judgment.

### III. THE COMMANDS OF GOD ARE ESTABLISHED TRUTHS.

- A. "The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether" (Psa. 19:9).
- B. Psalm 119:89. The word of God is absolute. It gives any honest student the ability to reason without fear of "fuzzy logic" (intrinsically imprecise language). Unlike the imprecisions of Cosmology in Science or the ever changing theories of Psychology, God's word is unchangeable. In connection with this thought, the Scriptures explain, "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is truth" (Psa. 119:142). In other words, the ethical standards of God will never change because they are

reality. The other systems of morality or cultural traditions are social constructs that have deviated from the will of God.

- C. Psalm 33:4; Psalm 119:160; Isaiah 45:19; John 17:17. We can have confidence in the word of God because His word is “right” and “true.” Hence, the Laws of Thought help us clearly identify, determine correctness, and the immutability of the things found in God’s word. Upon determining the “rightness,” or morally straight nature of His commands, we are then able to explain the “truthfulness” of God’s word without difficulty. The problem we often face is the ability to convey those truths with precision. When we become proficient in accurately defining the concepts of God’s word the judgments we proclaim will be without error.

#### **IV. USING THE LAW OF EXCLUDED MIDDLE TO FORMULATE GOOD JUDGMENTS.**

- A. With the truth of God’s word, extracted by the correct use of logical principles, we will be able to faithfully teach the doctrines of Christ and His righteousness.
- B. Doctrinal example, the dwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Bible clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit dwells in us, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16). This passage is a matter of fact but does not explain how He dwells in us. By using the Law of Excluded Middle, we can arrive at a proper judgment regarding the manner of the Spirit’s dwelling. Remember, “judgments opposed as contradictories cannot both be false, nor can they admit the truth of a third or middle judgment, but one or the other must be true, and the truth of the one follows from the falsehood of the other” ([www.encyclopedia.com](http://www.encyclopedia.com)). Either the Holy Spirit literally dwells in our physical body or He does not. These are the two judgments opposed as contradictories, which cannot both be false. However, one or the other must be true, and the truth of the one follows from the falsehood of the other. The first proposition is false for the following reasons.
  - i. The Holy Spirit is Deity (Acts 5:3-4; cf. Mat. 28:19; 1 John 5:7). His existence is intrinsically supernatural and is outside the realm of natural law (1 John 5:7).
  - ii. Miracles ceased when the written revelation of God was completed at the end of the 1st century (1 Cor. 13:8-13; cf. Rev. 22:18-19).
  - iii. The human body is earthly and is bound by natural law (1 Cor. 15:47-49; Gen. 2:7).

- C. If we conclude the Holy Spirit literally dwells in our physical body, then we affirm a miracle at the entrance of a supernatural Spirit. According to the Law of Excluded Middle, the truth of the opposing judgment follows from the falsehood of the other. Subsequently, the Holy Spirit does not literally dwell in our physical body. A third judgment cannot be affirmed due to the fact that the second proposition is true. The Law of Contradiction confirms that every statement is either true or false. And, the Law of Identity establishes the fixed characteristic of this truth, the Spirit does not literally dwell in our physical body.
- D. Moral example, the reliability of our word. As Christians, we are to put away lying and all deception (Eph. 4:25). This is especially true for the benefit of trustworthiness in the gospel (2 Cor. 4:2). By the use of the Law of Excluded Middle, Jesus explains, “But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Mat. 5:37). Again, “judgments opposed as contradictories cannot both be false, nor can they admit the truth of a third or middle judgment, but one or the other must be true, and the truth of the one follows from the falsehood of the other” (www.encyclopedia.com). Either we are going to do what we say, or we are not. These are the two opposing judgments, which cannot both be false. We cannot say we will do something and not follow through. If this were true, then we could not trust the teaching of salvation nor the promises of God (2 Cor. 1:17-20). Likewise, if promises are made based on things you do not possess, you make matters worse by promising goods you cannot deliver. If we develop a reputation of this nature, we will not be suitable in evangelism, church leadership, or any relationship (cf. Acts 6:3).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. In conclusion, we are reminded of the words of Psalm 119:30, “I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.”
  - a. Choosing truth is a conscience effort that must be made. We will not stumble on the truth, we must actually study God’s word and meditate upon it (cf. 1 Tim. 4:15).
  - b. The judgments of God must be logically examined so as to learn the rightness and truth of His will.
2. The Laws of Thought are fundamental to our approach of ascertaining truth. Yet, we often neglect to consider the commands of God from its perspective. May we thoroughly investigate the word of God and come to the knowledge of truth!

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# TEACHING THE NEXT GENERATION TO THINK

Keith A. Mosher Sr.

## INTRODUCTION:

1. There is only one perfect parent and that is God. The rest of us have a lot to learn and this generation (and probably the last several), for the most part, have not been educating children to think properly.
2. Parents should be able to say, with the apostle John, who was actually writing about brethren, that: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth” (3 John 4; KJV).
3. Parents, along with all who teach children, must give greater thought and prayer to what education is and why so many young people, today, seem unable to think, calculate, or even read properly.
4. Sometimes children are sent to Bible camp, or they take part in a “Bible bowl, or are even home-schooled in secular matters, and they learn the “rules,” but just as with the rich young ruler, something is lacking (cf. Mat. 19:16-22). [Note that the latter account follows teaching on marriage and children.]
5. The first thing that must be ingrained in a child is that God is preeminent. He is not somewhere on a “top ten list” of things to think about (Mat. 22:36-40).

## DISCUSSION:

- I. **MOSES GAVE EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS TO THE JEWS ON HOW TO EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN (Deu. 6:4-15).**
  - A. The shema (hear) recorded at Deuteronomy 6:4 is the first passage taught to Jewish children: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.”
    - i. The shema is imperative and not a suggestion. It was to be taught at all times, whether in the house, or out walking, or whether it was day or night (Deu. 6:6).
    - ii. The concept to be taught was the unity of God. [The passage is not discussing numbers of “gods.”] In other words, that to God alone was honor due, was to be the intent of the instruction (cf. Zec. 14:9).



- iii. Note that the concept was to get the children to imbibe the thought that was also to be the thinking of the parents, for the words to be taught had first to be in the minds of the fathers and mothers (Deu. 6:5).
- B. The news today is that America is in a sorry state when one measures modern “morals.”
- i. The reasons given are the usual: parents who lack values and schools that neglect ethical teaching. The favorite culprit today is “family breakdown.” Bennett wrote: “Most of our social pathologies—crime, imprisonment rates, welfare, drug abuse, sexually transmitted diseases—are manifestations, direct and indirect, of the crack-up of the modern American family” (The Broken Hearth: Reversing the Moral Collapse of the American Family).
  - ii. However, there is another side to the above coin. Too many adults have erroneous views of morality, whether in a one-parent or two-parent home. Ethical development is rooted in emotional development and children do have obstacles in single parent, or absentee parent homes. But the crux of the matter is that cynicism, shame, and distrust, apparent in the minds of children, can result from divorce and alcoholism in parents, but can also be found in children in a two-parent home where there is constant anger, moodiness, and fighting by the parents.
  - iii. For a child to think about compassion, respect, fairness, and all other needed virtues requires a pattern shown in the home. The concept that just family breakdown is the culprit has a large hole in it. For a child needs only one adult in whom the youngster can place trust, and that adult needs to be ethical, mature, and able to listen and encourage. [The author is the product of a one-parent home.]
  - iv. One other thought here: Parental depression is a large cause of wrong thinking in children. Such parents are moody, and may even abuse the offspring, and studies show that such children are more likely to suffer behavior problems and five times more likely to abuse drugs when the parents are depressed complainers.
  - v. In order for any parent to teach a child to think, that adult needs development in ethics, and love of God. Only a spiritually educated adult could ever pass on to his child what Paul meant by writing: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest; whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if

there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phi. 4:8; emphasis added).

- C. Modern adults need to be far less narcissistic and come to realize that being generous, and fair, and ethical and Christian are constant qualities to be developed.
  - i. Moses insisted, by inspiration, that thoughts of God should be upon parents’ hearts (Deu. 6:6b). The Bible “heart” is the seat of the emotions, the center of one’s personality, and the entire self-consciousness; all of the former characteristics of the parent must be involved in training a child to think in the same way. The righteous parent meditates on God’s word, day and night (cf. Psa. 1:1-2).
    - 1. Parents face the danger of materialism (Deu. 6:10-12) or the children will quickly learn that a dollar is much more important than God.
    - 2. Parents who “fear” God, and serve God, and worship God will impress on children the same qualities of life (Deu. 6:13). The practical manifestations of love for God are what one knows and about which one converses.
    - 3. Moses added: “And when thy son askest thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?” The only one who can answer correctly, of course, is the righteous parent (Deu. 6:25).

## II. WHAT ABOUT TEACHING A CHILD TO THINK ETHICALLY?

- A. One would like to draw an imaginary halo around the heads of one’s children, especially if the halo came with angelic behavior. [Joseph and Edna Josephson run the Institute of Ethics in Los Angeles, California. They teach that there are two central concepts in teaching children about ethics.]
  - i. Parents need to have a focused idea on what is important (cf. Gen. 20:11).
  - ii. Parents must constantly enforce said values associating positive and negative consequences to the child’s actions. [The institute lists six “pillars of character” and the outline that follows uses them for this point.]
- B. A child must, first of all, learn to be trustworthy. Honesty means that one does not cheat, steal, or be disloyal to God, family, and

- friends. So, is the parent trustworthy and can he demand obedience (cf. Mat. 21:28-30)?
- i. A child, especially those brainwashed in public education where values are self-determined, has to be taught to think that character counts.
  - ii. The child will have to be questioned as to what certain things mean to him, since public education has opted for a “your truth is yours” and “my truth is mine” ethic. [For example, one can teach a Sunday school class today and have the children smile and agree with everything; but, at the same time, the child can think that what is taught is the teacher’s value, but “I have my own and I am not free to think for myself, if I give in to the teacher’s authority.” [So-called “values clarification” has been taught in public education since 1973.]
- C. In the second place, a child has to be taught respect. The child has to be able to know that there are differences, and he must be tolerant of such. He will have to be taught good manners instead of bad language.
- i. Values have to be enforced by rewarding good behavior and punishing bad behavior. Such enforcement has to be consistent and fair (cf. Rom. 2:11).
  - ii. All bad behavior should be treated in the same way and have the same consequence.
- D. Third, a child must learn to think responsibly. This follows respect, above, and adds the teaching that one is to do what one is supposed to do, not what just pleases one (cf. Mat. 7:12).
- i. The parent must be an advocate for character by modeling what is important conduct. [When the phone rings, the parent does not tell the child to tell the caller, “I am not home;” and, the parent does not speed when driving.]
  - ii. Be consistent, Mom and Dad, and expect the same from the children!
- E. Fourth, the child must learn to think about fairness (cf. Rom. 2:3). He has to know that he must “play by the rules.” [Sharing is a difficult thought process for most children.]
- i. See Matthew 20:28. Service (and act of fairness) can be taught by making the child the one who serves the meals for

one day, and eventually he will start looking forward to the praise received for his efforts.

