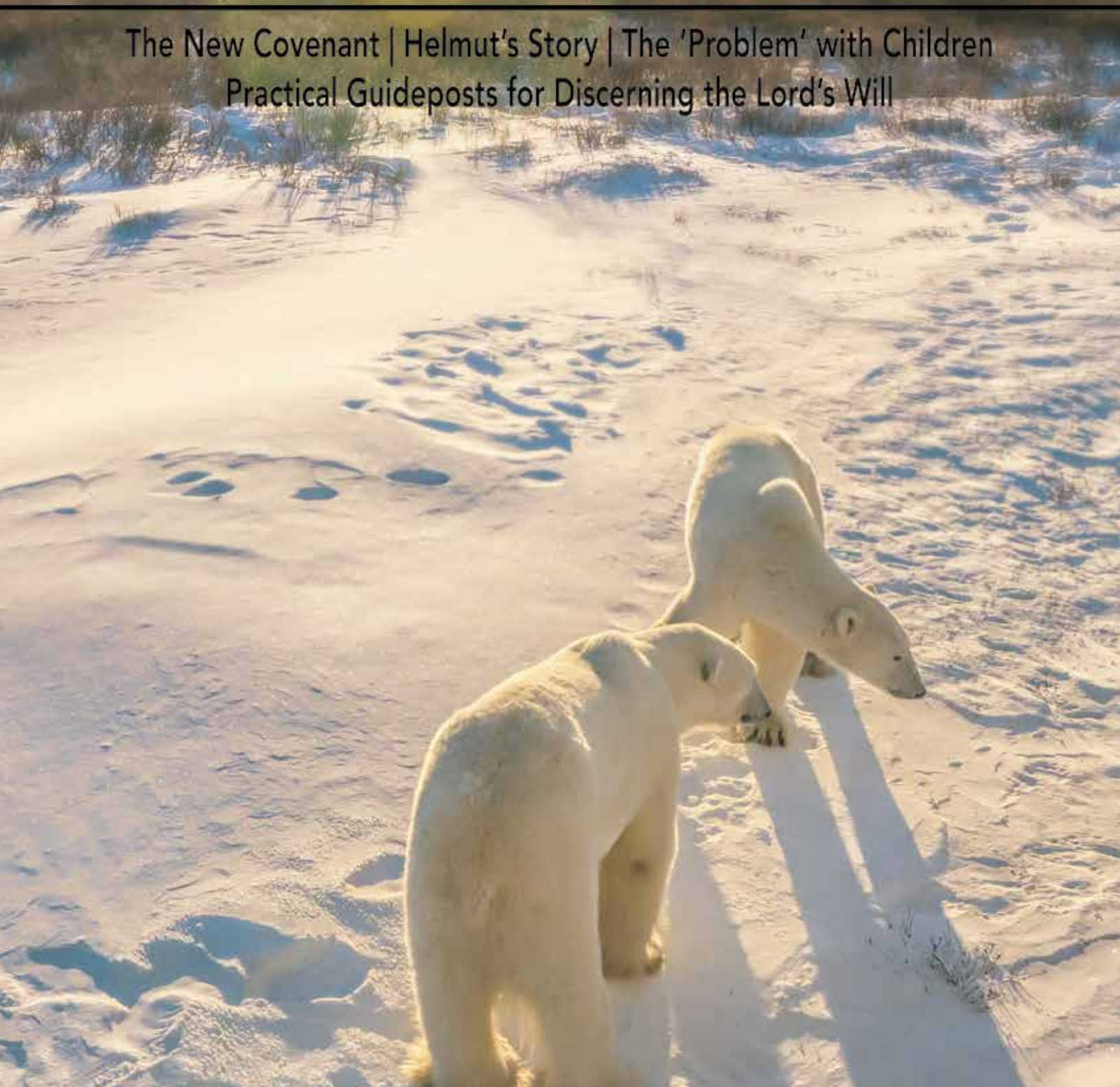


2021 Issue 2

MENBUILDERS

Building Godly men on the foundation of Jesus Christ **MAGAZINE**

The New Covenant | Helmut's Story | The 'Problem' with Children
Practical Guideposts for Discerning the Lord's Will



THE NEW COVENANT

Multiple covenants (or 'testaments') between God and human beings are presented within the pages of Scripture. Followers of Jesus may differ with respect to the exact number, interpretation, and interplay of these various covenants but no one can disagree that their existence provides a 'unifying thread' from Genesis through Revelation as God unfolds His divine plans and eternal purpose for believing men and women.

THE INTENT OF THIS ARTICLE is to first provide the reader with a brief overview of the primary covenants recorded in Scripture. We then delve into a discussion surrounding how a believer today is to conduct themselves given the historical existence of these covenants between God and man. Do all of these covenants concern the believer today? How do these covenants progressively reveal the will of God for mankind? Does one covenant nullify or contradict the other? How is the instruction to abide in Christ (John 15:1-8), walk by the Spirit (Romans 8:4; Galatians 5:16), and to be fully pleasing to our Lord (Matthew 25:23; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:4; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; Revelation 2-3) then carried out? A proper understanding of Scripture in these areas will facilitate our ability to walk a God-honouring life.

The first time that the term covenant is explicitly mentioned in Scripture occurs in Genesis 6:18 where the Lord guarantees Noah and his family safety from the flood waters should Noah build the ark. The Lord then reaffirms this covenant, giving the rainbow as a sign of His promise, and expands the details thereof in Genesis 9:9-17. Generations later, the 'Abrahamic' covenant followed and began with God's promise to make a great nation of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) and that through his descendants "all of the families of the earth shall be blessed." Further expansionary details concerning this covenant are provided in Genesis 15 and Genesis 17. In Acts 7:8 Stephen broadly refers to the Abrahamic covenant as the "covenant of circumcision" because all males submitting to this covenant were to be circumcised. The details provided in Genesis

15:12-14 foreshadowed the time when Abraham's descendants would serve another nation under bondage. This nation turned out to be Egypt and the 'Mosaic' covenant (Exodus 19-24) was established shortly after these events (predicted in Genesis 15) took place. The covenant ratified at Mount Sinai essentially outlined the duties and moral obligations of the nation of Israel in order to remain a "special treasure" and a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6) in the land in which they were yet to conquer and inherit. By fulfilling their part of the oath of the covenant (Exodus 24:7) Israel was to be a set-apart nation (Leviticus 11:44) evidencing God's blessings to the surrounding nations (Deuteronomy 4:6). Failure to carry out their part of the covenant would result in 'death' — the forfeiture of Yahweh's blessings and life in the promised land (Deuteronomy 30:15-20). Just as the 'Noahic' covenant (Genesis 9) outlined God's guarantee to preserve humanity from another flood so the divine relationship between God and Israel was to be preserved and portrayed in part via the sacrificial worship system outlined in Leviticus. Crucial to this covenant agreement was provision for the cleansing from trespasses and sins. In particular, the atonement for Israel's sin was made possible on the annual Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). This sacrificial system demonstrated that without the shedding of blood there could be no forgiveness from sin (Hebrews 9:22) and foreshadowed the need for a superior blood sacrifice that could permanently deal with the sin, and sin nature, of mankind. The 'Davidic' covenant further unfolded the eternal plans of God (2 Samuel 7). David wanted to build a permanent, physical structure (that is, a temple) that would in

a sense supersede the portable tabernacle built according to the pattern given to Moses. In response the Lord expanded David's eternal vision and promised to build him a different type of house. The house that the Lord would build was to be a lineage, a dynasty even, led by an individual that would forever reign over the earth. In effect, the promise to David further clarified the covenant with Abraham recorded in Genesis. Whereas Genesis 22:18 states that through Abraham's seed the world would be blessed, the Lord now notified Israel that the promised seed whose kingdom would be established forever would be a royal descendent of David.

