

Science and the Bible E-Zine

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"Truth: That which is in accord with fact and reality."

This is written so that you may believe the bible because of science rather than in spite of science.

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1) What's Happening at Science and the Bible?

By Max B. Frederick, AnOldScientist

About This Month's Feature Article:

The intensive church history class I just attended is not my first. I may be over seventy years old, but my memory of the church history class I attended over fifty years ago while in bible college did not sound like the same church history.

This was a typical church history class, presenting an outline of the different church ages from the church of the first century until now. But the outline seemed to emphasize different stuff than I remembered.

So I went to the internet and collected outlines from various church history classes. Sure enough my memory had not failed me.

Various outlines have similarities, but they all seem to diverge, with the most divergence being in the past 500 years, depending on the denominational slant of the author of the outline. Each seems to present its own denominational slant indicating

the church of today, with that slant, has progressed to what the church should be.

So, what happened in the past five hundred years that caused history to have so many different revisionist views?

It seems that the credibility of the church has declined. Looking around I see the credibility of the church in general as being at an all time low.

What happened that resulted in the credibility of the church to decline?

On Another Front: Remembering Tony Ralph Thornburg

Late this month I received word of the passing of a long time family friend and reader of The Science and the Bible E-Zine. Tony died Monday, March 22, 2010.

Tony was one of those many people who had great questions concerning the intellectual credibility of the claims of the Christian religion.

For many years, starting somewhat over thirty years ago, we met every week for a bible study, often in our hot tub. Many deep religious questions were bandied about. Once we even co-authored a research paper on what the bible said about “The Kingdom of God.”

A song he often referred to that described his state of mind was “Further Along” with the chorus:

“Further along we’ll know all about it.

Further along we’ll understand why.

Cheer up my brothers, live in the sunshine;

We’ll understand it all bye and bye.”

Tony was well aware that in this life there are many questions to which we will never know the answers, but will become clear, if the claims of the bible are true. That time will not come until we cannot report the answers back to others, as the verse says:

“When we see Jesus coming in glory;

When He comes from His home in the sky,

Then we shall meet Him in that bright mansion;

We’ll understand it all bye and bye.”

Tony’s last question of me was, what does the bible really say happens when a Christian dies? Well, you know, that is a very interesting question from an intellectually honest point of view. So many of the theological answers are shaded with what it is appropriate to say at a funeral. So, he wanted the straight stuff.

The response to that question was published in the June 2009 issue of The Science and the Bible E-Zine. <http://www.scienceandthebible.net/ezine/2009/SATB-Ezine-2009-06-30.htm> That article, “*What Happens at the End of a Christian Life on Earth?*” does not answer the question, rather it presents four hypotheses. Yet, in that intellectual exercise, Tony found the reassurance that, to a great many people, only intellectual honesty can impart. Tony was content to wait until that bye and bye for the final answer. Well, for Tony, that bye and bye has finally come. But the answer he found cannot be known to us until we too reach the end of this earthly road .

2) **The Credibility of Christianity.**

By Max B. Frederick, AnOldScientist

These are exciting times in which we live. We are witnessing history in the making. We are at the dawning of a new church age.

The past five hundred years has seen a steady decline in the credibility of Christianity. First, there was five hundred years of increasing credibility and influence of Christianity and its organization known as the church. Second, there was one thousand years of struggle for control of the church. Third, there was the past five hundred years, in which Christianity and the church, along with all other religions have increasingly been seen as intellectually ignorant and dishonest. During this third Era, the rise of modern science has provided an alternative that seems more credible. Many thinking believers have turned to the intellectually pleasing reality of modern science from the intellectually declining church. Fourth, well... read on.

From believing what they know is not true (popular perception of *faith*), to teaching what they do not even believe, to covering up immorality among church leaders, the church and even Christianity itself, are increasingly perceived to be intellectually dishonest and lacking in credibility.

No one has noticed the spiraling intellectual honesty and credibility of the church more acutely than the non-church secular intellectuals. According to a study of religiosity published by the University of Texas at Austin in 2007, the religious zeal of intellectually honest people has not diminished, just switched loyalties from Christianity to intellectualism, to what is perceived to be more intellectually honest.

The intellectual decline and loss of intellectual credibility of the past five hundred years is due to two things; the rise of imaginative interpretation of scripture, and competition from the alternative, of Modern Science, with its intellectual allurements.

As imaginative interpretation is increased, intellectual honesty suffers, and credibility is destroyed. Never has the church been so splintered. With diverging opinions as to doctrine, a multitude of various translations have appeared, purporting to clarify what the bible really says, but in reality, only clarifying the imaginative interpretation of the particular organization sponsoring that translation. From the logical contradictions of Freewill versus Sovereignty of God, to Pre-Tribulation versus Post Tribulation, from Young Earth Creation versus Old Earth Creation, to Salvation by Works versus Salvation by Faith, or even salvation by neither works nor faith, but by the one in whom the faith is placed, credibility of Christianity and the church has never been so low. The most often heard excuse among thinking people for not believing the bible has become the multitude of opinions about what it says.