- ii. A cognate of this idea about fairness is that a child must realize that he is not to manipulate or take advantage of others.
- F. The fifth “pillar” in thinking ethically is labeled caring (cf. 1 Pet. 5:7). Kindness is a learned trait that can be passed from mother to daughter (Tit. 2:4). This thought process includes learning to forgive.
- G. The sixth concept is labeled as citizenship (cf. 1 Pet. 2:13).
- i. A child can learn to do his share (i.e., vote for example).
  - ii. A child can learn to be a good neighbor, citizen, and protector of the environment. [How many children have seen their parents throw trash out of a car window?]
- H. Building character does not happen in a day. Integrity is not easy to attain and there is always room for improvement. Parents, start where you are and do the right thing in all situations and eventually the thought processes and the behavior you would like to see in your “little angel” will be self-policing efforts.

### III. THE BIBLE HAS MUCH TO TEACH ABOUT THINKING.

- A. There is false flattery in some thoughts (cf. Num. 24:11).
- B. There is denial present in some minds (cf. 2 Sam. 5:6).
- C. There are thoughts that presume (2 Kgs. 5:11).
- D. There is evil pride in the minds of many (cf. Est. 6:6).
- E. There can be self-deception unless the person changes his thought processes (cf. Est. 4:14).
- F. There exists the ability, in the mind, to recognize beauty (cf. Gen. 38:15).
- G. What one really is, is known only to the one thinking (cf. Pro. 23:7).
- H. A person can think of himself in a deceptive way (Mat. 3:9).
- I. There are numerous verses that are the record of Jesus’ saying to others about “thinking to self” (cf. Mat. 18:12; 21:28; et al).
- J. One can think evil as well as do such (Mat. 9:4).
- K. One can elevate self in one’s own mind (Rom. 12:3).

#### IV. TEACHING A CHILD TO THINK IS NOT A SUGGESTION BUT AN IMPERATIVE.

- A. The motivation for a Christian to offer himself to God is found in an understanding of how merciful God has been (Rom. 12:1).
- i. Paul had set forth the thesis, and proved it, that being in Christ is the only way to be saved (Romans, chapters 1-8).
  - ii. Paul then proceeded to examine the complaint of the Jews that God rejected them when the gospel replaced Judaism (Romans, chapters 9-11).
  - iii. Paul's conclusion, stated in Romans 12:1ff. is that God was merciful to all, Jew and Gentile alike, when sending His Son, and a Christian should offer himself and renew his mind [i.e., change his thinking; Rom. 12:2).
- B. Therefore, every generation of God's people must learn how to think differently from the world, and not give in to conforming to worldly ways such as immodesty, immorality, disrespect, and sin in general.
- i. A child, whose parents desire him to become a Christian, should be instructed (trained) to have a life wholly surrendered to God (Pro. 3:5-6).
  - ii. Children learn to be "spiritual agnostics" from parents who only attend services once a week or seldom go. Apathy is taught when the adults use about 95 percent of their time for the world and a few moments for God. When the child leaves home, he already is fully instructed in "atheism" by such training as the latter.
  - iii. It is not always the case that those who "grow up in the church" leave her because of the apathy of parents, for it is possible to apostatize. But studies show (from a Florida congregation's efforts) that where both parents are faithful, 89 percent of the children remained faithful. Such offspring were trained to think about God as being in all the activities of life, not just Sunday a.m. (cf. Jam. 4:17).
  - iv. I believe there is no better place to help children to think about God at all times than in daily family worship (cf. Rom. 11:26). Families should read the Bible, pray, and sing together, even on a vacation trip.
  - v. Parents must be willing to discipline in order to get the child to think correctly about spirituality and morality (Pro. 22:15). However, discipline should be applied to sinful acts not accidents (Pro. 23:13-14).

- vi. Acting out anger is not a way to get a child to think in a fine, emotionally controlled way (Eph. 4:31; 6:1-4; Pro. 14:29; Col. 3:8).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Training a child to “think” begins with adults who are continuously developing their own ethical and moral values.
2. Under the law of Moses, parents were instructed to teach children at all times (Deu. 6:1-14).
3. Even secular institutes are again recognizing that ethical values must be taught to each generation.
4. Christianity is a taught religion and so the Bible is replete with verses about proper thinking.
5. What do you think, parents, should you be training your offspring on how to think?

# THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A PATTERN

B.J. Clarke

## INTRODUCTION:

1. The evidence is all around us. We see it in the skies above (Psa. 19:1ff), in the earth beneath, and in the complexity of the human body (Psa. 139:13-16). The evidence proclaims loud and clear that there is a God in heaven (Dan. 2:28).
2. This raises further questions.
  - a. Does the Supreme Being, Who made this world, know that I exist? Does He care about me?
  - b. Is there anything He wants me to know? Is there anything He wants me to do?
  - c. Nature tells us that God is—Scripture reveals Who God is (1 Cor. 2:7-16).
3. The Scriptures contain 66 books, 1189 chapters and 31,102 verses. Do all of these verses serve equally as the pattern for man today?
  - a. God has spoken to mankind at various times in various ways (Heb. 1:1-2).
  - b. The OT Scriptures were written for our learning, but not for our law (Rom. 15:4).
  - c. The Law of Moses was nailed to the cross and taken out of the way (Col. 2:14ff; Heb. 8:6-13).
  - d. The New Testament of Jesus Christ was probated on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and by means of the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42; 20:28-32), we know how to behave in the house of God, the church (1 Tim. 3:15).
4. Some ridicule the idea that the ancient New Testament could be a pattern for the church today.
  - a. They scoff, "Which New Testament church is the pattern? Do you want to imitate Jerusalem, with its neglect of the widows? Or, do you want to be like Corinth, with its divisions, lawsuits among brethren, abuse of the Lord's supper, denial of the resurrection, etc., etc., etc.?"
  - b. They ask, "Why would we want to use these churches, with their human frailties, as a standard by which to measure ourselves? How

can these imperfect churches possibly serve as a model or pattern for us to imitate?”

5. The above questions cloud the real issue of what it means to restore the New Testament pattern for the Lord’s church.
  - a. The plea to restore the New Testament church is not a plea to imitate every single thing that a local church of the New Testament is recorded to have done.
  - b. Rather, the plea to restore the New Testament church is a plea to imitate the churches of the New Testament insofar as they imitated the will of God. Just as Paul was to be imitated only as he imitated Christ (1 Cor. 11:1), so, likewise, the churches of the New Testament should be imitated only wherein they followed the counsel of God!
  - c. The apostolic pattern, recorded in Holy Scripture, makes it abundantly clear that we should not imitate Jerusalem’s neglect of widows, nor should we emulate Corinth’s vices as described in 1 and 2 Corinthians. The very fact that we know that we should not imitate these churches in these areas, proves that a pattern exists whereby we may determine wherein a church should be imitated.
  - d. In short, in determining whether a church in the New Testament should be imitated in a particular action, all we have to do is read our Bibles and determine whether the conduct of said church is approved or condemned!
6. Hence, in this message, based upon our investigation of the inspired Word of God, we are examining the following question, “How well are we following the NT as our pattern?”

#### **DISCUSSION:**

- I. **ARE WE FOLLOWING THE NT PATTERN FOR DISSEMINATING THE GOSPEL?**
  - A. Jesus expected His disciples to take the gospel to every creature of all nations (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15).
    - i. This preaching of the gospel was to begin in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4; Luke 24:47) and spread from there to Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8).
    - ii. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1:21).
    - iii. Jesus has entrusted the stewardship of the gospel unto earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7).



- B. How well did the first century church do in obeying the great commission?
- i. The Word was preached on Pentecost and about 3000 gladly received the Word and were baptized (Acts 2:14-41).
  - ii. In the days immediately following Pentecost, the church continued to grow on a daily basis (Acts 2:47).
  - iii. In the weeks, months, and years which followed Pentecost, the church continued to multiply and grow on a daily basis (Acts 4:4; 5:14; 6:1,7; 8:12; 9:31, 42; 11:19-24; 12:24; 13:44-52; 16:5; 19:20).
  - iv. Paul affirmed that the gospel had gone “unto the ends of the world” (Rom. 10:18) and that it had been “preached to every creature which is under heaven” (Col. 1:23).
- C. How well are we doing in obeying the great commission?
- i. From 1945-1965, the churches of Christ were reported to be the fastest growing religious group in the United States.
  - ii. However, recent statistics reveal that we are not even among the top 10 list of religious groups who are growing the fastest. Are we growing on a daily basis? Are we turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6)? For that matter, are we even turning our cities and counties upside down?
  - iii. Some popular excuses are often heard in defense of why we are not growing today as did the 1st century church. Consider a few of these excuses.
    1. They had miracles in the 1st century—Such a statement demonstrates a misunderstanding of the purpose of New Testament miracles (Mark 16:20; John 20:30-31; Heb. 2:3-4).
      - a. Furthermore, miracles are not the explanation for the rapid growth of the Lord’s church from 1945-1965, for they didn’t even exist at that time.
      - b. Though we do not have miracles today, we have technology and mass media outlets available to us that were not even dreamed of in the 1st century.
    2. We live in a world that is hostile to the gospel—Compare our world with that of the 1st century. Talk about a hostile world!
      - a. Jesus was crucified for His religious teachings and His life (Mat. 27:22; John 1:10-11).
      - b. Jesus warned His apostles that the world would hate them and that they would be killed

- by those who thought they were doing God a service (John 15:18-20; 16:2).
- c. How many of us can identify with the suffering Paul described in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28?
3. We're growing spiritually and that's what really counts.
    - a. What is wrong with growing in number also? The early church grew both spiritually and numerically!
    - b. Acts 16:5 describes a daily growth of the church almost 20 years after Pentecost.
    - c. Whereas we should not emphasize numbers for the sake of numbers, we should place a value on each and every soul around us.
- D. Why is there such a vast difference between the growth of the early church and that of the Lord's church today?
- i. It all boils down to one word—commitment.
  - ii. The first century disciples were so committed to the cause of Jesus Christ that they were willing to suffer physical persecution, and even death, for Him (Acts 5:28-42; 7: 54-60; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 2:10). Someone has said that the problem with Christians today is that nobody wants to kill them anymore!
  - iii. Too many today “profess that they know God, but in works they deny him being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit. 1:16). They “talk the talk” but do not “walk the walk.” They call Jesus “Lord”, but they do not do the things that He says (Mat. 7:21-24; Luke 6:46).
  - iv. Many of us are not willing even to suffer verbal persecution, much less physical persecution, for the cause of Christ. Many of us are not willing to sacrifice an evening of television, much less our very lives, in order that we might advance the cause of Christ!
  - v. When we sow the seed of the kingdom, the Word of God, (Luke 8:11) bountifully, we shall reap a bountiful harvest. Conversely, when we sow the Word sparingly, we shall reap sparingly. The first century church spread the Word far and wide (1 The. 1:8) and that is why the church grew abundantly.
  - vi. Similarly, when the church of Christ grew so much from 1945-1965 it was because the members possessed an abundance of Bible knowledge and a commitment to sow it abundantly into the hearts of men.