Persistent apostasy and failure to follow the statutes of God resulted not only in a split within the nation of Israel after King Solomon's reign, but eventually the sacking of Jerusalem, the demise of the monarchy, and a 70 year captivity within Babylon. Despite the Lord severely chastening Israel during this dark era we also observe indications of a new work yet to be accomplished within Israel. This work would be a renewal performed within the hearts of a God-seeking remnant and is referred to as a "new covenant" in Jeremiah 31:31-33: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Although the term "new

covenant" is mentioned just once in the Old Testament, it is frequently alluded to in other places. For example, in Ezekiel 36:24-28 we read a prophecy of a changed heart within Israel and the giving of the Holy Spirit to faithful followers of Messiah: "For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep my judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God." In describing this new covenant, we sense a culmination of previous covenants and a further maturation of the eternal plans of our God. We also see that this covenant of peace with Israel is closely associated with the coming Messiah (Isaiah 42:6-7;

49:5-8; 53:1-12; 55:3-5) and includes foreigners and Gentile (non-Jewish) nations (Isaiah 60:1-3).

The arrival of the long-anticipated Messiah, Jesus Christ, consummated a new era between the LORD, Israel, and the Gentiles. Scripture describes this era as being founded upon a "new," "second," or "better" covenant. In Luke 16:16 Jesus said, "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it." (Also see Matthew 11:13 for a similar statement by Jesus.) During the Passover meal with His disciples Jesus declared, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:20) The writer of Hebrews plainly states, "But now He [Jesus] has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second." (Hebrews 8:6-7) The "first covenant" mentioned here refers to the covenant made with Israel, as recorded in Exodus 19-24. Its accompanying standards and instructions were recorded in the Mosaic law. The nation of Israel repeatedly failed to meet the law's demands. Paul writes that the law given to Moses and Israel at Mount Sinai

ultimately functioned as "our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24; also, see 1 Timothy 1:8-11) So the law decisively points out our sinfulness but is unable to bring divine life to the inner man of its adherents: "For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law." (Galatians 3:21) We also see from Hebrews 10:4 that "It is not possible that the blood of

bulls and goats could take away sins." The Old Testament sacrificial system was not sufficient, nor was it intended, to permanently deal with our sin. The law shows us God's standard, and highlights our inability to meet it. The law's demands can only be satisfied via faith in, and partaking of, the ultimate sacrificial Lamb—Jesus Christ. It is by putting our faith in the sufficiency of Christ and His shed blood that enables our heavenly Father to truly "pass over" us in mercy. Whereas the nation of Israel was required to apply a lamb's blood to the doorposts of their homes in Egypt (Exodus 12) to avoid certain death we, figuratively speaking, apply Christ's blood to the doorposts of our hearts. It is impossible to overstate the implications of this new covenant and it hinges upon the work that Jesus Christ accomplished via His death and resurrection. Jesus, as the initiator and mediator of the new covenant (Hebrews 10:9; Hebrews 12:24), is boldly declared to be the Messiah and Royal offspring of David (Revelation 22:16), the only perfect fulfiller of the Mosaic law (Matthew 5:17), the true



Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16,19), the unchangeable and holy High Priest (Hebrews 7:23-24), the Minister of the true tabernacle (Hebrews 8:1-2), the resurrection and the life (John 11:25), and the 'veil remover' (2 Corinthians 3:14) for those previously under the law.

We have now Biblically established that under this new covenant salvation from sin is offered via Jesus Christ alone. But having entered into this new life in Christ (that is, having been 'born again' or 'saved') how do we properly walk in it? Much confusion has arisen amongst believers in this area. Questions that sometimes arise go something like this: If the law given to Moses depicts God's standard then do I now at least try to adhere to it as a believer? If I desire to be an overcoming believer what do I need to do to please the Lord? Questions such as these can be answered by a proper understanding of what actually transpired at our initial salvation.

At the time of our repentance and placing faith in Christ a fundamental and life-changing shift happened in our inner being. The life of Christ, via the indwelling Holy Spirit, was birthed in us. John 3:6 says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." While human parents beget human babies the Lord begets a new Spirit in us—His Spirit. Romans 8:15-16 says: "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." So, we do not need a certificate or confirmation from others that we are a child of God! Rather, God's Spirit confirms it within our inner man, our spirit. All those born of God will come to recognize this witness within. Paul also writes, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16) Under the new covenant, God's Spirit lives within believers. He does not live within a temple or tabernacle made by hands. We are now 'saints' and our bodies are to be a 'holy' (that is, set apart) dwelling place of God. **To walk in this new life we need to be led by the source of this new life—the Spirit of God:** "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Romans 8:14) When we 'walk' by the Spirit we will not sin; rather, we will please our heavenly Father. Much of this walk in the Spirit is addressed in Galatians 5 so let's spend some time there. First, Galatians 5:16 says, "Walk in [or, by] the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." To walk by the Spirit is to walk in obedience to, and fellowship with, the Lord. This is not merely a religious checklist to function under. It is to seek His direction in our daily lives and to obey it, no matter the personal cost. It is to seek Christ's will first, not my personal agenda. Furthermore, it is to have Christ as our life and to be partakers of His divine nature! (Colossians 3:4; 2 Peter 1:4) Brothers, this is an amazing calling! We must also realize that there is a tension that exists here. Despite the life of Christ living within us we still possess the capability of walking in our old, sinful ways. That is why we are instructed in Galatians 5:16 to walk according to the Lord's ways; that is, we have proper choices to make as we are led by His Spirit in

our inner man. It goes further in Galatians to say: "For the flesh lusts [that is, wars] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." (Galatians 5:17-18) We read that we are in a battle. And what a battle it is! Will my choices produce 'life' or 'death' in my walk with Christ? When we follow the Spirit's guidance we will have life and our spiritual 'cup' will be a light and testimony to others as well. When we obey the Spirit, we will not commit the immoral acts that the law of Moses spoke against. You see, the fruit of a life led by the Lord is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Being a believer means that I am "one spirit" with the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:17). This is a literal fulfillment of Ezekiel 36:24-28 and empowers us to have Christ's law written on our hearts. When we walk according to God's Spirit, our heart's desire will be in perfect sync with the Lord's heart. In Matthew 5:20 Christ is recorded as saying, "Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." The Lord describes the fulfillment of the law as coming down to a heart issue; we need a new heart. In Matthew 15:17-19 Jesus teaches: "Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The religious crowd of Jesus' day was bent on an outward show. However, the Lord always went straight to the heart. In Matthew 5 Christ makes repeated statements along the lines of "You have heard that it was said to those of old," in describing the law's commands. He then would say, "But I say to you..." For example, the religious crowd prided themselves in not committing the physical act of adultery. Jesus elevated the standard and said, "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28) Who can stand before such a standard? People may pride themselves in "keeping the law" but let's be honest—we cannot keep anything without abiding in Christ. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

The Lord in His mercy and eternal purpose has grafted the believing Gentiles into His family (Ephesians 3:1-7; Romans 11). This profound revelation was also granted to Peter as recorded

in Acts 10. In a vision to Peter, the Lord demonstrated that the uncircumcised Gentiles were not “common” or “unclean”; the gospel was to go to them as well. This represented a monumental shift in the thinking of the early church and much debate ensued regarding the need (or not) for circumcising believing Gentiles, the keeping of dietary laws, and celebrating the festal holidays described in Leviticus (see Acts 15 for starters). The vision granted Peter in Acts 10 began to show the leadership of the early church that what produced holiness and Godliness in followers of Christ was not due to what one ate or their circumcision status—it was a new heart. The new heart produced in the believer the ability to keep the greatest commandments of the law: “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.’” (Matthew 22:37-40) Christ declared that the commandment of sacrificial love for one another is a hallmark of life under the new covenant. “A **new** commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35) Indeed, Paul wrote in Romans 13:8: “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.”

