

# 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

Last issue ended with a challenge to investigate real evidence to overcome the fear that what we think we know might be something that is not true. The question raised in this issue relates to how we can know which doctrines we have been taught actually come from the bible, and which ones come from modern religion.

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## 1) The Law of the Lord.

By Max B. Frederick, AnOldScientist

I have often been asked the question, "Which translation of the bible do you use?"

My reply has drifted toward the idea that the newer translations are becoming more biased toward the opinions of modern mainstream religion, the older translations are less biased by the opinions of mainstream religion of today, but are more biased toward ancient religious and pseudo-scientific opinions of ancient scholars of over

twenty-two hundred years ago, but still over a thousand years after the original writing of the earliest ancient scriptures.

I really prefer to find the meanings found in the original language version. I cannot read those ancient languages like the ancients could, but, I can look up how each word is used, and find what thoughts were to be communicated when those words were used. What I find is sometimes surprising, surprising to the point of requiring a modification to the ideas expressed in the commonly accepted lexicons, especially when the subject is something that is in the realm of modern science where modern science has independently investigated the underlying physical phenomenon. But I am getting ahead of myself.

As far as the idea that translations are biased by the opinions of mainstream religion, the nineteenth Psalm can be used to illustrate the point.

Week-end before last, while visiting out of town, I noticed a mainstream denominational church road sign announcing "School of the Bible" at nine-thirty Sunday morning. So I went. The adult class of under a dozen, mostly elderly people was led using a pre-published Sunday School lesson guide that presented the basis of ethics and morality as being the law of Moses as found in the bible.

That lesson guide used the nineteenth psalm as a springboard. But it ignored the first six verses. Starting with the seventh verse, that psalm read, "The law of the LORD..." and from there the guide continued in presenting the law of Moses as the perfect basis for ethics and morality.

But, a strange thought arose in my mind. If the law of Moses is so perfect for that purpose, why did Jesus refer to those teachers of that law, those most practiced at keeping the law of Moses, the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day, as whitewashed tombs, filled with dead peoples bones?

*"How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs--beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity." Matthew 23:27 NLT*

The lexicon is found to be dreadfully lacking. Looking at the various usages of each word in the ancient language reveals the lexicon is biased toward religious interpretation, even from the time of the very beginning of bible interpretation from a non-original language. Some of the lexicon definitions are simply religious interpretations of what early scholars thought the bible was trying to communicate.

When those same words of the ancient scriptures of the bible are studied by a scientist, it suddenly becomes obvious that it is not the law of Moses that is the basis of the last eight verses of that psalm, but the pre-existing Law of the Lord, the laws of physics, sometimes referred to as the laws of nature, as described in the first six verses of that psalm, the very same verses ignored by the study guide.

An example of this bias might be illustrated by an expert versed in ancient religious rituals reading some of the North American Pictographs. I have been told of a site where there is something written on a stone wall, high up in the mountains overlooking a beautiful setting. The religious expert might interpret the pictograph writing as the record of some religious ritual of sacrifice of animals. However, when

one well educated, but well versed and very familiar with wild animal hunting tactics looked at it, the comment was made of how easily it could be read. It is a narrative of what happened during an ancient hunting expedition or of multiple events that occurred at that hunting outpost. Including looking around at the context of the location, in the narrative one could see the nature of capture using the lay of the land, the kinds of animals taken, the people involved, and the number of animals taken, indicating the success of the hunt. It was all written there in stone, in a language that was independent of any native tongue, and easily understood today. The symbols did not represent sounds, as many modern forms of writing of today, but ideas that, when strung together, tell the narrative.

The same is true of the interpretations of the meanings of the symbols of the ancient Hebrew language that record the ancient scriptures of the bible. When read by scholars steeped in religion, it is pre-assumed to be about their concepts of ancient religion. But when someone else reads it, someone educated in and familiar with the actual topic being discussed, the writing takes on a completely different interpretation.