- vii. If we want the Lord's church to grow today, we must be more diligent in broadcasting the seed of the kingdom!

## **II. ARE WE FOLLOWING THE NT PATTERN FOR DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN FAITH?**

- A. Jesus expected the first century believers to teach, baptize, and then teach those who had been baptized "to observe all things" commanded by Christ (Mat. 28:20). The first century church did not practice a "dip 'em and drop 'em" sort of approach to evangelism.
- B. The first century church gave great emphasis to developing the faith of those who had been baptized.
  - i. After the 3000 were baptized "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42).
  - ii. The early disciples "ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42).
  - iii. After their establishment, the churches, throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, were edified (Acts 9:31).
  - iv. Paul and Barnabas made a special effort to confirm the souls of the disciples and to exhort them to continue in the faith (Acts 14:23; 15:41).
- C. How are we doing in "keeping the saved, saved"?
  - i. So many times, we see churches advertising the number of baptisms they have had during a given year. However, a close look at the attendance does not reveal significant increase. This is often because, while some are being converted, some are falling away, or it is because some obey the gospel, believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away (Luke 8:13-14).
  - ii. We must endeavor to do a better job in fulfilling the second part of the great commission!

## **III. ARE WE DUPLICATING THE NT APOSTOLIC PATTERN?**

- A. In order to guide the infant church, God gave some "apostles" (Eph. 4:8). The apostles were especially guided by the Holy Spirit to remember all that Jesus had taught during His earthly ministry, and to receive the revelation of all truth, i.e., things that Jesus had not taught them during His earthly ministry (John 14:26; 16:12-14).
- B. The first century church followed steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine.

- i. They followed the apostle's doctrine in organizing the church with a plurality of qualified elders overseeing the local flock with deacons, evangelists and members serving under their oversight (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-13; Phi. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
  - ii. They followed the apostle's doctrine in worshipping in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). They gathered together on the first day of the week to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), to pray (Acts 2:42), to partake of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7), to give of their means (1 Cor. 16:1-2) and to hear the gospel preached (Acts 20:7).
- C. How are we doing in holding fast to the pattern of sound words (2 Tim. 1:13)?
  - i. Many churches have abandoned the practice of distinctive New Testament Christianity and have sought to become like the denominations round about them (Cf. Jdg. 2:12; 1 Sam. 8:5, 20; 2 Kgs. 17:15).
  - ii. The pattern has been abandoned, and even ridiculed, by certain individuals who claim to be preachers of the gospel.
  - iii. We must be willing to hold fast to the pattern, even if we experience persecution as a consequence (2 Cor. 11:23-28; 2 Tim. 3:12).

#### IV. ARE WE FOLLOWING THE NT PATTERN FOR DEMONSTRATING CHRISTIAN LOVE?

- A. John, the apostle of love, wrote much about the importance of Christian love.
  - i. We are commanded to love one another (John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:11, 14).
  - ii. True love is a giving love (1 John 3:17-18).
  - iii. True love does not seek its own will, but rather seeks the welfare of others (1 Cor. 13:5; Phil. 2:3-4; 1 Cor. 12:26; 1 Pet. 3:8; 4:8-9).
- B. The first century church is depicted as practicing such love.
  - i. They demonstrated their love for one another. The record says that "all who believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need" (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; 11:29-30; Rom. 15:25-27).

- ii. They demonstrated their love for all men. (Matt. 5:43ff; 2 Cor. 9:13; Gal. 6:10; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Tim. 6:17-18; Jas. 1:27).

C. How do we measure up today in the demonstration of Christian love?

- i. Do we love in word only (Jas. 2:15-16)? Or, do we sacrifice to help others in the household of faith?
- ii. Can the world see our love for them and be moved by it to want to know more about Christ and His church?

**V. ARE WE FOLLOWING THE NT PATTERN IN DEFENDING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH?**

A. Jesus warned His disciples that they would face opposition from false teachers (Mat. 7:15-20), and from those who would attack Christianity and its followers (John 15:20-25; 16:1-23).

B. Many of the first century churches defended the faith against foes, both within and without the church.

- i. They defended the faith in the face of opposition from the high priest, the Sadducees, chief priests, elders, and the members of the council (Acts 4-7).
- ii. They defended the faith in the face of those who desired to kill them (Acts 9:23-29).
- iii. They defended the faith in the presence of the Judaizing teachers who sought to bind circumcision upon the Gentiles (Acts 11:1-4; 15:1-2, 5-31; Romans, Galatians).
- iv. They defended the faith in the synagogue of the Jews (Acts 17:2-3, 17; 18:4; 19:8-9).
- v. They defended the faith in the presence of certain philosophers (Acts 17:18-32).
- vi. They defended the faith by denouncing the idolatry at Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41).
- vii. They defended the faith in the presence of high-ranking government officials (Acts 21:37-26:32).
- viii. They defended the faith by marking and avoiding false teachers (Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 1:18-20; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 1:15; 2:16-18; Tit. 1:9-11; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 John 2:18-22; 4:1; 2 John 7-9; Jude 4, 10-19; Rev. 2:2, 6).

- C. How are we doing in defending the Christian faith?
  - i. That all depends upon about whom you are talking about! Some churches are diligent in their defense of the faith. They are “set for the defense of the gospel” (Phi. 1:17, KJV).
  - ii. On the other hand, there are churches today who are guilty of tolerating the presence of false doctrine and false teachers in their midst (Cf. Rev. 2:14-15, 20).
  - iii. We need to keep on keeping on and not be weary in well-doing! We need to try to jolt some of the churches on the fringe into coming out and standing for the truth!

**VI. ARE WE FOLLOWING THE NT PATTERN IN DISCIPLINING THE DISORDERLY?**

- A. Because God is love (1 John 4:8), He desires what is best for us. Sometimes what is best for us is rebuke and chastening (Heb. 12:5-6; Rev. 3:19).
- B. The first century church was instructed by God to discipline the disorderly.
  - i. Jesus provided a procedure whereby personal offenses might be rectified, but said that if one refuses to reconcile the problem, the church should regard him as an heathen man and a publican, i.e., not have fellowship with him (Mat. 18:15-17).
  - ii. Ananias and Sapphira were severely disciplined for lying (Acts 5:1-11).
  - iii. The church at Corinth was admonished for not disciplining the disorderly member among them who was committing fornication with his father’s wife. Paul commanded them to withdraw fellowship from the man in an attempt to save his soul (1 Cor. 5:4-13).
  - iv. Paul wrote the Thessalonians, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 The. 3:6).
- C. How do we measure up in the practice of disciplining the disorderly?
  - i. Sadly, churches which practice church discipline are very much in the minority.

- ii. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 has become a forgotten commandment.
- iii. The philosophy of the world, that it would be unloving to withdraw fellowship from a member of the church, has infiltrated the body of Christ. We have been conditioned to believe that the practice of church discipline is unloving, and that it will drive people away from the church rather than drawing them back to it.
- iv. We must have the faith that God's way is the best and only way; and practice His will.

**VII. ARE WE FOLLOWING THE NT PATTERN IN DEVELOPING DAILY DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST?**

- A. God has always expected for man's devotion to Him to be shown on a daily basis (Num. 4:16; 28:24; 29:6; Psa. 61:8; 86:3; 88:9).
- B. The first century church often demonstrated a daily devotion to the cause of Christ.
  - i. They took up their crosses and died daily in order to follow Christ (Luke 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:31; Gal. 2:20).
  - ii. They engaged in a daily study of the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).
  - iii. They were involved in daily service (Acts 6:1).
  - iv. They were steadfast in their devotion to prayer (Acts 2:42; 12:5).
  - v. They taught the gospel on a daily basis (Acts 5:42).
  - vi. They would often dispute the Scriptures on a daily basis (Acts 17:17; 19:9).
- C. How do we measure up in the practice of daily Christianity?
  - i. Too many practice a "Sunday morning only" brand of religion!
  - ii. Even some members, who are faithful to attend all Sunday and Wednesday services of the church, neglect to take up their cross and follow Jesus during the other days of the week.
  - iii. Let us work, and pray, and labor every day, in the vineyard of the Lord!

**CONCLUSION:**

1. We can read our New Testaments and learn when God was pleased with the first century church, and when He was not.
2. It is perfectly legitimate for us to imitate the excellence of the first century church.
3. Paul told the church at Corinth to examine themselves whether they be in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5).
4. So, likewise, we would do well to examine ourselves and to measure our progress by comparing it to the pattern of first century churches with whom God was well-pleased.
5. Let us endeavor to duplicate the pattern of the NT church by being evangelistic, compassionate, loving, distinctive, militant, and devoted.



# HOW DO WE COME TO KNOW THINGS?

Israel Rodriguez

## INTRODUCTION:

1. As creatures driven by curiosity, we feel most alive when—through the exercise of right reason—one comes to know the mysteries of life. The exhilaration of knowing can only be surpassed by an understanding of its process—how do we come to know things?
2. No discussion on the subject of reason would be complete without an examination of how we know what we know or what may simply be referred to as a theory of knowledge.
  - a. All information can be classified under five headings: metaphysics, epistemology, logic, ethics and aesthetics.
  - b. Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that examines the nature of knowledge, its presuppositions and foundations, and its extent and validity (American Heritage Dictionary, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition).
3. Reason—as the power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgments by a process of logic (New Oxford American Dictionary)—is exclusive to the human race and the means by which one acquires knowledge.
  - a. Mankind and animals have different intellectual capacities (cf. Rom. 12:1 “reasonable service” (KJV, NKJV) vs. 2 Pet. 2:12 “creatures without reason”).
  - b. Mankind was created in the “image” and “likeness” of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Created in God’s image and likeness signifies that human beings are representative figures that resemble God’s nature. But in what way are humans like God?
    - i. First, God is Spirit (John 4:24). This indicates that He is not made up of anything material. Therefore, God’s image obviously does not consist in man’s body which was formed from earthly matter (Gen. 2:7).
    - ii. Second, humans are “spirits in body” (Num. 16:22; Jas. 2:26a). This demonstrates that mankind is not only physical but spiritual (cf. Mat. 4:4). Thus, if the similarity between God and man is not physical, it must be spiritual.
  - c. Humans are like God in that we are spiritual, intellectual and moral beings. The common denominator of these qualities is thought. Our ability to produce ideas by thinking demonstrates how we are most

- like God. It is not surprising, then, to discover that both God and man are capable of thinking, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah...” (Isa. 1:18). The word “reason” in this text conveys the idea of “two people arguing their case” (Zodhiates’ Complete Word Study Bible). In other words, what God is saying through Isaiah is, “Let us debate our case in court” (cf. Mic. 6:2). Note the insight we receive concerning the relationship between thought and language from this text. There can be no thinking without language and language implies thinking, however clumsy or foolish it may be at times (cf. Pro. 18:13). When God created mankind in His image and likeness He created us as spiritual beings endowed with the ability of thought and language.
- i. God and mankind are spirit (John 4:24; 1 John 4:1).
  - ii. God and mankind are mind (1 Cor. 2:10-11; Eph. 4:23).
  - iii. God and mankind are moral (Gen. 3:22).
- d. Humanity’s faculty of reason makes knowledge possible (1 John 5:20).
4. Knowledge is facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. It can also mean what is known in a particular field or in total; facts and information. Philosophically, knowledge refers to true, justified belief; certain understanding, as opposed to opinion (New Oxford American Dictionary).