Living this new life in the Spirit did not come without some major hiccups even when it came to the conduct of the early apostles. Peter, for a time, ceased from eating with the new Gentile believers for fear of the opinion of believing Jews who preached continued adherence to the Mosaic law (Galatians 2:11-13). Paul publicly rebuked Peter for his hypocrisy and for the effect that it had on other believers, including Barn-

abas. From the record of this incident we receive the crucial Scripture that states: “For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:19-20) Although under the new covenant we are still free to abstain from certain foods (for example, pork) Paul writes in Romans 14:14 that “I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself.” We are not to show contempt for one another because of differing convictions concerning the keeping of certain days or dietary laws. To do so would violate the greatest commandment of all (recall Matthew 22:37-40). Nevertheless, a preoccupation concerning what to eat, etc., is not the vision for kingdom life. Romans 14:17 says, “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

In summary, the life of believers today is completely supplied by the life of Christ via His indwelling Spirit. We are grafted into His life and when we willfully abide in Him we will please Him and bring life to others as our cup overflows with genuine fruit of the Spirit. This divine, eternal life is provided to us freely by faith in Jesus at the time of our salvation and for eternity thereafter. It is not dependent upon cultural background, education, gender, circumcision status, or food preferences (Matthew 15:16-20; Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 3:28; 1 Timothy 4:4). As we mature in faith His work is evidenced by the spiritual fruit in our lives. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)



Helmut Sass' Story



War exacts a heavy toll, especially if you come in second.

I was born in the summer of 1942. It was the middle of World War 2. Our family consisted of my father, mother, my one year old sister Erika, and now me. When I was just nine months old my father was drafted into the German army. He was sent to fight on the Russian Front and sadly never returned. Because of my young age when my father disappeared I have no recollection of him apart from pictures and family stories that were passed down to me.

After the war ended in 1945 we were ordered off our family farm when the territory reverted to Poland. Nearly all of the German inhabitants were forcibly repatriated to Germany. My mom, now a 30 year-old widow with two young children, hitched one of our horses to a wagon and loaded my sister and me on it along with a few belongings. We joined the seemingly endless caravan of refugees heading west. After weeks of travel, we finally arrived in a small town in north central Germany. We were subsequently provided accommodations on a 200 year-old estate which became our home for the next seven years. My mother worked in the fields and also helped care for the landowner's livestock.

God directed us to a group of believers in a nearby city. On Sundays we would walk more than an hour each way to attend church meetings. During these difficult times we met precious people who remained friends for life. Although I did not understand it at the time, my mother had a profound faith and total trust in God. I clearly see now that He provided for all of our needs during those unsettling days. I remember my mother always being grateful for what we had. She would thank God for never forsaking us. I began to learn that God is indeed a "Father of the fatherless, a defender of widows." (Psalm 68:5)

In the early 1950s we learned of opportunities to immigrate to North America and were encouraged by others to apply. On January 31, 1953, we boarded the Beaverbrae cargo ship with upwards of 700 other immigrants and sailed for Canada. Men and women were housed separately aboard the ship. I was 10 years old and assigned to the men's quarters. Here the metal framed beds were stacked three high and I was relegated to the top bunk.

After 13 grueling days at sea our ship docked at St. John, New Brunswick. An additional four day train ride brought us to our destination—a farm near Taber, Alberta. Our first home in Canada had two bedrooms and a kitchen. There was no electricity or running water. Our family of three also shared the cramped quarters with my aunt, uncle, and two younger cousins. We were obligated to work on this farm to pay for our travel costs to Canada. It was winter and we would not get paid until late summer. I recall being in a store and my mother speaking with the store owner in a language that I did not understand. I later learned that my mom persuaded the owner to sell us food and supplies on credit. Once or twice a week

I walked or hitchhiked the four miles to town to do the shopping. This I enjoyed as it was a pleasant relief from working in the fields.

After our first year working in Alberta, our income was sufficient to pay for our boat fare as well as our account at the local store. Since all had gone well we agreed to remain for another growing season. After the second season we boarded a Greyhound bus heading east. With one suitcase and several carry-on bags comprising all of our earthly belongings, we arrived in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on October 31, 1954.

We make minor choices which have major consequences.

My mother decided to live in Winnipeg, which at the time seemed like a minor decision. In retrospect, however, this had a major impact on the remainder of our lives. My family's first dwelling in Winnipeg was two rented rooms in a rooming house on Alexander Ave. It was within walking distance to McDermot Avenue Baptist Church, which became our church home for over 40 years.

Due to many years of hard physical labour my mother developed serious health problems. I was encouraged to begin working full time to help support our family. So, at the age of 15 I left school in order to find employment. To do something like this today is almost unheard of in Canada given all of the social support systems that now exist. Nevertheless, the Lord's hand preserved me in it all.

When I was 17 years old I made the most important decision in my life—I gave my life to the Lord and started to follow Him. The Bible refers to this as being "born again." Jesus said, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) This all-important decision to whole heartedly follow Christ benefits not only this life but also our life after our physical death. I do not have to fear death because Jesus has conquered its grip on believers. And as a follower of Jesus I can now participate in building His church and eternal kingdom. I have also learned that God supplies all of my earthly needs when I put Him first. Jesus taught, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) God has been faithful even at times when I haven't been. God always keeps his promises!

In July, 1969, I married Shirley, whom I had met years before at our church. It was an exciting time as we began our life together. One of the first things I embarked upon after marriage was to start my own business. Admittedly I have dabbled in a few ventures. The first, major business venture that my wife and I were involved with was a soft drink bottling and retail operation named Pic-a-Pop Beverages Ltd. The business began on Stapleton St in Winnipeg in the early 1970s with our factory producing multiple flavors of soft drinks. We sold them, in case lots, directly from the factory to the consumer in reusable glass bottles. Because we eliminated major dis-

tribution costs and retail markups we were able to pass these savings on to the consumer. I recall selling 24 bottles of 10oz pop or 12 bottles of 30oz pop for only \$1.50.

Every new venture has a 'learning curve.' Because of inexperience I made many mistakes. We were fortunate, however, to attract valuable help and many employees remained with us for the duration of the business. The concept and the quality of the soft drink product were popular with consumers which enabled us to expand rapidly, primarily through franchised operators. From one location in Winnipeg, we expanded in a few short years to 14 factories and hundreds of retail outlets in Canada and the USA. We even opened a bottling plant in Hawaii. I recall one year flying to Hawaii numerous times for work. But I don't recall going to the beach even once that year!

Markets change and so do the habits of consumers. Returnable glass bottles were replaced in the soft drink industry with aluminum cans and plastic containers that could be sold more easily in big box stores. Savings gave way to convenience and after 20 successful years we experienced a major downturn in sales. We eventually sold the Winnipeg operation and it closed shortly thereafter.

Another of my ventures was within real estate. This was a logical transition because our pop business entailed a heavy real estate component which gave me useful experience within that sector. We formed a company named Triple S Realty Inc. and began acquiring multiple family and commercial real estate properties in downtown Winnipeg. We were able to do this by borrowing large sums of money. At that time interest rates on mortgages started at 12% and eventually ballooned to as high as 22%. I began to experience first-hand the painful reality that the Bible describes in Proverbs 22:7, "The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender." I was now in bondage to the banks and the mortgage companies. Our larger properties were primarily heritage buildings requiring major upgrades and improvements. To do this, I borrowed additional funds totalling millions of dollars. The additional costs were not sustainable and in order to avoid bankruptcy we began selling our properties. Through it all God remained faithful. Our family never lacked any good thing. After years of struggle, and many sleepless nights, God enabled us to sell our properties and pay off our debts.