Even within various organizations known as the church, among some leaders, there is indication of growing acceptance of the intellectual dishonesty of their own religion. This very month, while the Catholic church is plagued with covering up immorality among its leadership, some Protestant leaders met to discuss their plans of how to hold their church together now that they have accepted as fact the proposition that science has discredited the possibility of eternal life.

How did we get to this point? The end of this five hundred year era of declining intellectual honesty is reached with the politically correct dictate that all religions are considered to be equally invalid. The credibility of Christianity has decreased while the credibility of the perceived intellectually superiority of science has won converts.

The history of America, of the United States, reflects this decline of credibility of the church. Within the first one hundred years of this Era, persecution of one church group against another became so great in Europe, that eventually the first settlers to this new land emigrated from Europe to escape. When the United States was founded, the credibility of Christianity was still high enough that the new government was founded on Christian principles. But by then, the credibility of the church had dropped so far that a law was made to prevent the establishment of any one of the many divisions of the church from becoming a state religion.

The acceleration of this drop in credibility during the last fifty years of this third Era has been witnessed by the author of this article.

In the 1950's credibility of Christianity was still high enough that the words, "*under God*," were added to the pledge to the flag. But that same decade saw increasing denial of influence of religion. In that post war age, mention of any religious aspects of news stories disappeared from the airways.

In the 1960's God was declared to be dead by the God is Dead Movement.

In the 1970's all religions, even though not considered equal, were to be treated with equal dignity.

In the 1980's, during this age of Postmodernism, denial of reality became rampant.

In the 1990's the politically correct attitude became that all religions actually are equal in that all are the product of the human intellect and none are supernatural.

But, the start of the new millennium saw the start of a new Era of church history.

We have entered a Fourth Era of church history. The current Age of Intellectual Jihad and Veritology has ushered in a new Era of Reality, Truth, Intellectual Honesty and Credibility of Christianity

2001 saw a distinct change. With the 9/11 attacks, the church has been reluctantly drawn into intellectual Jihad. No longer are religious connotations banned from the airways. Outspokenness of faith in Christianity has increasingly been allowed in the media after the 9/11 attacks. Live news reports no longer edit out religious testimonials. This past year, 2010, has seen several major news commentators actually speak, on the air, of their own profession of faith in Christianity.

Quietly, and in the background, there has been a rise of Christian apologists restoring credibility to Christianity.

Even so, to some, the change is not that obvious. Some opponents of Christianity are celebrating in their victories. In the past ten years our country has seen the overt declaration that we are not a Christian nation, but a nation of religious equality.

How then, did we get to this point in church history?

One of the most significant events in church history is the least often mentioned in typical church history outlines. That event is the great separation of science and religion. That is the event that ushered in the precipitous decline in intellectual credibility of the church as thinking people were given something else that seemed more intellectually credible. But church leaders continued in intellectual blindness.

A study of church history reveals the answers.

Generally, church history classes present an outline of church history. Most of them present the church of today as finally arriving where it should be.

There are many versions of how to outline church history. Most of them are very similar in the beginning concerning the age of Christ and the apostles, the early church fathers, the catholic nature of Christianity, etc. But later in history, the outlines diverge, depending on the denominational slant of the designer of the outline.

Yet, there is an overall outline that is never mentioned. None of the typical outlines of church history see the forest for the trees. The trees are all the various church ages. But when you stand back, you can see the forest where all the ages fit into a common overall outline of Eras into which all the Ages of church history fit.

There are four Eras in this overall outline:

First, The Era of Rise in Credibility and Worldly Status of Christianity, 0-500

Second, The Era of Struggle over Power and Control of the Church, 500-1500

Third, The Era of Decline in Intellectual Credibility of the Church and Christianity, 1500-2001

Fourth, The Era of Reality, Truth, Intellectual Honesty and Credibility of Christianity, 2001-Present

None of the typical church history outlines even mention the fact that during the past five hundred years it is obvious that the intellectual honesty of the church in general, and the credibility of Christianity itself, has declined to its current all time low.

We are just at the beginning of the fourth Era. We have just lived through the five hundred year Era of decline of credibility and are at the beginning of the rise of intellectual honesty and credibility.

Somehow, during the thousand year reign of political struggle for control, intellectual honesty suffered. With the rise of faith in the reality of modern science, near the end of that thousand year long era, the credibility of the church suffered.

Think about it. This past five hundred years has been an era of the great revivals. But a living flourishing church, as in the first five hundred year Era, does not need reviving. Only that which is nearing death needs to be revived.