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **I. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD, LANGUAGE AND TRUTH.**

- A. When we consider the beginning of all things, though the Bible tells us God was already here (“In the beginning God...,” Gen. 1:1a), there is a reason Scripture also emphasizes the “divine expression” of God (“In the beginning was the Word...,” John 1:1a; cf. Pro. 8:22).
- i. As a living, conscious and personal being, God is often described as One who by the breath of His word not only makes Himself known, but accomplishes His will (Isa. 45:23; 55:9-11).
  - ii. Therefore, it is not surprising to read of God who brings into existence and upholds all things by the word of His power (Gen. 1:3ff; Psa. 33:6, 9; 148:5; Heb. 1:3; 11:3).

- B. Language is among the greatest phenomena of human existence. Though we understand what language is and how it functions, its origin is a mystery to many.
- i. The two prevailing theories are: belief in divine creation and the natural evolution hypothesis. One believes language to be a gift from God, while the other says that at some point in our evolutionary development humans acquired a more sophisticated brain which made language invention and learning possible.
  - ii. Since language is a large part of human existence one would expect more from secular anthropologists, linguists and scientists concerning its origin and development. Yet, the truth is apart from the Bible we are left with nothing more than speculation and conjecture.
  - iii. The Bible is the only artifact of human history that properly explains the origin and development of language. The evolutionary model does not answer the question of origin. Evolution pertains to the so-called “survival of the fittest” not the “arrival of the fittest.”
  - iv. In fact, the discipline of science (the collection, classification and analysis of data about the physical universe) is designed only to investigate the state and function of things. If observation and experimentation are the central means of scientific inquiry, then science can tell us nothing about our origin, because there was no one to observe the beginning of time and space.
  - v. The biblical model is different. The Bible enjoys a rich history with more archeological evidence to support its historicity and truthfulness than any other artifact of recorded human history. From the Bible we not only learn about the origin and development of language, but its purpose in the greater scheme of human existence.
- C. The Bible is clear about the origin and development of language.
- i. Spoken language predates written language by about 800 years when comparing biblical chronology to the world’s oldest writings by Sumerian scribes c. 3200 B.C.
  - ii. The biblical record begins with an account of God speaking the universe into existence (cf. Heb. 1:3c). The phrase “and God said” is found some eight times in Genesis chapter one

to describe creation (vs. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26) and twice in reference to God speaking to mankind (vs. 28, 29).

- iii. In Genesis chapter two we not only discover God speaking aloud (vs. 18), but also giving Adam the task of naming all the animals (vs. 19-20). It is in this passage that we identify the beginning of human language. The chapter finishes with a monologue by Adam concerning the creation of woman (vs. 23).
- iv. In Genesis chapter three a couple more references are made to the use of language.
  - 1. First, Satan is described as using language to deceive Eve, as they dialogue about the meaning of the commandment of God (vs. 1-7; cf. 2 Cor. 11:3).
  - 2. Second, the Bible says, “And they [Adam and Eve] heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...” (Gen. 3:8a). Note well, how the Bible describes Adam and Eve hearing the voice of God.
  - 3. Language originates with God who not only spoke the universe into existence, but endowed mankind with the faculty of speech.

- D. Language was not utilized by God simply to create, but to communicate truth. In fact, God’s desire is for “all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of truth” (1 Tim. 2:4; cf. 2 Pet. 3:9).
  - i. Fulfilling this objective is the reason for language, because language makes communication possible, and communication is the means by which one is taught truth. Thus, the Bible describes the Godhead in terms of the process of communication.
  - ii. A familiar mnemonic device describing the work of the Godhead is: God *thought* it (Mind), Jesus *brought* it (Word), and the Holy Spirit *wrought* it (Truth). Mind produces thoughts that are expressed in words for the purpose of communicating truth. Not surprisingly, the process of human communication occurs in the same manner (cf. 1 Cor. 14:19).

## II. GOD, AS TRUTH, IS THE ORIGIN AND SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE.

- A. Utter nothingness cannot give rise to matter, nor can non-living matter generate life, much less conscious life. The fact that

something exists today implies that something has always existed. According to the Bible, God is the uncaused cause of all things. We are also informed that God and truth are correlates. Therefore, man does not begin his and her life in a vacuum, but within a fully functioning system of truth that is both eternal and absolute.

- i. God has always been and will always be (Exo. 3:14; Psa. 90:2).
  - ii. God is a living, conscious, personal being (Deu. 5:22-33; Jas. 4:8a).
  - iii. God and truth are correlates (Psa. 31:5).
    1. “God is not a man, that he should lie...” (Num. 23:19).
    2. “...God, who cannot lie...” (Tit. 1:2).
    3. “...it is impossible for God to lie...” (Heb. 6:18).
    4. Thus, “...God is true” (i.e., God is truth; truth is God) (John 3:33).
- B. As intelligent beings, mankind utilizes his and her faculties to comprehend their purpose. The objective of all thinking is to discover truth. Driven by curiosity, mankind seeks to understand the nature of things so as to make sense of themselves in the greater scheme of existence. Perplexing questions surrounding our origin, purpose and destiny motivate our search for truth.
- i. The existence of God is itself a fact of knowledge (Rom. 1:19-25; cf. Psa. 19:2).
  - ii. God created mankind with the intellectual capacity to acquire knowledge, especially the knowledge of Him (Acts 17:24-28; Gal. 4:9).
  - iii. To know God is to know truth (Psa. 119:160).
- C. Thoughts become knowledge when in harmony with truth. Truth is, “Being in accord with fact or reality; Fidelity to an original or standard” (Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary). As a correlate of God, truth is established in one of three ways: through the observation and experimentation of the physical world and its laws (Rom. 1:20), through the correct interpretation of God’s written revelation (2 Tim. 2:15), or through the proper exercise of one’s faculties (1 The. 5:21-22; Heb. 5:14; Eph. 3:4).
- D. As indicated by the circumstances of our first parents in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:7-9, 15-17, 21-22, 25), the test of mankind’s freedom involves his and her power of cognition.

- i. When Adam and Eve chose to disobey God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil this resulted in a type of moral cognition characteristic of God and illegally acquired by mankind (Gen. 3:5, 7, 22).
- ii. Instead of humbly submitting themselves to God, and learning to trust Him, Adam and Eve allowed themselves to be seduced and beguiled by Satan, who had convinced them to misappropriate the knowledge of good and evil (a type of knowledge characteristic of God, cf. 2 Sam. 14:17, 20).
- iii. The fact that Adam and Eve had unlawfully gained to themselves a certain type of knowledge is not the central point in the fall of mankind. It is the fact that limitations are an inherent part of genuine freedom.
- iv. Thus, mankind's freedom within the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:16) necessitated a prohibition (vs. 17). It would seem, then, that the knowledge of God, which language and communication make possible, is the solution to mankind's plight.
- v. Thus, God has chosen to communicate His will to mankind through human language (1 Cor. 2:9-16). When God spoke His word, He sent it forth for a specific reason, to give man an understanding that would help them in their latter end (Isa. 55:11).
  - 1. Jehovah is a God of knowledge (1 Sam. 2:3).
  - 2. God is perfect in knowledge (Job 37:16).
  - 3. Earth filled with the knowledge of God prophesied (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14).
  - 4. That the soul be without knowledge is not good (Pro. 19:2).
  - 5. God teaches mankind knowledge (Psa. 94:10; 119:66; Pro. 2:6b).
  - 6. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge (Pro. 1:7).
  - 7. Correction brings knowledge (Pro. 12:1).
  - 8. Knowledge of righteousness is power (Pro. 24:5).
  - 9. Knowledge of God is pleasant to the soul (Pro. 2:10).
  - 10. Knowledge of God is more important than sacrifice (Hos. 6:6).

11. Knowledge of God's wisdom is of more value than gold (Pro. 8:10).
12. The lips of priests should keep knowledge (Mal. 2:7).
13. John the Baptist sent to give knowledge of salvation (Luke 1:77).
14. Jesus, by the knowledge of His work, would help the masses (Isa. 53:11).
15. Knowledge is the key to the kingdom of God (Luke 11:52).
16. The righteous are delivered through knowledge (Pro. 11:9).
17. Fools hate knowledge (Pro. 1:22, 29).
18. Those who reject knowledge are destroyed (Hos. 4:6).

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Our beliefs are founded upon our knowledge.
  - a. Those who have been misinformed or misguided in any way will adopt a fallacious belief system.
  - b. The misinterpretation of information will result in misapprehension that will lead to misapplication (2 Peter 3:15-16).
  - c. Beliefs are powerful interpersonal forces (cf. Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:12-13).
2. The quality of our thinking, our understanding of truth, the certitude of our knowledge, and the soundness of our beliefs will result in a particular mode of behavior.
  - a. People are what they think (Proverbs 23:7; 27:19).
  - b. Consider how language makes the communication of truth possible, which is the objective of thinking, the standard of knowledge, and the means of establishing one's belief system that is the foundation of human functioning.

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# A CLEAR & PRESENT DANGER

Tom Wacaster

## INTRODUCTION:

1. The assignment for this hour is: “Define hermeneutics while addressing current issues that make our study critical, including the New Hermeneutics.”
2. We could spend an entire lesson on the “need” for a study of hermeneutics:
  - a. Evidence abounds that point to this “clear and present need.”
  - b. Some of our brethren have become slaves to “sophisticated silliness” and are the victims of “logophobia.”
3. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord” (Isa. 1:10).