I have been asked many times, "Helmut, what happened? What went wrong? You appeared to be doing so well." I could make many excuses, such as blaming the economic conditions of the 1980s, my inexperience, lack of a formal education, etc. However, God hates all sin, and one sin that the Bible points out as particularly grievous is pride. I was guilty of pride! The Bible says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6) When things went well I took the credit! I once heard the following definition of pride as: "Believing that I have achieved something, that in reality God and others have done for me, and through me."

Although I still remain active in real estate work I now approach it from an entirely different perspective. I want the Lord to lead me, not my personal ambitions. It has made a world of difference in my walk with Him!

I am now almost 80 years old. I see the Lord's sovereign and protective hand all over the details of my life. I have been married for 52 years to an amazing wife who has remained by my side despite some 'difficult waters' to cross. We have four amazing daughters who, with their husbands, have given us 22 precious grandchildren. It has now been over 60 years since I committed my life to Jesus Christ. I do admit to many mistakes and there are things that I would certainly now do differently. But to pursue and trust the Lord is a decision I have never regretted.

I leave you, dear reader, with some life changing advice: If you do not have a personal relationship with God, you can know Him today! Admit your need, your sins, and place your faith in Jesus Christ as your Saviour. He is the living Truth in a world that is so dominated by error and lies. Will you trust Him today?

Helmut Sass



Left: Helmut with his mother and sister, shortly before immigrating from Germany.



Right: Helmut giving children a tour of a pic-a-pop facility in 1994.

'the PROBLEM'

with children



Inconvenient. Expensive. Accidents. Draining. Career Killers.

ALL OF THESE TERMS HAVE BEEN frequently used to describe the 'destructive impact' that children have on their parents. Evidently this thinking has impacted one's preferred family size. In the early 1800s an American woman would, on average, have between 7 and 8 live births in the course of her reproductive lifetime. Birth rates have typically been on the decline ever since. Now in the 21st century, the average American woman has fewer than two live births during her life. The projected 2021 Canadian fertility rate, at 1.5 live births per woman, is even less than that of the USA.

It is true that parents must sacrifice much in terms of finance, energy, and time when it comes to raising their children. We cannot minimize this and say that there is no cost. Indeed there is a great cost. But on this sacrificial journey of parenting, the key is to see the present and eternal value that our Lord places upon children. Let's take a quick look at why the Lord values children.

(i) Human beings are called to be image bearers ('imagers') of God. This includes children!

Genesis 1:26-27 states, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Because every human being has the capacity to bear the image and likeness of their Creator they are intrinsically valuable. No wonder then that Satan minimalizes the worth of

children. Satan despises anyone that reminds him of the Lord. Our enemy's desire is to disparage and destroy any person that might display the Lord on this earth.

(ii) Children are prospective workers in the Lord's economy and kingdom.

A child's true worth and purpose will be discovered when they submit their lives to Christ and actively participate in furthering His church and kingdom on earth. Psalm 8:2 gives a glimpse of this. It says, "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have ordained strength, because of Your enemies, that You may silence the enemy and the avenger." In His divine plan the Lord has chosen to use redeemed human beings to build His kingdom. And guess what? All adults were once children. Even our Lord Jesus Christ came to earth as a baby. In Matthew 2 we see that King Herod's fear of being usurped by another was a personal motivation to attempt to kill Jesus while a young child. Similar to King Herod, Satan doesn't want to be usurped in any area. We see in Revelation 12:11 that human beings have a crucial participatory role in overcoming Satan—"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." Is it no wonder that Satan then despises the fruit of the womb? Today, via abortion, we sadly observe that a mother's womb is one of the most dangerous places for a child to be.

(iii) Children are a reward not a loss!

Points (i) and (ii) begin to unpack why children are intrinsically valuable. Let's consider some Scripture that specifically

describes children as a reward. Psalm 127:3-5 says, “Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate.” The following Psalm also describes the worth of family. Psalm 128:1-4 says, “Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.”

(iv) God has children too!

When we are born again we become the spiritual offspring of the Lord. God is the Father of our regenerated spirit as we are brought, spiritually speaking, from certain eternal death to new life. Hebrews 12:9 teaches “Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?” Over the centuries the Lord has been building His family out of every “tribe and tongue and people and nation” in order to produce a Kingdom of kings and priests for Himself on the new earth. (Revelation 5:9-10; Revelation 21:2-3) For this we can praise our Saviour with the words of 1 John 3:1-2—“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

(v) Childlike faith and humility are pictures of what mature believers should evidence.

In Matthew 18 Jesus taught that we need to come to Him with childlike faith and dependence. “Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the

greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’” (Matthew 18:2-4) Children are highly dependent upon their parents for food, clothing, shelter, and basic training. On the surface children appear to have very little to offer their parents when young. However, how blessed a parent is when their children begin to grow in obedience and wisdom. It is the same with our spiritual Father; 3 John 4 says “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” Just as a baby is desperate for its mother’s milk so spiritual babies are to “desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.” (1 Peter 2:2) The faith that children place in their parents is frequently convicting. Young children especially tend to take at face value what their parents say, even when their parents are not trustworthy. Similarly, we must also rest ourselves in the hands of our loving and sovereign spiritual Father. His words are always trustworthy. “The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.” (Psalm 12:6-7)

Perhaps it is now time for a bit of a caution. You are not automatically more pleasing than another believer merely because you are married and are willing to have (or have had) a large family. 1 Corinthians 13 clearly teaches that people can appear to do some amazing things for the Lord, yet without love it will profit them nothing in the Lord’s eyes. Also in 1 Corinthians 4:5 we read: “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels [that is, motives] of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God.” Why we do something is as important to the Lord as what we actually do! Other passages (Matthew 19:12; 1 Corinthians 7) teach that believers may be called to remain single for the greater cause of the Kingdom. Other couples struggle with fertility and health issues when trying to conceive. Scripture presents numerous examples (Genesis 15; 1 Samuel 1; Luke 1) where the difficulty of conception actually furthered the Lord’s purposes. Our responsibility is to go before the Lord, discern His direction in these matters and then obey. In doing this let’s not believe the lie that children are a detriment rather than a divinely bestowed blessing.



PRACTICAL GUIDEPOSTS

FOR DISCERNING

THE LORD'S WILL

IF YOU HAVE FELLOWSHIPED WITH other believers for any length of time you will likely have heard certain ones tell you that the Lord is directing them into a new life calling or ministry opportunity. Perhaps you have made these statements yourself. Sometimes the directions that brothers in the Lord embark upon are unexpected and appear to come out of left field. How can we be certain that a new calling has arisen out of the Lord's heart and not simply out of our own desires? It is my heart that the following discussion will shed some light on the general process of discerning the Lord's direction. What is presented here is not a formula or a recipe that will look exactly the same when assessing life's options. Nevertheless the instruction provided here is rooted in Scripture and

thereby can serve as guideposts for determining the Lord's heart in important matters of life.

First things first: the perceived physical, mental, financial, or spiritual capacity to take on a new opportunity is not the sole (or even primary) litmus test for determining the validity of a decision. We must truly see that just because you 'can' do something does not necessarily mean that you 'should' do something. Contrary to much of our natural thinking, ability does not equal calling. Scripture is replete with examples of men who, at first glance, were woefully inadequate for the callings that God had directed them into. Natural confidence, bravado, creativity and strong oratory skills were not the Lord's criteria when selecting men to carry out His will. "He [the Lord] does not delight in the strength of the horse; he takes no pleasure in the legs [strength] of a man. The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy." (Psalm 147:10-11)

GUIDEPOST #1: The Lord's calling for you may not be your natural preference.