Unlike modern English, the ancient Hebrew language started out as symbols representing ideas, devoid of the requirement to sound them out in any particular language. The conversion of Hebrew to a language written in sounds occurred over time, and with the addition of symbols indicating which vowels should be used to connect the ideas, those symbols which we equate to consonants came to represent specific sounds. In that ancient language, each symbol represented both a concept and a sound. With these concepts and sounds used in combination, the equivalent of what we recognize as words were formed. Eventually the meanings of those symbols became secondary to the sounds, but still are helpful in deciphering the meanings of ancient Hebrew words that have had their meanings lost.

The problem in reading that ancient language comes to the surface when it is realized that the non-religious use of that language disappeared for hundreds of years. It fell into non-use and was considered to be a dead language long before the rise of ancient Greek scholarship. Many references can be found on the internet denying this fact, but the fact remains that the original meanings of many ancient Hebrew words were lost during that time, and are still not fully understood. When scholars updated the scriptures by translating it into the new universal language of about 250 BC, the language we know as classical Ancient Greek, the work was done by religious and technical (scientific) experts at the legendary Library of Science at Alexandria, Egypt. They were the most learned scholars of that era. Obvious in their work is their bias toward religious interpretation according to religious understanding popular at that time, and their bias toward scientific interpretation, according to the science related “knowledge” of that time. As we know today, that “knowledge” contained many factual errors.

When a scientist of today takes a fresh look at the meanings of the actual words used in the original ancient Hebrew language of the scriptures, and having a greater understanding of many of the scientific principles that were recorded or referred to, a more accurate lexicon definition of many of the words emerges.

Now, back to that recent school of the bible experience and how it becomes relevant.

The “Law of the LORD” referred to in the nineteenth psalm is not the “Law of Moses,” as many theologians have mistakenly assumed. They are two distinctly different concepts.

Equating the two, the universal Law of the LORD—the laws of the universe that results in orderly, predictive behavior of the universe, equating that universal law with the version of the Law of the LORD as written by Moses, results in the contradiction of concern here.

Nowhere in the bible does it say that the law of Moses is perfect. Only two places are there references to the law being perfect. One is the nineteenth Psalm where it is referring to the universal law, and James 1:25, where it refers to “the perfect law of liberty.” Any equating of these two universal law of the Lord references to the Law of the lord as written by Moses is simply a conclusion based on the biased opinions of mainstream religion.

The bible does not say the law of the LORD as given by Moses is perfect. But the bible does say that the Law of the LORD is perfect when referring to the body of physical law that modern science refers to as the laws of physics—that which physically controls everything in the universe.

Nothing in that nineteenth Psalm speaks of Moses nor of his written version of the Law of the Lord. It is a mistake to make that assumption. It is a mistake to equate what the psalmist calls the perfect Law of the LORD” with the written law of Moses. Yet, universally, I have found, all biblical scholars equate the two. And biblical critics use the equation as the springboard for claiming the bible contradicts itself in saying that the Law of the Lord is perfect, and simultaneously saying the law of the Lord is not perfect.

Little do scholars recognize the law of the LORD here for what it actually refers to—that universal law which governs the universe as well as the “natural” consequences of our behavior.

A scientist looking at the original language of the nineteenth Psalm might easily see the message very differently than a theologian steeped in mainstream religion.

Just what does the ancient language of the nineteenth Psalm actually say?

The first six verses speak of the order in the universe:

*“The universe declares the greatness of the one who is the summation of the great eternal energies.” (MOST)*

The ancient Hebrew undifferentiated concepts of power, force, and energy, and as being eternal and possessing the attributes of intelligence (knowledge) and wisdom (prudent use of knowledge) are all summed up in the term here typically translated “God”

*“The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship.” (NLT)*

The ancient Hebrew concept here translated “skies” has been variously translated skies, “sky above,” atmosphere, “everything overhead,” expanse, even “firmament,” revealing the bias toward the pseudo-science of the ancient Greeks at the time of the translation into the LXX about 250 BC.

*“Day after day they reveal—and night after night, they demonstrate: knowledge.” (MOST)*

The key concept found in this couplet, typical of ancient Hebrew literature, variously translated, “reveal,” “demonstrate,” “utters speech,” “reveals,” “sheweth,” “display,” “declares,” “indicat scientiam” (Latin) all reveals the ancient Hebrew concept that the supernatural governor displays the attribute of intelligence (knowledge.)