## DISCUSSION:

- I. WE USE LOGIC AND REASONING IN OUR EVERYDAY LIFE
  - A. Case study #1 is the example of Patrick Sparks.
  - B. Case study #2 of the barking dog.
  - C. Case study #3 is your visit to Walmart or Outback.
  - D. Case study #4 is a visit at your doctor and pharmacist.
  - E. Case study #5 is the Bible.
    - i. Consider the use of *a fortiori* arguments.
    - ii. Jesus used this argument when He confronted the Pharisees (Mat. 12:9-12).
    - iii. The Hebrews author used this argument in Hebrews 7:1-10.
    - iv. Additional passages containing *a fortiori* argument include Matthew 6:23, 26, 7:9-11, 18:1-8, Mark 2:23-28, and 1 Corinthians 9:3-14.
  - F. Conclusion: In each of the cases mentioned above we use logic and reasoning.
- II. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF “HERMENEUTICS”?
  - A. It should be noted that you do not need to know the meaning of “hermeneutics” to go to heaven.
  - B. “Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation” (Dungan, 1).

- C. The word is derived from the Greek *Hermes*, the “messenger of the gods and the interpreter of Jupiter” (ibid).
- D. Proper hermeneutics include (among other things):
  - i. A proper attitude toward the Bible as the inspired word of God (John 7:17).
  - ii. A proper approach and/or method.
    - 1. Improper approach (hierarchical, rationalistic, modernism, post-modernism).
    - 2. Proper approach (inductive, example, inference, command; more on this later).
  - iii. An understanding of figurative language (allegories, similes, fable, similitude, metaphor).
  - iv. An understanding of types and shadows.
  - v. The historical and contextual setting (who, what, when, where, why).
- E. The roll of proper ‘*interpretation*’ in hermeneutics:
  - i. “Oh, that is your *interpretation* or your *understanding* of a passage.”
  - ii. “Interpretation has in mind the thoughts of another. A person has interpreted the thoughts of another when he has in his own mind a correct reproduction or photograph of the thought as it was conceived in the mind of the original writer or speaker. If the later adds anything of his own it is eisegesis and not exegesis. The moment the Bible student has in his own mind what was in the mind of the author or authors of the Bible books when these were written, he has interpreted the thought of Scripture” (Schodde, 1489).
  - iii. A good illustration of this principle is the simple statement in Mark 16:16.

### III. WHAT IS “NEW HERMENEUTICS”?

- A. *New* is not always better, and when it comes to a proper study of the Bible, it is definitely *not* better; in fact, it is *dangerous!*
- B. In 1989, at the “Nashville Meeting” it was proposed that the brethren needed a ‘*New Hermeneutic.*’

- i. The argument:
  1. This was proposed on the belief that the New Testament was not complete until after the fourth century.
  2. This meant that they church did not use the '*Old Hermeneutic*' of command, example, and inference).
  3. Hence, that *old* approach is flawed, and thus the need for a '*new hermeneutic.*'
  4. It is proposed that this '*new hermeneutic*' needed a historical approach, which would include historical criticism, redaction criticism, and higher criticism.

C. This '*new hermeneutic*' examined:

- i. This is not an exhaustive list of the claims of those pushing for this '*new hermeneutic.*'
- ii. They suggest we must retain the '*core*' of the gospel (virgin birth, resurrection of Jesus, but that the ancient **forms** in which the ancient gospel was expressed are not obligatory today.
- iii. Consequently, only the first four books of the New Testament are really the gospel message; the remainder is a reflection of the gospel in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.
- iv. Anything in the book of Acts, the epistles, and the book of Revelation are rooted in culture and subject to change.
- v. The methods of Biblical interpretation presently used originated with Thomas and Alexander Campbell who developed their hermeneutic based on Baconian logic.
- vi. Hence, this method of interpretation is flawed since it originated with man.
- vii. There is a fear of logic and a determination to avoid any conclusion based on rational thinking.

D. The dangers of this '*new hermeneutic*':

- i. It assumes the worst about the present hermeneutic. It implies that those who hold to old hermeneutic are ignorant about context, culture, history, eschatology, et al to know what they are talking about.
- ii. It is based in cynicism, negativism, and hyper-criticism. As Roy Lanier Jr. stated:

Reactionary dissatisfaction permeates the writings of men calling for such a change. These men are experts at picking at our foolishness. Yes, there are many foolish actions and teachings in our near history, but there are multiplied hundreds of wise actions and teachings also. However, these men who claim to be so positive, affirmative, and progressive are surely the most negative men among us today! (Lanier, 33).

- iii. It requires a basic denial of inspiration, for as we shall observe later, the '*old hermeneutic*' is precisely the approach used by Jesus and the inspired authors of the New Testament.
- iv. It denies the power of the "seed" of the kingdom.
- v. It will bring multiple unscriptural innovations into the church.

- 1. Changing attitudes toward marriage and divorce.
- 2. Introduction of instruments of music into the worship of the church.
- 3. Role of women in the church.
- 4. Changing attitudes toward moral issues.
- 5. Brethren, the list is endless!

- vi. Guy N. Woods hit the nail on the head:

This view, becoming more and more widespread in the church today, denudes the book of divine authority, strikes from it any plan or purpose for subsequent adherence to its teachings, and makes of it little more than casual history. It is an abandonment of the all-sufficiency of the scriptures - a repudiation of the book as a rule of faith and practice and as an expression of the divine will (Woods, 94).

E. I think I will trust the words of Psalm 19:7-11.

#### IV. **COMMAND, EXAMPLE AND INFERENCE - A PROVEN AND RELIABLE HERMENEUTIC**

- A. Modernism and post-modernism have influenced the western world:
  - i. Protagorus is credited with having said, "Man is the measure of all things."

- ii. The Humanist Manifesto II states the same thing: “We must save ourselves.”
  - iii. Compare this with the words of Jeremiah 10:23 “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”
- B. The will of God comes to mankind in three ways:
- i. Direct Commands (Acts 2:38; Hebrews 11:6)
  - ii. Approved Examples (Acts 8:4-13; 26-40)
  - iii. Necessary Inference (the Bible implies; man infers).
- C. Is this three-fold approach Biblical? How did 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians approach the Scriptures? Consider Acts 15:1-21.
- i. The issue (15:1).
  - ii. They used **inference** (15:6-10). Here Peter drew a conclusion from what God had done.
  - iii. They used **example** (15:12).
  - iv. They used **declared statements** (15:15-16).
  - v. Note: If this is a flawed manner of hermeneutics, then the apostles were guilty.
  - vi. Are you ready to discard the hermeneutics they would approve?

### CONCLUSION:

1. What is so appealing about this ‘*new hermeneutic*’?
  - a. One does not have to be a Solomon to see the consequences of adopting the ‘*new hermeneutic*’ over the reliable and proven method used from the very beginning of the church.
  - b. Wherein is the appeal?
    - i. It is an appeal to subjective reasoning.
    - ii. It is an appeal to human feelings and emotions.
    - iii. It is an appeal to something *new* and *exciting*.
  - c. It can be summed up in three words: “I like it!” or “I want it.”
  - d. Or, as one brother said, “The spirit of liberalism can be summed up in three words: “No big deal!”
2. The future of the church rests in the respect for and approach to the Scriptures. May we be ever vigilant in this area.

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# RIGHT REASONING

Israel Rodriguez

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Fewer concepts are more popular than the subject of reason. This notion resonates with humanity, not only due to its intrigue, but because of the order it brings to one's thinking, and the promise of a life well lived. One would only expect such a substantial concept to be properly appraised by the Divine Author of the Sacred Volume. Hence, as we seek to assess the value and quality of not only reason, but right reason, we naturally open the Pages of Inspiration.
2. What is reasoning?
  - a. "The use of reason (especially the drawing of inferences or conclusions through the use of reason). An instance of the use of reason: argument" (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary).
  - b. The English word "reasoning" appears seven times in the ASV1901 and translates a Hebrew noun, a Greek noun and two Greek verbs:
    - i. Job 13:6, "Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips." In this text "reasoning" translates the Hebrew term *tokahat* which refers to an "argument" in the sense of "a reply as a rational discourse" (Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains Hebrew Old Testament).
    - ii. Mark 2:6, "But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts." Mark 9:33, "And they came to Capernaum: and when he was in the house he asked them, what were ye reasoning on the way?" In these texts "reasoning" translates the Greek term *dialogizomai* which means, "To think or reason with thoroughness and completeness-to think out carefully, to reason thoroughly, to consider carefully, to reason, reasoning" (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains).
    - iii. Luke 9:46-47, "And there arose a reasoning among them, which of them was the greatest. But when Jesus saw the reasoning of their heart, he took a little child, and set him by his side." In this passage the English word "reasoning" (appears twice) translates the Greek term *dialogismos* and means, "To argue about differences of opinion-to argue, to

dispute, argument” (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains).

- iv. Acts 19:8-9, “And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.” Here, the English word “reasoning” translates the Greek term *dialegomai* and means, “To speak in a somewhat formal setting and probably implying a more formal use of language-to address, to make a speech” (Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains).

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. WHAT IS RIGHT REASONING?

- A. To declare anything right or wrong one must have a firm understanding of what it means to value something as right or wrong. Morality is central to all existence.
  - i. Morality is defined as, “A system of ideas of right and wrong conduct” (American Heritage Dictionary).
    - 1. If morality is here where did it come from?
    - 2. Since morality is a “system of ideas” that refer to right and wrong conduct whose mind gave rise to this system?
    - 3. Morality is inextricably tied to the debate of the existence of God.
      - a. The existence of God is the first truth in a series of truths concerning all reality. Notwithstanding, how can we know that God exists? Mankind must properly utilize their highest capacity available to them viz., their mind. The basic function of mind is reason (i.e., thinking). We reason from the known to the unknown.
      - b. What does mankind know concerning reality? He or she should know that they exist, and that they are part of a greater existence we call the universe. Concerning the universe and



its fullness, there are only four plausible explanations.

- i. Matter is eternal. The scientific laws of thermodynamics deny the plausibility of this option. Thermodynamics is the study of energy conversion between heat and mechanical work. From the first and second law of thermodynamics one may safely infer that matter cannot be eternal, because the universe is running out of usable energy.
  - ii. It happened by chance. The scientific law of causality denies the plausibility of this option. The universe is a grand effect and must have an equal and adequate cause. The universe exhibits order and design. Therefore, it must have had an orderer and designer.
  - iii. It is an illusion. This option is absurd.
  - iv. It was created. This is the only truly plausible option. The details of this option are determined through correct reasoning.
- ii. God, truth and morality are correlates.
1. God is a person.
    - a. God is Spirit (i.e., He is non-corporeal) (John 4:24).
    - b. Spirit is mind (1 Cor. 2:10-11; cf. Job 7:17; Rom. 11:33-36).
    - c. God possesses the power of reason (Isa. 1:18).
    - d. God has thoughts (Psa. 92:5).
    - e. God has expressed His thoughts in words (Pro. 2:6; Mat. 4:4).
    - f. God has made a record of His word and preserved it for all posterity (cf. Deu. 31:24-26; John 21:25; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Cor. 2:10-13).