This point may be difficult to receive since from birth we are inclined simply to do what we prefer to do. Our culture also continually reinforces the motto to "follow your heart." The Lord's work proceeds in a different manner. We must be able to distinguish between our natural preferences and the Spirit's will. A fundamental fact is that our flesh and the Lord's spirit are in direct opposition to one another (Romans 8:5-8; Ga-



latians 5:16-17). In our fleshly pursuits we can never please God. What we prefer must become aligned with the heart of God. All natural abilities and preferences must be submitted to His will otherwise they are unsuitable for His Kingdom work and will, in reality, be working against the building of His church. It is not our responsibility to ‘find out all of the ways that we can help God out.’ It may sound a bit juvenile to word things this way but, sadly, much of what believers do in an attempt to build the church life is merely their preferred ministry or service. That is, many believers commit themselves to what they naturally like to do and feel adequate enough to carry out. Let’s consider a practical example: Meet ‘John Doe.’ John has been a believer for several years now and truly desires to be engaged more within the work of the Lord. He is a gifted public speaker, frequently gives presentations as a part of his employment, and (naturally) doesn’t shun the spotlight. Given his comfortability with public speaking he (naturally) assumes that his calling is to be publicly involved in evangelism or preaching. However, unbeknownst to John is that the Lord wants to do a deeper work in him as well as the lost. To accomplish this, the Lord desires that for now John serve more behind the scenes in the body life. This does not mean that John is not to share the truth with others. But the Lord, knowing all things, wants John to witness one-on-one at his workplace where the message of the Gospel is highly needed. It turns out that he is the only believer employed there. Having John share at his workplace will serve to teach John both humility and faith. Humility, in that when he faces opposition for speaking for Christ, he will learn how to deal out of a heart of love with people that he sees on a daily basis. And faith—since John also loves his job, he will daily need to commit his job security to the Lord when asked by Him to share with others. This time of training in humility and faith would not be John’s (natural) choice but, of course, the Lord “has done all things well.” (Mark 7:37)

GUIDEPOST #2: Counsel has been asked of the Lord.

Adhering to this guidepost seems like a Christianity 101 ‘no brainer’ but you may be surprised as to how often we mess this up. Asking counsel of the Lord does not consist of merely informing the Lord as to your plans. We must have open hands, in prayer, when seeking the Lord. George Muller once wrote that to properly discern the Lord’s direction one must get his “heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people is just here.”

In John 14:14 Jesus says, “If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” Perhaps we do not understand what asking “in My name” truly implies. It does not imply that our petitions will be fulfilled merely by ending our prayers with “in Jesus’ name.” To ask something in Jesus’ name is to pray in accordance to the Lord’s heart, not ours. Matthew 6:10 instructs us to pray “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” When our heart is aligned to Christ’s will He can fulfill whatever He desires through us. James 4:3 says that “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you

may spend it on your pleasures.”

No matter how much visible ‘evidence’ we have to proceed in a particular direction, we must genuinely pray and seek the Lord’s heart. In the book of Joshua we read how the nation of Israel was to utterly destroy the adulterous nations that then inhabited the land of Canaan. This land was to be the inheritance of the 12 tribes of Israel, subject to them clearing the land of the physically and spiritually hostile nations. They were to make no covenants of peace with these nations due to their extreme wickedness. We read in Joshua 9 that the inhabitants of Gibeon, in an effort to preserve their lives, concocted a plan to make a peace deal with Israel. They feigned to be a peace-seeking people from a faraway land. To accomplish this they sent a delegation of their people in tattered clothing, equipped with worn out supplies and moldy food. The leaders of Israel, including faithful Joshua, failed to seek counsel of the Lord when asked to make a covenant with the ungodly people of Gibeon. Joshua 9:14-15 records, “Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the Lord. So Joshua made peace with them...” Joshua failed to seek the Lord’s counsel by placing undo priority on the physical ‘evidence’ brought to him. It turned out that the people of Gibeon lived nearby in the land. They should have been destroyed but now the covenant of peace had to be kept. Israel now risked the temptation of intermarriage with this neighbouring nation and the all-to-frequent idol worship that followed such close relationships.

GUIDEPOST #3: Place yourself under God-ordained authority and receive Godly counsel from the brothers.

Given our natural drive for independence this guidepost often appears undesirable. Our tendency towards thinking we know best hampers us from seeking input from others. We must rise above this and pursue input from the authorities in our lives. Authority ordained by God comes in many forms: for example, our parents, employer, government, and local church leadership have various opportunities to speak into our lives and all roles are appointed by the Lord. Here we will limit ourselves to considering the role of our church family in assisting our decision making process.

We should not fall into the trap of being self-proclaimed prophets having no accountability. We should not set out on a new course without receiving input from the brothers in our local church. Yes, there may be the rare occurrence where there is truly no other brother to seek out for advice but by and large the Lord will place other believers in our lives that are more than capable of giving us a true and timely word. Generally speaking, there should be an ‘amen’ from the leading, godly brothers in our local church. Godly men are those men who will share with you what the Lord has showed them. These brothers do not merely exist to rubber stamp your preferred plans. There are numerous incidents in Scripture where Godly direction has been provided via the counsel of the brothers. Let’s consider two occurrences, both from the life of Paul, as recorded in Acts.



(i) Paul and Barnabas are sent out by the leading brothers in the church at Antioch.

Acts 13:1-3 “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” We see in this account that sincere brotherly fellowship and serious prayer enabled the brothers to perceive the direction of the Holy Spirit. This was a Spirit-led, corporate church endorsement for the commissioning of Barnabas and Saul. This decision was not made by subtle manipulation or personal agendas.

(ii) Paul and Silas are sent out by the leading brothers in the church at Antioch.

Paul and Barnabas eventually returned to Antioch and resumed fellowship with the assembly there. In Acts 15:36-41 we read that after some time Paul was burdened to visit the saints that were won to Christ in their initial work together. Barnabas was determined to again bring with them a younger believer, Mark, to assist them in the work. Paul strongly disagreed with this choice given Mark’s sudden departure early in their first missionary journey together. We read in Acts 15:39 that “The contention became so sharp that they [Paul and Barnabas] parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus.” The ‘amen’ from the brothers seemed to be in support of Paul because we then read in verses 40-41 that “Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren, to the grace of God. And he [Paul] went through Syria and

Cilicia, strengthening the churches.” It seems that the brethren in Antioch agreed with Paul’s decision and gave him and Silas their blessing prior to departure. It is interesting to note that Scripture records very little about the ministry of Barnabas and Mark from this point forward. Men, it is no small thing to go against the consensus of other godly brothers. If brothers that you have fellowshiped with provide you with a caution it is to be taken seriously.

GUIDEPOST #4: Long term fruit: A work of the Lord will build up the local church life.

Using this guidepost to determine the Lord’s direction will, by necessity, take time. Rest assured, however, that all genuine leading of the Lord is ultimately used to build His church. We read in the latter part of 1 Corinthians 14:26, “Let all things be done for edification [that is, building up].” We see in farming that most fruit comes to maturity long after the season of planting. In the early stages of plant development it is difficult, to the untrained eye, to determine if what is growing is a weed or a useful plant. However, if guideposts 1-3 are violated we can be assured that the seeding process has gone awry. In this case we will likely not obtain good fruit down the line. If the initial direction taken by an individual is not initially grounded in the fruit of the spirit (for example, love, humility, self-control, and teachability) we can be certain that, if no correction occurs, the long term fruit will also be of poor quality.

If people are genuinely touched by the Lord they will desire to be built into the fellowship of the church life. They will desire to be led by the Spirit within the corporate body somewhere. I Corinthians 10:17 remarks “For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread [that is, Christ].” So-called moves of the Spirit that are factious are largely built upon tangential issues, poor exegesis of Scripture,

and personal agendas. Instead of building the local assembly they will be cancerous and will tear down the body.

GUIDEPOST #5: Current life circumstances can provide useful cautions.