*“Even though no sound, voice, or language is uttered or heard.”*

Even though the skies are silent as far as sound is concerned, the intelligence (knowledge) is revealed. This passage is variously translated giving opposite impressions:

*“[There is] no speech nor language, [where] their voice is not heard.” (KJV)*

*“They speak without a sound or a word; their voice is silent in the skies;” (NLT)*

*“Their message is gone out throughout all the earth—their message to the extremes of the world, just as the heat from the sun reaches all locations of the earth due to its non-stationary location in the earthly sky.” (MOST)*

The various translations of this passage that include the words “tabernacle” or “tent” are from the ancient Hebrew concept of a residence related to the nomadic lifestyle of being transitory, therefore, the use in describing the transitory location of the sun relative to the earth so that the heat from the sun can reach everywhere on the globe.

*“Their message goes out like the exuberance of a bridegroom after his wedding—or like a champion proclaiming victory in running his race.”*

These illustrations are to emphasize the futility of trying to ignore the message coming from the universe, a message that proclaims the greatness of its creator as illustrated in the consistency of the universal law that govern its origin and existence.

At this point, the subject does not change. The assumption that the subject has changed from the perfection of the physical laws of the universe to the religious law of Moses is an erroneous assumption due to an erroneous equivalence of *the Law of the Lord* with *the Law of Moses*. Most religious bible commentaries divide this psalm into two parts, the first six verses being praise of the heavens to the glory of God, and the section from verse seven on pertaining to the totally different subject of the perfection of the law of Moses.

*“This law of the eternal one (the LORD) is perfect, even to the governing of the soul. The governing of the eternal one is sure, imparting wisdom to the simple.” (MOST)*

Again, the attributes understood by the ancient Hebrews to be a part of the eternal governing power or energies (elohiym) recognized to be the Hebrews supernatural deity (YHWH) includes the attribute of wisdom.

Here, the ancient Hebrew word used to refer to the ancient Hebrew deity, YHWH, (traditionally translated into the English word “LORD,”) carries the meaning of “the eternal existence,” reinforcing the earlier use of the different ancient Hebrew word *elohiym*, that refers to that same deity as the combined concept of energies, force or power. This combined concept of energies, force or power is roughly equivalent to what modern science proclaims to be that which is eternal in the “law of conservation of energy” which states that energy can be neither created nor destroyed.

The nineteenth Psalm goes on to praise this universal law of the Lord attributing to it the concepts of perfection, trustworthiness, wisdom, rightness, illumination permanence, correctness, and intelligence. These various concepts are translated into more religious terms in modern translations, but that just shows the bias of the modern translations toward modern mainstream religion.

With that illustration, maybe you can see my bias toward finding the meanings from the original language of the ancient scriptures rather than picking a favorite modern translation.

I went to the internet to see if anyone else had noticed this inconsistency in the mainstream religious interpretation where there exists no inconsistency in what it really says.

What I found was very revealing.

Many theologians had noticed the inconsistency of their interpretation, but no one had recognized that their underlying assumption was not what the bible really says.

There is almost no end of theologians rationalizing away what they assumed to be the fact that the bible actually said the law of Moses was perfect, even though it had to be replaced with grace, (or some other such theme of its imperfection.)

But the more damaging were the themes of the critics who recognized the inconsistency and presented it as a criticism of the bible, citing it as a contradiction of the bible with itself, condemning Christianity and religion in the process. For an example see, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahi5FRd5geM>

The bottom line here is, The Law of the LORD that is perfect is not the version recorded in the books of the law by Moses, known variously as, The Law of Moses, or the Law of the Lord according to Moses, or the Ten Commandments.

The Law of the LORD that is perfect is what is otherwise referred to as the laws of

physics, that governing set of physical principles that caused the universe to come into existence and which maintain the universe in all its detail, even down to the details of our daily life. It is this Law of the LORD as described in the nineteenth psalm before the statement is made that it is perfect. It is what general modern science sometimes refers to as the laws of nature, the laws having the consistency upon which all modern science places its faith. Without that consistency, or perfection, modern science, in all its rigor, could not exist.

That is why I prefer to place more confidence in the original language of the ancient scriptures over any modern translation, even though I have to carefully work out the meaning of each word for myself.

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