2. God is truth.
  - a. If God exists, and truth is God, then by necessity God is the absolute standard of right and wrong. Despite what many believe, there can be no standard of morality apart from God. Think for just a moment. How do we determine the rightness and wrongness of something? If, for instance, we claim that stealing, cheating, lying, murder, etc. is wrong, who says so? It is not enough to simply state that common sense dictates that these things are wrong, because we only succeed in sifting the question to the origin of common sense. In other words, where did common sense come from? And, does everyone equally possess it? Any clear-thinking and honest individual will eventually concede the fact that morality is inextricably tied to truth. The first great truth in a series of truths regarding all reality is, God is. We also learn that God is truth. Therefore, God is the one who determines what is right or wrong.
  - b. Consider 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 and 2 Timothy 3:15-17. These passages both declare that God's word is the standard by which all mankind comes to the knowledge of good, as well as bad, and that His word equips us for EVERY good work. Subsequently, if God does not approve of a thing according to His word, then it must not be good.
  - c. In Hebrews 5:11-14 we read that God's word, when properly studied and interpreted, is designed to exercise one's senses to be able to discern good and evil. As a matter of fact, the ability to distinguish between good and evil is a mark of every mature Christian. Simply put, without God there can be no morality.
3. God is the standard of morality.
  - a. God is good and does good (Psa. 119:68).
  - b. God created all things very good (Gen. 1:31).
  - c. God is just (Deu. 32:3-4).

- d. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne (Psa. 89:14).
    - e. God is perfect (2 Sam. 22:31).
    - f. Every good gift and every perfect gift comes from God (Jas. 1:17).
    - g. God is perfect (Mat. 5:58).
    - h. Only God is good (Mark 10:18).
    - i. God is the only one qualified to teach the human race morality (Psa. 25:8).
  - iii. All people desire what is good and right.
    - 1. Like existence, consciousness, and human language morality is something we have experienced since birth and continue to experience every day.
    - 2. No one naturally desires evil. People do not desire poor health, anxiety, sadness, conflict, failure, despair, etc. All people seek good. People do desire well-being, comfort, joy, peace, success, happiness, etc. (cf. Mat. 7:9-12; Eph. 5:29a)
- B. As noted earlier, reasoning can refer to...
  - i. Something that takes place in one's mind (in the sense of utilizing one's faculties to gain a greater understanding of some issue) or...
  - ii. Setting forth arguments (in the sense of providing reasons that justify one's position).
  - iii. In both cases, certain variables must be properly managed to prevent errors.
- C. In summary, right reasoning refers to the proper development, exercise and maintenance of one's intellect. Every stage of human development carries with it a certain responsibility.
  - i. The proper development of our intellect (and emotions) begins at home with parents or guardians (Pro. 22:6, 15; 29:15; Eph. 6:4).
  - ii. As a child becomes of age, he and she should be taught "to refuse the evil, and choose the good" (Isa. 7:16).
  - iii. During one's youth care should be taken to "[guard our] heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Pro. 4:23).

- iv. One’s adult years should be dedicated to taking “heed to [oneself], and to [our] teaching...” (1 Tim. 4:16).
  - v. One should remain teachable even through his and her golden years—“Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king, who knoweth not how to receive admonition anymore” (Ecc. 4:13).
- D. A good example of right reasoning is seen in Matthew 16:1-4 where Jesus told the Pharisees and Sadducees who were attempting to entrap Him by asking for a sign from heaven, “Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times” (vs. 3). Here, the word discern gives us insight into the process of right reasoning.
- i. The word “discern” in this text translates the Greek word *diakrinō*. This term is defined, “To separate, make a distinction” (Thayer). Whereas the basic idea of thinking involves ideas or concepts formed and revolving in the mind, reasoning is the process of separating and distinguishing between the constituent parts of an idea or concept.
  - ii. Thus, as ideas or concepts are formed and revolve in the mind, one who reasons correctly separates whole ideas or concepts into their fundamental parts, distinguishing between them and identifying their relationship to one another, so as to be in a better position to mentally grasp the nature of the idea or concept under consideration (1 Kgs. 3:9; Heb. 5:14; cf. Isa. 55:11 with Heb. 4:12).

## II. WHY RIGHT REASONING IS IMPORTANT.

- A. More than just being important, reason is an inherent part of humanity. Unless we were born with some deficiency all people possess the power of reason.
- B. Consequently, humanity’s problem is not that we cannot reason, but that we often fail to learn to reason well.
- C. The design of God’s word is not simply to educate mankind in His ways, but to form, shape and sharpen our intellectual ability.
  - i. God created and gave mankind their “breath of life” (physical nature) and their “spirit of life” (the powers and faculties of the rational soul: intelligence, sensibilities and volition) (Isa. 42:5b).

- ii. As both intellectual and physical creatures, mankind has been created to respond to God from both sources of power (Isa. 26:9).
  - iii. The actual study of God's word (reading, researching, meditating upon and applying God's word) is designed to enhance our mental faculties (cf. Pro. 1:1-6).
- D. Apart from an ability to reason (much less to reason correctly), life would literally be impossible.

### III. HOW TO RIGHTLY REASON.

- A. Because God created us as rational beings, reasoning is a natural part of our lives. Human nature, though innocent, is initially crude and untrained (cf. Rom. 9:11; Deu. 1:39; Isa. 7:16). Over time, however, and with much patience and care, we hone our faculties learning the value and power of correct thinking.
- B. All actions are valued as either right or wrong. People not only desire to be right, but to do right. Therefore, it is imperative that we know how to determine what is right. Determining what is right requires the proper use of mankind's God-given ability to reason as well as the proper interpretation of God's will. Two popular methods of reasoning are:
  - i. Deductive Reasoning ("top-down logic") (from general to specific) (cf. Mark 2:1-12).
  - ii. Inductive Reasoning ("bottom-up logic") (from specific to general) (cf. Luke 24:27).
- C. Our faculties have been given to us by God to seek Him (Psa. 14:2; Acts 17:27-28).
- D. To discover God is to discover truth. God's word is truth and is designed to teach us what is right (Neh. 9:13; Psa. 19:8a; 33:4).
- E. The word of truth must be "rightly divided" (2 Tim. 2:15, KJV), which means it must be correctly comprehended, interpreted and applied to our lives.
- F. Thus, determining what is right is the result of having our senses exercised by God's word to discern between good and evil (Heb. 5:14).
- G. Everything ought to be measured against God's moral standard (1 The. 5:21-22).

- H. It is important to do all things according to God's word, because judgment will be according to His word (John 12:48-50).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. As free, moral agents who function within a system of morality, it is imperative that mankind knows not only *how* to determine what is right but *why* the determination of right is essential.
2. Without the ability (i.e., our God-given capacity to reason) or means (i.e., God's revealed will) of determining what is right the existence of mankind would be absurd and life would be meaningless.

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# EXEGESIS vs EISEGESIS

Terrance Brownlow-Dindy

## INTRODUCTION:

1. Exegesis is the critical goal of the discipline of sacred hermeneutics - the science of biblical interpretation.
  - a. The antithetical concept of eisegesis will be shown to be worthy of rejection as a hermeneutical approach.
  - b. The favorable hermeneutical principle of exegesis will be advocated.
2. Definitions:
  - a. *exegesis* - Gr. exegeisthai < ex, out + hēgeisthai, to lead, guide. An explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a text. (Webster's New World College Dictionary)
  - b. *eisegesis* - Gr. eis, into + hēgeisthai, to lead, guide. The interpretation of a text (as of the Bible) by reading into it one's own ideas (merriam-webster.com)

(The Bible was not designed to be spiritualized, allegorized, mythicized, or harmonized with what we fantasize. The Holy Spirit has said exactly what He intended to say. He has conveyed the precise message that He intended to convey. Our task is to lead that precise message out of the text, into our minds and that of our hearers - and that for the purpose of us coming to understand who God is, what He has done, how that relates to us, what are our responsibilities to Him, and what is our path to eternity). (cf. 2 Sam. 23:1-2; 2 Pet. 20-21; 1 Cor. 2:7-13).
3. Scholarly Analyses of the Concepts:
  - a. "The sole object of the expositor is to explain as clearly as possible what the writer meant when he wrote the text under examination. It is the interpreter's job to represent the text, not the prejudices, feelings, judgments, or concerns of the exegete. To indulge in the latter is eisegesis, 'a reading into' a text what the reader wants it to say." (Kaiser 45 - Toward and Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching).
  - b. "There is a distinct difference in approaching the Scriptures with an honest effort to ascertain the Truth, and an approach which seeks to verify for the person what he wants the Bible to say." (Holland 115 - Encouraging Expository Preaching).

- c. “The Bible is not a book with which to prove doctrines; it is the doctrine itself. Almost anything can be proven to the man who wants to find the proof. It leads to a wrong use of the Scriptures, so that, instead of searching them for whatever they may contain, the doctrines have been first assumed, and then the Bible is compelled into some sort of recognition of the position.” (Dungan 39 - Hermeneutics).
4. Our advocacy of the exegetical method over the practice of eisegesis derives from the fact that the Bible favors the former rather than the latter. Clear examples of eisegesis are firmly rebuked by and within the pages of Divine inspiration:
    - a. Matthew 4:1-11 (read into the text an occasion to tempt God).
    - b. John 5:1-11 (read into the text manufactured Sabbath limitations).
    - c. Matthew 22:23-32 (read into the text false doctrine regarding resurrection).
    - d. Acts 15:1-2 (read into the doctrine unsanctioned conditions of salvation).
    - e. Colossians 2:8 (read into the doctrine preconceived notions of Gnosticism).
    - f. Unfortunately, some of our brethren have committed the same error!!!
  5. Nehemiah 8 provides a beautiful case study of the present subject. The correct handling of God’s word is conceptually encapsulated in Nehemiah 8:8 - “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” Let us put the discipline into practice using a unit of thought that clearly speaks to it. (Brief background info - cf. Kaiser 42).

### DISCUSSION:

- I. **IN EXEGESIS, THE STARTING POINT IS THE TEXT! (Neh. 8:1-3, 8a).**
  - A. Walter Kaiser, “Counting Caricatures” - Presuppositions are problematic!
  - B. D.R. Dungan, Hermeneutics - Seeking to prove preconceived doctrines rather than discovering the meaning of the doctrine of Christ hinders exegesis.
  - C. Nobly, the Jews here brought **the Book of God rather than the imaginations of their hearts** that landed them in captivity in the first place! (cf. Jer. 3:17; 9:14, 11:8, 13:10, 16:12, 18:12, 23:17).