Perhaps a practical example will provide clarity. Suppose you are offered a new position within your company. It is a position that you are qualified for, given your job experience and past training. The pay increase is attractive as money for your family is tight, at least from your perspective. On the one hand, it almost seems to be a no-brainer of a decision. However, one practical caution in your spirit is that the new position will require a significantly higher time commitment at work. You will likely have to bring work home on a frequent basis and you foresee long nights ahead. “Our children are young,” your wife also reminds you, and so this makes you take a lengthier pause. The thought that this job would be perfectly suited for a single man, or for an older man with grown children, lingers in your mind. Brothers, this could be a practical caution from the Lord in your spirit that is confirmed by your wife. We only have so much physical capacity. Yes, the Lord can grant us strength for any situation but we must first be assured that He desires us to be in the ‘situation’ at all. Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” is sometimes used in an unjustified manner by believers to take on any new opportunity. Remember that Philippians 4:13 is preceded by Philippians 4:11-12 which state, “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” The Lord often reminds me to ‘know my limits.’ We have an infinite God but we are finite beings currently restricted to time, space, and bodies that tire easily. As long as cautions like these remain in our mind we should not make a hasty decision.

GUIDEPOST #6: Go with His peace.

Admittedly, this final guidepost is the most subjective of the six that I am presenting here. Nevertheless this guidepost works in conjunction with, not opposition to, the other five. Consider Colossians 3:15, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.” I want to focus on the first part of this verse. We must recognize that much of our walk is to be led by the Holy Spirit on a moment by moment basis. For example, what we say in a given conversation or what we let our mind dwell upon are typically near-instantaneous decisions that must be governed by the Spirit. Have you ever had the Lord nudge you in your spirit to say something, or not to say something, in the moment? This is a very subjective walk that we are discussing here and it is a walk that must be completely conducted in submission to the peace of His Spirit, not ours. Consider again the phrase from Colossians 3:15, “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” The word “rule” means to arbitrate, umpire, or preside. It is the peace of God that we must possess on a moment by moment basis before proceeding in any direction, no

matter how small. A note of caution here: we must not confuse His peace with simply an emotion or some sort of mystical experience. Although the Lord’s peace can evoke a positive emotion in us, His peace is much more than this. The Lord’s peace provides us with the settled awareness of His will even if our natural feelings and inclinations are in opposition. This moment by moment walk in the Spirit is a learned process as we grow in maturity with Him and our minds are transformed (Romans 12:1-2). If we do not have the peace of God to proceed with something we must take pause in our direction, or possibly cease entirely. Recall that true peace is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Proceeding in a direction or a decision where we do not discern the Lord’s peace is an unhealthy choice for our walk and the building of His kingdom.

This article provides a sobering word but a needed one. Dear brothers, let us truly know the mind of the Lord using the guideposts He has so graciously supplied to us through His speaking, His written Word, prayer, the counsel of other brothers, life circumstances, and His moment by moment peace. We need to be good stewards of His resources so that one day, on **that day**, we may hear “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matthew 25:21)





"The Bible is full of contradictions and errors."

"How can you be sure the Bible is the same now as when it was written, given that it has been copied and translated so many times?"

These common charges against the Christian Scriptures are often followed with an assertion like, "Historians and scientists have long since proven that the Bible is inaccurate and unreliable."

But how accurate is that statement? Is the Bible really full of contradictions? Is it outdated, inauthentic, and full of scientific and historical errors as so many assert? In short, can we trust the Bible?

Here we will consider some objections to the accuracy and reliability of the Bible to help you make a more informed decision about whether or not the Bible is trustworthy.

False Impressions

Consider the following statements:

- The Bible says that God helps those who help themselves.
- The books of the New Testament were written centuries after the events they describe.
- "Cleanliness is next to godliness" is in the Bible.
- According to the Bible, the earth is flat.
- The earliest New Testament manuscripts go back only to the fourth or fifth centuries AD.

- The Bible teaches that the earth is the center of the universe.
- The English Bible is a translation of a translation of a translation, etc. of the original, and fresh errors were introduced in each stage of the process.

How many of the above statements do you think are true? The answer is none; all of them are false. Yet these false impressions persist in the minds of many, and misinformation like this produces a skeptical attitude toward the Bible.

The fact is that, with few exceptions, many have reached their conclusions about the Bible through second- and third-hand sources rather than through firsthand investigation. For example, it is a rare person who has personally examined the text to see if an alleged contradiction is really there. Someone who asserts that the Bible is full of contradictions should be able to name at least one, if not several; challenging them to do so can be a helpful initial response.

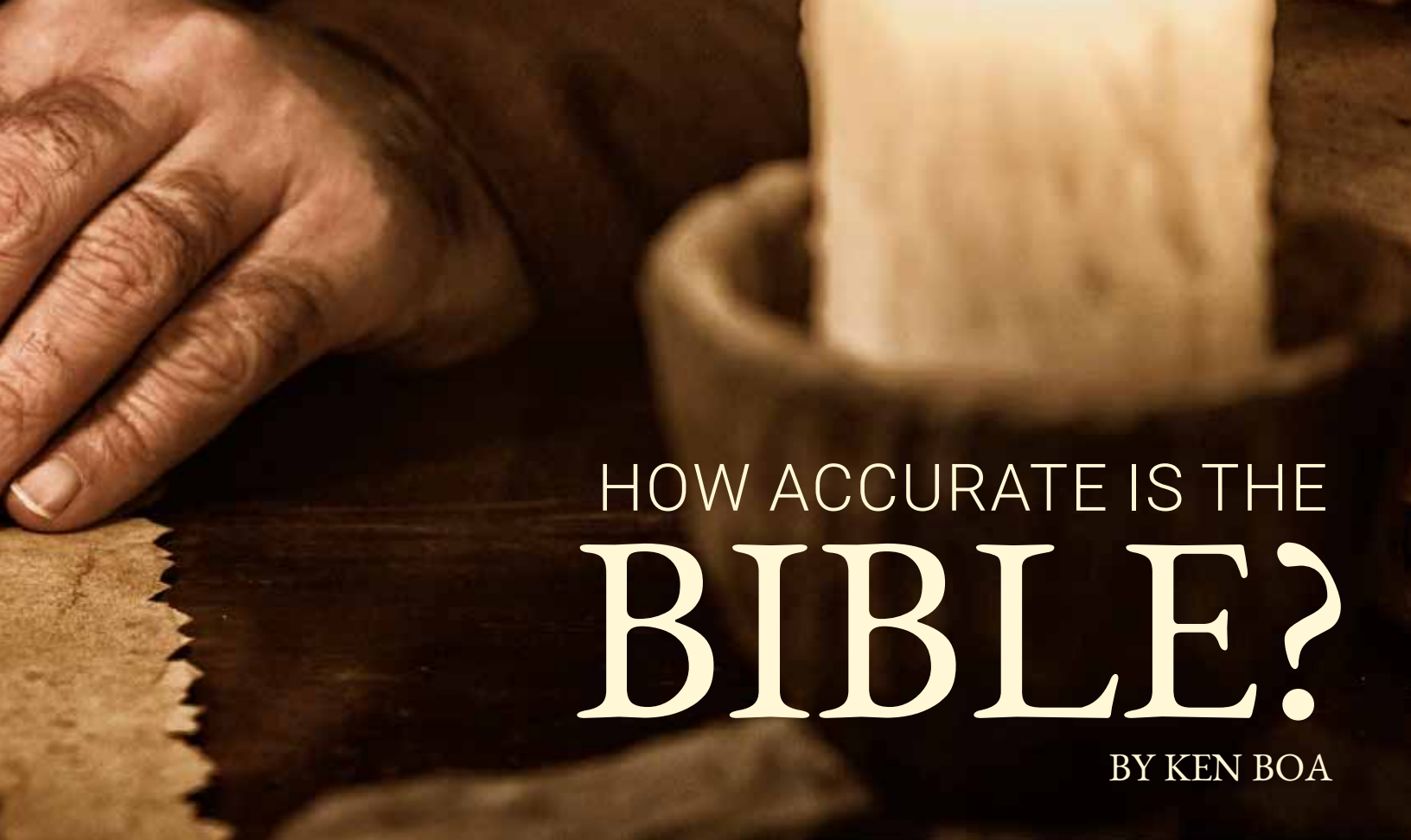
Bible Reliability Definitions

We can break down the question of whether the Bible is reliable into four subcategories or questions:

Authenticity (textual reliability): Is what we have now a fair representation of what was first written?

