

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Searching For The Truth

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Number: 07

Topic: Creation Tells Us The Truth

Bible Verses: Romans 1:19-20, Acts 14:7, Psalm 19:1-4

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Romans 1:19-20 *Because that which is known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things made, both His eternal power and divinity, so that they are without excuse.*

Acts 14:17 *And yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, giving to you rain from heaven and fruitbearing seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."*

Psalms 19:1-4 *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims the work of His hands. 2 Day after day they pour out speech; night after night they communicate knowledge. 3 There is no speech; there are no words; their voice is not heard. 4 Their message has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens He has pitched a tent for the sun.*

In a world full of lies and illusions, claims and counter-claims, politics and conspiracies how can a Christian be certain of knowing even a fragment of the truth? How can we know reality from non-reality? For instance how can we know which religion is the right religion and which holy book's claims are true?

Part of the answer is found in looking at the evidence supplied by God's Creation. This was critical for me as my conversion was quite unusual. It happened during a May Day service at an Anglican Franciscan Friary in Brookfield, Australia (an outer suburb of Brisbane). That afternoon I was trying to mathematically disprove the existence of God. However God manifested Himself to me as a light and spoke to me, for what I guess was twenty minutes or so during the service and I became a believer in the goodness, power and absolute existence of God.

However I was quite unsure about what sort of God I had believed in! I was not going to blindly accept that Christianity was the "right religion". So I started on a very long and arduous search looking a wide variety of world religions for about six months aided by a BBC series on religions on TV, my own readings and auditing some lectures at university. During this period I formulated three "test questions" that I will share with you, as they proved quite useful:

My premise was: *If there is One Creator God and He is rational and truthful and consistent then His true religion will also be consistent with His Creation. God will not say one thing in Creation and another thing in His religion, therefore....*

1. The true religion will not flatly contradict known and sure basic scientific truth. For instance it will not say that the world rides on the back of a tortoise or that small animals are spontaneously generated from piles of rags.
2. The practice of the true religion will not destroy Creation. All people, everywhere, should be able to fully pursue the true religion simultaneously, without causing great harm to Creation or to basic social function.
3. God is the Creator of life so followers of the true religion should become "more alive" as a result and not become impassive, dead, wooden, legalistic or otherwise lacking in essential vitality.

The first test (of scientific consistency) eliminated astrology, the occult, tribal religions, voodoo, multiple gods, and irrational and foolish religious sects that made silly claims about nature and the world. It also seemed to eliminate religions that totally separated reality from spirituality or claimed that the existence of Creation was a mere illusion (Zen, Hinduism, Buddhism etc).

The second test eliminated religions of asceticism and total retreat, and those with begging bowls or compulsory celibacy as the highest form of spirituality (since if everyone fulfills their faith by being poor and totally celibate society would soon cease to function). The third and last test eliminated various form of rigid fundamentalism, and for me also eventually eliminated Islam, as I saw no "life" in their most devoted followers. So almost all major religions were soon eliminated as candidates for being the true religion of the One Creator God.

I finally ended up trying to decide between Judaism and Christianity. By this time I had started to read the Bible on my own and came across the following verse:

Galatians 2:21 *I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.*

I asked myself 'did Christ die for nothing?' and that seemed unthinkable! At that point I finally decided that Christianity was, after all, the true religion of the One Creator God.

So it was the evidence of Creation, logic and my own senses (plus I am sure much help from God the Holy Spirit) that was the guide on my spiritual search for truth. God used the sheer undeniable facts of Creation to point out to me His divine nature and power until I could fully intellectually believe in Christ Jesus.

Creation corrects our vision. An evening spent looking at stars will convince anyone they are not actually the center of the Universe and that all the games of all the politicians are just "passing away" when compared to the grand scheme of things.

Many people "assemble doctrines in the dungeon". By that I mean they go into a room with no external input and get their holy books, favorite philosophers and personal knowledge and experience and assiduously "cut and paste" until they have assembled a beautiful picture that is internally logically consistent and which is generally is also emotionally satisfying to them.

However these composers of doctrines rarely "look out the window" and compare their beautiful picture to the actual tangible reality outside to test if their map of reality is at all accurate. In fact sometimes they desperately shutter the window! They may even claim that it is worldly and against faith to look beyond the doctrines that were assembled in the dungeon.

People claiming instant divine healing for all, or that sickness is an illusion, or that viruses are in fact demons or thoughts, or that prosperity will be yours if you tithe each month, and greater prosperity will be yours if you double tithe, end up flatly contradicting reality. There are many people who are not healed instantly after prayer and there are many who tithe regularly and do not ever become rich (most pastors, missionaries etc).

If the way you add up the bible verses ends up with a "wrong answer", one that does not work in the real world, then it is not God's fault, you just got your sums wrong! Creation tests our theology and helps us to think straight about life and thus to get our sums right!

What we believe should not end up being so bizarre that it sends us totally off course. For instance the Devil's attempt to use the Bible to lie to Jesus, saying that He could test God and jump from the top of the Temple without His foot hitting a stone. Even now, many zealous Christians are jumping into dangerous situations and testing God, on the basis of misplaced "faith" and suffering serious harm as a result.

You have to continually "look out the window" and check your doctrine against the plain and obvious evidence of God's Creation which He has made as a witness to us

(see verses at the start of this study). Look at the birds of the air and the lilies of the field to understand God's provision, but also look to the ant and see how it prepares for the winter!

When someone makes a religious claim – check it out, both in Scripture and in the real world! We have all received wild Christian emails that have turned out to be hoaxes. Check that it is actually so!

Be very suspicious of claims that cannot be objectively tested in any way e.g. that someone saw a vision of Heaven, or visited Heaven, or that they were told by God to raise ten million dollars. There is no way you can verify such things and if they are asking you for money on the basis on a totally unverifiable claim then you may be dealing with a con-artist!

In a similar manner check the end-times claims of people who talk about lunar and solar cycles and visiting comets and star alignments and planets etc. Nearly all of them are completely muddled and incorrect in their basic science. The biblical signs of the times are listed in places such as Matthew 24 and are not found in astrological mumbo-jumbo.

I am not placing scientists in charge of your faith. Some science is fairly speculative as well (evolution, some areas of physics etc). However I am saying we need to check our faith against the obvious facts. If someone says that if you give to their ministry you will receive a hundredfold back again and that angels will put gold bars in your letterbox then you should be skeptical!

On a humorous note, someone disproved the existence of vampires and the undead as follows: Start with just one vampire, next full moon this vampire goes out and bites one more person and now there are two vampires, the next full moon each of these two vampires bites one more person each so we now have four vampires, the full moon after that the four members go out and the population of the "undead" becomes eight. So each month the vampire population doubles going from 16 to 32 to 64 to 128 to 256 and so on. After about 33 full moons you are up to eight billion people who have become vampires and you are out of victims because the whole world is now "undead". So starting with even one vampire, after just 2 years and 9 months, the vampire process has to come to an end! Thus sheer logic tells us that the classic vampire can never have existed in the first place because if there had even been one vampire, we would all end up being vampires!

Most silly religious superstitions can be disproved with similar logic. I don't care how glamorous vampires sound, they are nonsense and Christians should not believe in them or in many of the extreme supernatural claims made by certain "Christian authors".

Thus science, logic and common-sense are not the enemies of faith, but good friends and guides that God has built into the created order to assist us in our quest to know Him!

Blessings,

John Edmiston
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