- D. Honorably, the preachers read distinctly in the book in the Law of God, rather than to practice the passing of oral man-made traditions as would become the woeful practice of many Jews in subsequent generations (cf. Mat. 15:1-9).
- E. Unfortunate examples of modern failures to assume this same honor and nobility may be seen in the following examples:
  - i. Hypothetical “loop-holes” around the ordinance of baptism (Luke 23:43) (begins with Protestant aversion to the necessity of water baptism).
  - ii. Attempts to force the text into an authorization of hand clapping and “praise dancing” in worship (Rom. 15:11) (Gr. ainos).
  - iii. Perversions of the doctrines of John 14:1-3 and 1 Peter 1:3-5 in advocacy of a renovated earth position. (cf. Wes McAdams).
  - iv. Wresting 1 Corinthians 5 in efforts to justify “virtual worship.”
  - v. The preceding are stark examples of *eisegesis* rather than *exegesis*!

**II. MENTAL INDUSTRY IS NECESSARY TO THE PROCESS! (Neh. 8:2-3, 8b).**

- A. *Time* - Ezra the preacher spent hours reading from the Book (v. 3, 13-15, 18).
  - i. “The weakest part of Michael’s game on the offensive end was his shooting, so he obviously mastered something that everybody said he couldn’t do when he came out of college. And he did it by shooting, shooting, shooting, shooting consistently.” - Phil Jackson (1000 shots per day, 6 days per week!).
  - ii. Note the Bereans (Acts 17:11).
- B. *Effort* - Prior to the presentation of God’s word recorded in Nehemiah 8:1-8, Ezra had spent much time involved in becoming a “ready” scribe in the Law of Moses (Ezra 7:6).
  - i. Ezra prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord (Ez. 7:10).
  - ii. seek = Hebrew darash - investigate, make inquiry, search carefully, study, surely require.

- iii. 2 Timothy 2:15 - “study” - Greek *spoudazon* - to be bent upon; to endeavor earnestly; strive (Perschbacher 376).

C. *Adherence* - To sound hermeneutical principles.

- i. Ezra and the other Levite preachers were able to “give the sense.” This does not occur accidentally or incidentally. Adherence to sound principles of hermeneutics is a must in order to develop such skill.
- ii. Implied in the fact that Ezra and his preaching companions were able to give the sense is their application of timeless exegetical principles.

**III. PROPER UNDERSTANDING IS THE GOAL (8c, 12).**

A. God’s word is or involves...

- i. counsel (Psa. 119:24);
- ii. guidance (Psa. 119:105);
- iii. that which is of utmost importance (Job 23:11-12).
- iv. life (John 6:68);
- v. liberty (John 8:31-32);
- vi. salvation (Jas. 1:21);
- vii. sanctification (John 17:17);
- viii. judgment (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-12).

B. In light of the eternal importance of the word of God, the primary ambition of exegesis is to produce understanding in the hearer.

- i. The beautiful blessings of the word of God described in the preceding verses alluded the Ethiopian nobleman until the expositor Philip assisted him in understanding the text (cf. Acts 8:26-35).
- ii. To the honest and sincere heart, gaining an understanding of the word of God is exhilarating, and a cause for celebration (Ezra 8:12)!

**IV. FAITHFUL APPLICATION IS PRIZE (13-18).**

- A. Upon a second day of study of the Law of God with the competent exegete Ezra, the Israelites realized that in the seventh month (which month they were in - v. 2), there was an ordinance that they

were supposed to observe: The Feast of Tabernacles and the seven days of dwelling in booths (cf. Lev. 23:33-44).

- i. sound exegesis rendered the Jews knowledgeable of, and able to apply the word of God accurately.
  - ii. The same deduction used of the Israelites in order to properly observe God's Feast of Tabernacles is the exact type of deduction that the New Testament Christian uses to properly observe the Lord's Supper.
- B. At the end of the day, the ability to faithfully apply God's word is dependent upon our ability to properly exegete God's word.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Reading into God's word what we desire to see there rather than extracting from the Sacred Text that which is contained therein is an exercise conducive to damnation (cf. 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Tim. 2:14-18).
2. If heaven is to be our home, a handling aright of the word of truth is absolutely imperative.

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# THE LAW OF NON-CONTRADICTION

Michael Light

## INTRODUCTION:

1. The law of Contradiction states, “A thing cannot be both itself and not itself at the same time in the same sense.”
2. For propositions, “A precisely stated proposition cannot be both true and false.” To use symbolic logic, we can state it this way - “A is B” and “A is not B” are mutually exclusive.
3. Since the Bible is made up of propositions this is a very relevant and important study. Losing continuity of truth is to lose our salvation (Rom. 10:1-3).

## DISCUSSION: *Contradictions and Conflications...*

### I. CONTRADICTIONS ABOUND.

#### A. Both socially and morally

- i. Our political climate is one of moral contradictions and the subsequent conflicts that they generate.
  1. Transgenders (cross dressers / men pretending to be women and women pretending to be men) and public restrooms.
  2. “you can’t tell anyone they are wrong” (you are “wrong” for doing so - ironic is it not?).
  3. The church is; and always will be in conflict and at odds with the world (2 Cor. 6:15).
- ii. We will focus on the religious elements specifically for this study. But the principles will apply equally to society as a whole.
  1. Many who call themselves “believers” (a very broad definition in our world) hold contradictory positions.
  2. Far too many Christians and congregations do to.

#### B. As always the Word of God will shed light on the issue at hand.

- i. Psalm 119:105
- ii. Our society has lost its “Christian Heritage.”

1. Our nation was literally founded by individuals who were seeking religious freedom. Specifically, the freedom to practice the Christian religion. To read interpret and practice as they saw it in the Book.
  2. Today the “official position” of most in government is to restrict; edit; and possibly eliminate the Christian faith.
  3. We lock down churches but leave liquor stores; abortion clinics etc. open...
- iii. The church in many places seems to have lost their Bibles.
1. They seem more concerned about fitting in to what the culture thinks a Christian should be than they do actually pleasing the Father of Lights (James 1:17)
  2. They are more concerned with “hurting” feelings than teaching the whole council of God (Acts 20:27).
  3. We should not be caustic or mean when preaching. But the idea that we can preach and not “break the hearts of sinners” is totally false. Repentance (which is essential to salvation Acts 17:30); follows godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10). One cannot be right with God, until he or she know that they are wrong (lost in sin and in need of turning (Acts 3:19).

## II. POINT ABOUT WHICH THE UNGODLY CONTRADICT JESUS.

- A. That only biblical truth can save...
  - i. John 8:32; 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
  - ii. The wisdom of the Bible (Proverbs; all scriptures-Isaiah 55:8,9).
- B. We do not have to believe the Bible to live in contradiction with it.
  - i. All men and women are amenable to God and His word (Acts 17:30; John 14:48; Mat. 25; 2 Cor. 5:10).
  - ii. We all have to choose our “god” (Jos. 24:15).
  - iii. Our world views affect ever thing else.
    1. Evolution - teaches that man is a hairless ape. There is a world of difference in what the Bible teaches on this and what is implied. “God made man a little lower than the angels.” Darwin and Modern American

Paganism “made man a little higher than the apes.” These differing concepts have staggering effects on how we see ourselves and our fellow man.

2. Relativism - no certainties. All ideas (religions / life choices and practices) are equally valid. This removes the possibility of ‘rightness” or “wrongness.” It kills the idea of sin or moral goodness. Violence rises; we keep “bumping into walls” because there really are no guidelines... no truth.
3. Socialism - Communism various forms of tyranny. No right and wrong so individuals decide that their “opinions” (for that’s all there truly is) should be followed by all... And might makes right. So, tyranny results.
4. Hedonism - Romans 1 - brings sin; physical and emotional sickness; terrible social, economic, and human waste. Divorce, disease, abortion, addiction, emptiness, depression, suicide, and so it goes. The way of the transgressor is hard (Pro. 15:13ff).
5. You can choose your actions ... but you cannot choose your consequences.

### III. **HOWEVER, “CHRISTIANS” SEEM TO ACTUALLY AFFIRM AND LIVE MORE CONTRADICTIONS THAN THE WORLD.**

- A. Many among the “converted” when pressed, will deny what the Bible teaches about Christ only having one church.
  - i. Matthew 16:13ff.
  - ii. Ephesians 5:20ff.
  - iii. Acts 20:28; Colossians 1:18.
- B. Going along with that: they also reject the singular plan of salvation.
  - i. Hear (Rom. 10:17) Believe (John 8:24) Repent (Acts 3:19) Confess (Rom. 10:10) Be Baptized (Rom. 6:3-6) Live Faithfull (1 John 1:7-9).
  - ii. They see this as too “restrictive” as “simplistic.” Even as “legalistic.” Betraying a total lack of clarity on the overall messages of the Bible. And the specificity God used to help us all find the truth.

- C. Likewise - they refuse to let the scriptures teach us how to worship God “acceptably” (John 4:24).
  - i. When you really peel back all the layers of arguments they really get down to the idea - “that they should be able to worship God however they see fit.”
  - ii. When properly analyzed they remove the very essence of what “worship” is.
- D. And they have virtually no use for what the Bible teaches concerning a life of self-denial and sacrifice.
  - i. Luke 9:23 - denying self is a prerequisite to being a Christian.
  - ii. We are to live a life of sacrifice and devotion (Rom. 12:1-2).
  - iii. We are to put others before our own wants (Gal. 6:2).
  - iv. We are to put God first in all things (Luke 6:46; John 14:1).
  - v. Many Christians lie in lyrics. They sing “*here am I send me*” with no intentions of ever “going” to work for the Kingdom. They sing “*anywhere with Jesus I can safely go*”... then forsake the assembly for a year because they might catch a virus that is roughly 99% survivable.
  - vi. It is easy to talk a good game of devotion; courage; and willingness to risk all for God... but when we flee in the face of challenge - how can we see that as anything but a contradiction. A more common word is hypocrite.

**CONCLUSION:**

1. May God grant us the wisdom to discover the right, the will to choose it, and the strength to make it endure.
2. May we truly be growing, trusting, encouraging, passionate, committed to the end - followers of the Lord.
3. May it never be said we were practitioners of violating the Law of Non-Contradiction.