Accuracy (factual reliability): Is what we have now a fair representation of what actually happened?

Authority (doctrinal reliability): Is what we have now a fair



HOW ACCURATE IS THE BIBLE?

BY KEN BOA

representation of what God wanted to communicate to us?

Accumulation: How do we know the right books were chosen to be in the Bible?¹

Three Tests

There are three lines of evidence that support the claim that the biblical documents are reliable:

1. The bibliographic test,
2. The internal test,
3. The external test.

The first test examines the biblical manuscripts, the second deals with the claims made by the biblical authors, and the third looks to outside confirmation of the biblical content.

The Bibliographic Test

The first test examines the quantity, quality, and time span (between oldest copy and original writing) of the text. This test examines the question, “When we read the books of the Bible, are we reading what those books originally said?”

Quantity of Manuscripts

In the case of the Old Testament, there is a small number of Hebrew manuscripts, because the Jewish scribes ceremonially buried imperfect and worn manuscripts. Many ancient manuscripts were also lost or destroyed during Israel’s turbulent history. Additionally, the Old Testament text was standardized

by the Masoretic Jews by the sixth century AD, and all manuscripts that deviated from the Masoretic Text were evidently eliminated. But the existing Hebrew manuscripts are supplemented by the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint (a third-century BC Greek translation of the Old Testament), the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Targums (ancient paraphrases of the Old Testament), as well as the Talmud (teachings and commentaries related to the Hebrew Scriptures).

The quantity of New Testament manuscripts is unparalleled in ancient literature. There are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts, about 8,000 Latin manuscripts, and another 1,000 manuscripts in other languages (Syriac and Coptic, among others). In addition to this extraordinary number, there are tens of thousands of citations of New Testament passages by the early church fathers. In contrast, the typical number of existing manuscript copies for any of the works of the Greek and Latin authors, such as Plato, Aristotle, Caesar, or Tacitus, is much smaller.

Comparison of Existing Manuscript Quantities

Homer: Approximately 2,000

Plato: 7

Aristotle: 49

Caesar: 10

Tacitus: 20

New Testament: 5,000+ in Greek (24,000 including translations in other languages)²

Quality of Manuscripts

Because of the great reverence the Jewish scribes held toward the Scriptures, they exercised extreme care in making new copies of the Hebrew Bible. The entire scribal process was specified in meticulous detail to minimize the possibility of even the slightest error. The number of letters, words, and lines were counted, and the middle letters of the Pentateuch and the Old Testament were determined. If a single mistake was discovered, the entire manuscript would be destroyed. As a result of this extreme care, the quality of the manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible surpasses all other ancient manuscripts. The 1947 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provided a significant check on this, because these Hebrew scrolls predate the earliest Masoretic Old Testament manuscripts by about 1,000 years. But in spite of this time span, the number of variant readings between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic Text is quite small, and most of these are variations in spelling and style.

The quality of the New Testament manuscripts is also very good—considerably better than the manuscript quality of other ancient documents. Because of the thousands of New Testament manuscripts, there are many variant readings, but these variants are actually used by scholars to reconstruct the original readings by determining which variant best explains the others in any given passage. Some of these variant readings crept into the manuscripts because of visual errors in copying or because of auditory errors when a group of scribes copied manuscripts that were read aloud. Other errors resulted from faulty writing, memory, and judgment, and still others from well-meaning scribes who thought they were correcting the text. Nevertheless, only a small number of these differences affect the sense of the passages, and only a fraction of these have any real consequences. Furthermore, no variant readings are significant enough to call into question any of the doctrines of the New Testament. The New Testament can be regarded as 99.5 percent pure, and the correct readings for the remaining 0.5 percent can often be ascertained with a fair degree of probability by the practice of textual criticism.

Time Span

Apart from some fragments, the earliest Masoretic manuscript of the Old Testament is dated at AD 895. This is due to the systematic destruction of worn manuscripts by the Masoretic scribes. However, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls dating from 200 BC to AD 68 drastically reduced the time span from the writing of the Old Testament books to our earliest copies of them.

The time span of the New Testament manuscripts is exceptional. The manuscripts written on papyrus came from the second and third centuries AD. The John Rylands Fragment (P52) of the Gospel of John is dated at AD 117–138, only a few decades after the Gospel was written. The Bodmer Papyri are dated from AD 175–225, and the Chester Beatty Papyri date from about AD 250. The time span for most of the New Tes-

tament is less than 200 years (and some books are within 100 years) from the date of authorship to the date of our earliest manuscripts. This can be sharply contrasted with the average gap of over 1,000 years between the composition and the earliest copy of the writings of other ancient authors.

To summarize the bibliographic test, the Old and New Testaments enjoy far greater manuscript attestation in terms of quantity, quality, and time span than any other ancient documents.

The Internal Test

The second test of the reliability of the biblical documents addresses the question, “What claims does the Bible make about itself?” This may appear to be circular reasoning. It sounds like we are using the testimony of the Bible to prove that the Bible is true. But we are really examining the truth claims of the various authors of the Bible and allowing them to speak for themselves. (Remember that the Bible is not one book but many books woven together.) This provides significant evidence that must not be ignored.

A number of biblical authors claim that their accounts are primary, not secondary. That is, the bulk of the Bible was written by people who were eyewitnesses of the events they recorded. John wrote in his Gospel, “And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.” (John 19:35; see also John 21:24) In his first epistle, John wrote, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life ... that which we have seen and heard we declare to you ...” (1 John 1:1,3) Peter makes the same point abundantly clear: “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” (2 Peter 1:16; also see Acts 2:22; 1 Peter 5:1).

The independent eyewitness accounts in the New Testament of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ were written by people who were intimately acquainted with Jesus Christ. Their Gospels and epistles reveal their integrity and complete commitment to the truth, and they maintained their testimony even through persecution and martyrdom. All the evidence inside and outside the New Testament runs contrary to the claim made by form criticism that the early church distorted the life and teachings of Christ. Most of the New Testament was written between AD 47 and 70, and all of it was complete before the end of the first century. There simply was not enough time for myths about Christ to be created and propagated. And the multitudes of eyewitnesses who were alive when the New Testament books began to be circulated would have challenged blatant historical fabrications about the life of Christ. The Bible places great stress on accurate historical details, and this is especially obvious in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, Luke’s two-part masterpiece. Here is the prologue to the first of these: “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile



an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.” (Luke 1:1–4)

The External Test

Because the Scriptures continually refer to historical events, they are verifiable; their accuracy can be checked by external evidence. The chronological details in the prologue to Jeremiah (1:1–3) and in Luke 3:1–2 are two illustrations of this. Ezekiel 1:2 is another example; this verse allows us to date Ezekiel’s first vision of God down to the day (July 31, 592 BC).

The historicity of Jesus Christ is well-established by early Roman, Greek, and Jewish sources, and these extrabiblical writings affirm the major details of the New Testament portrait of the Lord. The first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus made specific references to John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and James in his *Antiquities of the Jews*. In this work, Josephus gives many background details—about the Herods, the Sadducees and Pharisees (Jewish religious leaders), the high priests like Annas and Caiaphas, and the Roman emperors, for example—that are mentioned in the four Gospels and the book of Acts.