The need for great revivals was a symptom of the declining credibility of the church.

The two major features of the third era are the loss of intellectual credibility due to the rise of imaginative interpretation of scripture, and the competition from Modern Science. As imaginative interpretation increased, credibility decreased.

Most church history classes end with that third era. Typically they end with the church triumphantly awaiting the return of Christ and the end of time.

However, on September 11, 2001, we entered a new Age in Church History. That new age is ushering in a new Era of church history. That first Age in this new Era of Reality, Truth, Intellectual Honesty and Credibility of Christianity, is The Age of Intellectual Jihad and Veritology. This new Era and Age burst upon us with an attack by militant extremist Muslims against what they, and the whole secular world, considered to be false religions, including the New Paganism, Americanism, Humanism, Judaism, and Christianity.

That attack got the attention of the whole world, including a new breed of Christian scholars. Those scholars are restoring the intellectual honesty and integrity of Christianity. The credibility of Christianity was at its lowest point in two thousand years, being assumed to be just as man-made and as non-supernatural and therefore false as all other religions such as Humanism, Americanism, and Atheism.

With this attack by a radical religious group on our way of life, a new breed of Christian leaders are fighting back with the truth against the divergent opinions that have destroyed credibility. This is intellectual Jihad.

Virtually un-noticed by Church historians is the recent rise of Truth and Credibility among biblical scholars. Here are the names of a few of these scholars.

Ravi Zacharias - Helping Believers Think and Helping Thinkers Believe.

Hugh Ross - Reasons to believe

Del Tackett - The Truth Project

R. C. Sproul - Ligonier Ministries

Os Guinness - "Without truth we have no biblical faith."

Marshall Foster - "From Terror to Triumph"

(This is not an endorsement of their teachings, just acknowledgment that they exist.)

Other scholars are emerging, teaching scientific evidence for the supernatural origin of scripture.

Many Christians have begun to search for the truth. They are beginning to listen to this new breed of scholars and the credibility of their intellectual honesty.

Others, of the old school continue to teach tradition that flies in the face of both reality, and ancient scripture. But they are dying out and becoming less influential. Some church leaders are even going down the road of teaching what they believe to be untrue, having given up what they believe to be the unrealistic hope of eternal life.

So that is where we are now, at an all time low, and at the beginning of anew era of rise of credibility. And the bible, at least the ancient scripture version, upon honest intellectual scrutiny, is proving to be in accord with reality.

Thus, Christianity is emerging as the one religion that has any hope for intellectual honesty and credibility.

Thus, intellectual honesty is giving those who have placed their faith in modern science, no excuse for disbelieving the gospel (good news) that the creator has provided the unbelievable, eternal life.

3) **Word of the Month: *Toward or Beyond the Rising Sun***

A Glossary of Science Related Terms Used in the Bible

In January of 2010, this new feature was added to the Science and the Bible E-Zine. It is a Glossary of Science Related Terms Used in the Bible. In this feature various words that are commonly misunderstood are presented, defined, and discussed.

The need for discussion of the meaning of many ancient Hebrew words found in the bible arises from the fact that the Hebrew language fell into disuse and became a dead language for a period of time before it was translated into a newer language. During this period of time, the meanings of many words were lost and are only now coming to light as the original meaning of many science related passages are being verified by modern science.

Toward or Beyond the Rising Sun [No Single English Word Equivalent]:

Variouly translated as East or Ancient Past, commonly ambiguous and must be chosen depending on interpretation of the translator.

In the eighth verse of the second chapter of the bible, we are introduced to another ambiguous, or should I say easily misinterpreted words of the bible when it comes to interpreting science and the bible.

And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Gen 2:8

The literal meaning of the original word in the Hebrew language that is translated *eastward*, is, “beyond the rising sun”. That word has relevance in two realms, one is in time, the other in space. In time it refers to the past, even the ancient past. In space it refers to the direction you look to see the sun come up, the east.

When translating, the translator must either render it something like, *beyond the rising sun*, go beyond the original meaning to assign which realm is intended by the original author. In the case of this verse, it could be alternatively translated:

And the LORD God planted a garden beyond the rising sun in Eden; or, And the LORD God planted a garden in the ancient past, in Eden;

The rendering chosen depends on whether you interpret the age of the earth according to the common chronology of the nearly three dozen accounts of creation of the bible in the light of the single account that has it organized into six days, whether you interpret the bible to teach an old earth, or a young earth. If you go with the young earth interpretation logic says there was no ancient past at that time so you go with *east*. If you go with the old earth interpretation, logic says the original intended meaning was *the ancient past*. The word itself is not definitive as to which realm of time or space contains the intended meaning.

So, when you see the *east* mentioned in the bible, do not immediately assume it is

talking about a direction in space, it may actually refer to a direction in time. Check the context. You may even have to go to the context in the original language.

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