# REASONING FROM THE MASTER

Omari French

## INTRODUCTION:

1. The great narrative of New Testament biblical discourse is that we have the mind of God at our disposal in part in reference to the inspired revelation of the mind of Christ.
  - A. This thought process must be adorned by all as we embrace his form as a servant and willingness to suffer for the benefit of others. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus... And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phi. 2:5-9)
  - B. The otherwise unattainable mindset of God is reflected by Christ asking God the Father to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles who wrote scripture so we can have at our disposal the mind of Christ. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16).
    - i. Within this very context we see that the design of revelation is for us as Christians to embrace the thinking of Christ that is revealed in scripture. “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which of God; that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2:12).
    - ii. The very idea of conforming to Christ entails adopting his mindset most impactfully in reference to the crucifixion which is how we combat sin and maintain obedience.
      1. “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death” (Phi. 3:10);
      2. “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourself likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (1 Pet. 4:2).
2. Thus, the apostle’s doctrine becomes the exclusive vehicle for us to access the reasoning of Christ, which establishes the folly of our own reasoning that does not equate to truth, justification and our salvation.
  - A. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, 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);



- B. “Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen” (Acts 1:2).
- C. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

**DISCUSSION:**

- I. **JESUS’ REASONING TO THE DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS AND PAUL ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS SHOWS THE REQUIREMENT TO LAY ASIDE OUR OWN FOOLISHNESS AND RECEIVE RELIGIOUS TRUTH IMMEDIATELY REGARDLESS OF OUR STATION IN LIFE. (PROPOSITION).**
  - A. Confirmation- Cleophas and the other disciple were foolish and slow of heart because they did not grasp the holiness of Christ as the catalyst for his inevitable resurrection and how this is the very culmination of Scripture. “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken” Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:25-26).
    - i. The context of Luke 24 dictates that this was the first day of the week the same day of Christ’s resurrection (Luke 24:1) and while they were walking to the village of Emmaus they were talking about all things that had happened and while they communed they reasoned and Christ came near. (Luke 24:15).
      - 1. This word for reasoning is the Greek word “*suzeteo*” Strong’s NT 4802 which means to investigate jointly, or to examine or to dispute or question.
      - 2. It has 10 New Testament occurrences:
        - a. Mark 1:27 (the multitude *questioning* the doctrine and authority as Jesus commands the unclean spirits);
        - b. Mark 8:11 (Pharisees *question* Jesus after the feeding of the 4,000 seeking a sign);
        - c. Mark 9:10 (disciples *questioning* one another what the rising of the dead should mean);
        - d. Mark 9:14 (Jesus seeing a great multitude and the scribes *questioning* with them);
        - e. Mark 9:16 (Jesus *questioning* the scribes with what question they had with the multitude);

- f. Mark 12:28 (one of the scribes *reasoning* together asking Jesus what is the first commandment of all and he was not far from the kingdom after answering Christ discreetly);
  - g. Luke 22:23 (the disciples began to *inquire* among themselves which of them should betray Christ);
  - h. Acts 6:9 (the Jews arose and disputed with Stephen); and
  - i. Acts 9:29 (Paul speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Grecians).
3. From this we see that reasoning on our own terms and without the thoughts of Christ is futile concerning the meaning of the resurrection (Mark 9:10) which is the very context also of Luke 24:15. “Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness but the resurrection for the dead” (Rom. 1:2-5).
  4. Our reasoning about our resurrection through Christ must also eliminate our thoughts and express the thoughts directly relayed from scripture. “And God has both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power” (1 Cor. 6:14). “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die” (1 Cor. 15:36).
  5. Additionally, Christ’s thoughts initially are the vehicle to enable us to leave our own foolish misunderstandings and comprehend the significance of his as we draw nigh to the kingdom. (And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. (Acts 28:30-31).
- ii. With significance of scriptural reasoning of Christ now established, we highlight the specific action of Christ to explain to Cleophas and the other disciple what is transpiring

through the scriptures. “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27).

1. The Greek word for “expounded” is “*diermeneuo*” Strong’s NT#1329 which is a compound word “*dia*” which means to travel across and “*hermeneuo*” Strong’s number 2059 which means to properly and thoroughly interpret and to accurately and fully explain (this word is where we derive the concept of hermeneutics).
2. The usage of this word in Luke 24:27 makes reference to “fully unfolding the meaning of what is said or to explain or to expound.”
3. In context and given that Jesus began at the beginning and all the prophets, Jesus is thoroughly explaining in all the instances that the scriptures described all things concerning himself in specific reference to his suffering, resurrection and ascension.
  - a. “But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled” (Acts 3:18).
  - b. “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21).
  - c. “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Pet. 1:10-11).
4. Time would fail us [Hebrews 11:32] to speak of all the references that Jesus covered that are not explicitly provided in the narrative of Luke 24 (See Deu. 21:23; Psa. 22:18; 16:10; Zec. 12:10; 13:7]. The critical point that we must here rehearse is the reception of the disciples to this process.

- a. Upon the realization that it was Christ speaking at the breaking of bread and then his miraculous disappearance the disciples said, “And they said to one another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures” (Luke 24:32).
  - b. The text is providing how receptive the disciples were to this process of having the word of God through the OT scriptures explain to them the meaning of Christ fulfilling all prophecies.
    - i. In James 1:21 the Bible teaches that we are “[to] lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word that is able to save your souls.”
    - ii. The engrafted word here is what saves the soul so we should be enthused to receive it thoroughly and rightly divided in all settings.
  - c. “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily whether the things Paul said were so” (Acts 17:11).
  - d. “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, 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, which effectually works also in you that believe” (1 The. 2:13).
5. Jesus appears again to the disciples back in Jerusalem and further opens their understanding through the explanation of the totality of scriptures (Luke 24:44-46).
- a. We glean from this that understanding can be had from scriptural discourse. “Whereby when you read you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.” (Ephesians 3:4). That

clear explanation is the best medium for optimal understanding.

- b. “And he said, how can I except some should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.” And that an individual’s receptiveness to the word of God is linked to their desire to openness to systemically reason through scriptural discourse.
  - c. See Luke 16:14 with the opening of Lydia’s heart as a reference to her receptiveness contrasted with Romans 11:8. Paul quoting the Old Testament in reference to Israel being given by God the spirit of slumber with eyes not to see and hears not to hear.
    - i. A clear cross reference to Paul’s quote in Romans 11 is the narrative of Acts 28:27 where Paul cites the same scripture of Isaiah and explains:
    - ii. “For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes have closed: lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears an *understand* with their heart and should be converted and I should heal them.”
  - d. The understanding of man can be accordingly darkened through being alienated from the life of God and the state of being past feeling which numbs the sensation to be stimulated through the reasoning of scriptures rightly divided. See Ephesians 4:18-19; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Timothy 2:15.
  - e. The understanding of scripture is inextricably linked to the desire to receive the totality of the truth of scriptures and thereby receive the understanding of the will of God.
- B. Confirmation- we see then from the Luke 24 example that the design of reasoning from the Master is to attack our preconceived carnal notions and provide the unadulterated totality of scripture for our understanding.

- i. For instance, in Luke 24:21 after discussing the events that led to the crucifixion of Jesus the disciples said “But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.”
  - ii. This reasoning reflects the glaring omission of Christ’s redemptive power through His blood to remit sins. Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14.
  - iii. It also ignores that the kingdom has nothing to do with conquering early regimes in the physical sense (John 18:36).
  - iv. This thinking still permeates the disciples before Christ is taken up (Acts 1:6) and as Christians we must rely upon a thorough explanation of scripture to remove any preconceived carnal presumptions applied to the spirituality in the New Testament kingdom.
- C. Likewise, we also cite the disciples other line of reasoning that led to the conclusion of Christ that they were “fools and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken.”
  - i. Note Luke 24:19 where the disciples explain that “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.”
    - 1. There is no doubt that there is some truth in this statement. However, the disciples are not fully grasping that Jesus was beyond just “a prophet” and he was in fact “the Prophet” that Moses was trying to prepare the people for. See John 1:21; John 6:14; John 7:40 cf. Deuteronomy 18:18.
    - 2. Thorough refutation from scripture can again renew our minds to embrace the whole counsel of God and understand the way of God more perfectly. See Acts 20:27; Acts 18:26.
  - ii. Moreover, we see the association of Jesus only as one of the prophets as failing under Matthew 16:13-14 because it undermines the connotation of Jesus as the Son of God.
    - 1. The timing of the coming of the Son was what the prophets were looking into (1 Pet. 1:10-11).
    - 2. It was the Son only that could be raised from the dead and declared to be the Son of God accordingly (Psa. 2:7; Acts 13:33).

3. This reasoning was remiss from the disciples which is why they were so distraught and lacked understanding of the events that were showing the significance of the resurrection.
4. Bridging the lack of understanding can only be accomplished through a systemic process of examining the totality of scripture. In so doing he provided the disciples with an understanding that proves His divinity, preeminence and Deity (Col. 2:9).

## **II. THE REASONING OF CHRIST IN THE CONVERSION OF PAUL FURTHER HIGHLIGHTS THE REQUIREMENT TO REMOVE THE BLINDNESS OF IGNORANCE FROM OUR HEART TO ACCEPT THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.**

- A. Paul's life in Judaism was characterized by his advancement on the basis of zeal for their tradition (Gal. 1:14; Acts 26:5).
  - i. Despite this zeal, there was a latent ignorance in reasoning in attempting to establish righteousness without embracing the thoughts of Christ (Rom. 10:3; Phi. 3:4-9).
  - ii. Thus, all that was done in ignorance through his conscience and zeal toward the law was vain because it was absent of the reasoning inherent in the mindset of Christ (1 Tim. 1:13).
  - iii. In fact, the apostle Peter states, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold from your vain conversations received by tradition from your fathers" (1 Pet. 1:18).
- B. The reasoning of Christ exposes the folly of our opposition to God because that opposition only culminates in an opposition with ourselves and against our own self-interest.
  - i. This is because God categorically wants all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
  - ii. In order for this salvation to transpire we all must cease to oppose ourselves for the acknowledgment of the truth. Paul himself would say, "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Tim. 2:25).
  - iii. Surely, this is inclusive of the reference to Christ references Paul's ignorance in the statement "I am Jesus whom thou persecuteth it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts 9:5).

1. This terminology facilitates the imagery of an ox kicking against the goad to further injure himself.
  2. Which is why when Paul says he was “injurious” in 1 Timothy 1:13 in addition to the persecution against Christian he was also do harming to himself through disobedience to God.
- iv. All Christians should approach the reasoning of Christ on similar grounds as Paul also says, “For we ourselves were sometimes foolish disobedient deceived serving divers lusts and pleasures living in malice and envy and hating one another” (Tit. 3:3).
  - v. Thus, we must acknowledge that going against the reasoning of Christ is opposing the best thing for our ultimate best interest in this life and the life to come (John 10:10).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. We must come to the realization that Christ rightly used the proper reasoning of God through the scriptures during His early ministry and or failure to follow His example will lead to error (Mat. 22:29).
2. The cross of Christ demonstrates that the scriptures could not be broken (John 10:35), and that all things written about Him must be fully fulfilled and fully explained.

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