We find another early secular reference to Jesus in a letter written a little after AD 73 by an imprisoned Syrian named Mara bar Serapion. This letter, written to his son, compares the deaths of Socrates, Pythagoras, and Christ. Other first- and second-century writers who mention Christ include:

- The Roman historians Cornelius Tacitus (*Annals*) and Suetonius (*Life of Claudius, Lives of the Caesars*)
- The Roman governor Pliny the Younger (*Epistles*)
- The Greek satirist Lucian (*On the Death of Peregrine*)
- The Jewish Talmud also mentions Jesus a number of times

The Old and New Testaments make abundant references to nations, kings, battles, cities, mountains, rivers, buildings, treaties, customs, economics, politics, dates, and the like. Because the historical narratives of the Bible are so specific, many of its details are open to archaeological investigation. While we cannot say that archaeology proves the authority of the Bible, it is fair to say that archaeological evidence has provided external confirmation of hundreds of biblical statements. Higher criticism in the 19th century made many damaging claims that would seem to completely overthrow the integrity of the Bible, but the explosion of archaeological knowledge in the 20th century reversed almost all of these claims. Noted archaeologists such as William F. Albright, Nelson Glueck, and G. Ernest Wright developed a great respect for the historical accuracy of the Scriptures as a result of their work.

Out of the multitude of archaeological discoveries related to the Bible, consider the following examples illustrating the remarkable external substantiation of biblical claims. The Nuzi, Mari, and Ebla tablets, along with excavations at Alalakh (1937–1939; 1946–1949), all provide helpful background information that fits well with the Genesis stories of the patriarchal period.

The Nuzi Tablets (1925–1941)

Found shortly before World War II just to the east of Mari and the Euphrates River, the Nuzi excavations uncovered several thousand cuneiform tablets (dating back to 1500 BC) that confirm many customs of the day that are mentioned in the Bible, including:

- The servant heir custom (i.e., having your eldest servant inherit your wealth if you were childless), a practice mentioned by Abraham in reference to Eliezer in Genesis 15:2.
- The birthright sales custom, mentioned with Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:31).
- The custom of household idols (Genesis 31:19 tells the account of Rachel having stolen these from her father, Laban).



The Mari Tablets (1933)

Discovered in 1933, the Mari tablets are diplomatic correspondences and governmental records involving King Zimri-Lim (a contemporary of Babylon's Hammurabi). To date, some 20,000 clay tablets have been found dating back to around 1800 BC. These letters, along with the Nuzi tablets, illustrate the patriarchal customs in great detail. They also mention the city of Nahor, which apparently is named after the Nahor identified in Genesis 11:24, and make reference to the "Habiru" people (most likely an Akkadian reference to the Hebrews—an allusion to them as a nomadic people).

The Ebla Tablets (1964–1970s)

Discovered in northern Syria, these tablets affirm the antiquity and accuracy of the book of Genesis. Their excavation began in 1964 by two professors from the University of Rome, Drs. Paolo Matthiae and Giovanni Pettinato (an archaeologist and epigrapher, respectively). Since 1974, 17,000 tablets have been unearthed from the Ebla kingdom era and have made valuable contributions to biblical criticism.³

Other External Evidence for the Old Testament

Some scholars once claimed that the Mosaic law could not have been written by Moses, because writing was largely unknown at that time, and because the law code of the Pentateuch was too sophisticated for that period. But the codified Laws of Hammurabi (ca. 1700 BC), the Lipit-Ishtar code (ca. 1860 BC), the Laws of Eshnunna (ca. 1950 BC), and the even earlier Ur-Nammu code have refuted these claims. Archaeology provides helpful, external evidence of numerous other biblical details from the Old Testament as well, from Genesis to Ezra to Daniel.

New Testament Evidence

The New Testament has also received abundant support from archaeology, and many critical attacks have been reversed. Most of the geographical details associated with the life of Jesus in the Gospels have been substantiated. These include places such as the Pool of Siloam, the Pool of Bethesda, Jacob's Well, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Cana, Capernaum, Chorazin, the residence of Pilate in Jerusalem, and "The Pavement" in John 19:13.

In the past, critics tried to discredit Luke, accusing him of being an inaccurate historian; however, the books of Luke and Acts (both replete with references to cities, Roman provinces, and political figures) have now been substantiated by external evidence. Critics once scoffed at his reference to Lysanias as the "tetrarch of Abilene" (Luke 3:1), but archaeologists have since found two Greek inscriptions proving that Lysanias was indeed the tetrarch of Abilene in AD 14–29. Luke's use of technical terminology, like proconsul, procurator, Asiarch, praetor, and politarch, has been challenged in the past, but mounting evidence has vindicated his accuracy.

Conclusion

The Old and New Testaments pass the bibliographic, internal, and external tests like no other ancient books. Most professional archaeologists and historians acknowledge the historicity of the Bible, and yet many theologians still embrace pre-archaeological critical theories about the Bible. The evidence strongly supports the accuracy of the Bible in relation to history and culture, but in many cases it has been overlooked or rejected because of philosophical presuppositions that run contrary to the Scriptures. This leads to a double standard: critics approach secular literature with one standard but wrongly use a different standard when they examine the Bible. Those who discard the Bible as historically untrustworthy must realize that the same standard would force them to eliminate almost all ancient literature.

Of course, there are many other issues surrounding the accuracy and authority of the Bible that we have not addressed here. For further reading, I recommend the following:

- Question 4 ("Is the Bible Reliable?") of my book (coauthored with Larry Moody) *I'm Glad You Asked* (also includes a longer supplemental reading list)
- Chapters 9–12 of my book (coauthored with Robert M. Bowman Jr.) *20 Compelling Evidences That God Exists*
- F. F. Bruce's classic *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*
- Walter C. Kaiser Jr.'s *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?*

Footnotes

1. Boa and Moody, *I'm Glad You Asked* (Ellicott City, MD: Search Ministries, 1982, rev. 2013), 73.
2. Boa and Moody, *I'm Glad You Asked*, 79.
3. Contender Ministries, <https://www.contenderministries.org/biblestudy/archeology.php>

This article by Dr. Ken Boa is also accessible at <https://kenboa.org/apologetics/how-accurate-is-the-bible/> and is reprinted here with permission. Dr. Boa is the president of both Reflections Ministries and Trinity House Publishers. These ministries seek to encourage, teach, and equip people to know Christ, follow Him, become progressively conformed to His image, and reproduce His life in others.



HIMSELF

BY ALBERT BENJAMIN (A.B.) SIMPSON (1843-1919)

Albert Benjamin Simpson was born near Cavendish, Prince Edward Island where his father, among other occupations, worked as a ship builder. Albert became a highly influential believer in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a pastor, writer, evangelist, and founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. As years passed Albert sensed a significant calling from the Lord to a more consecrated walk with Him. He felt less drawn to what he could 'get' from the Lord. Rather, he realized the need for a total surrender to the Lord's will. Albert reckoned this as a much needed death to self and a new, daily commitment to living the 'crucified life.' The lyrics to the song *Himself* (see below) reflects the maturing walk that Albert experienced as he let go of himself and followed Christ more fully.

Once it was the blessing

Now it is the Lord

Once it was the feeling

Now it is His Word

Once His gift I wanted

Now, the Giver own

Once I sought for healing

Now Himself alone

Once it was my working

His it hence shall be

Once I tried to use Him

Now He uses me

Once the power I wanted

Now the Mighty One

Once for self I labored

Now for Him alone

Once 'twas painful trying

Now 'tis perfect trust

Once a half salvation

Now the uttermost

Once 'twas ceaseless holding

Now He holds me fast

Once 'twas constant drifting

Now my anchor's cast

Once I hoped in Jesus

Now I know He's mine

Once my lamps were dying

Now they brightly shine

Once for death I waited

Now His coming hail

And my hopes are anchored

Safe within the veil

Once 'twas busy planning

Now 'tis trustful prayer

Once 'twas anxious caring

Now He has the care

Once 'twas what I wanted

Now what Jesus says

Once 'twas constant asking

Now 'tis ceaseless praise

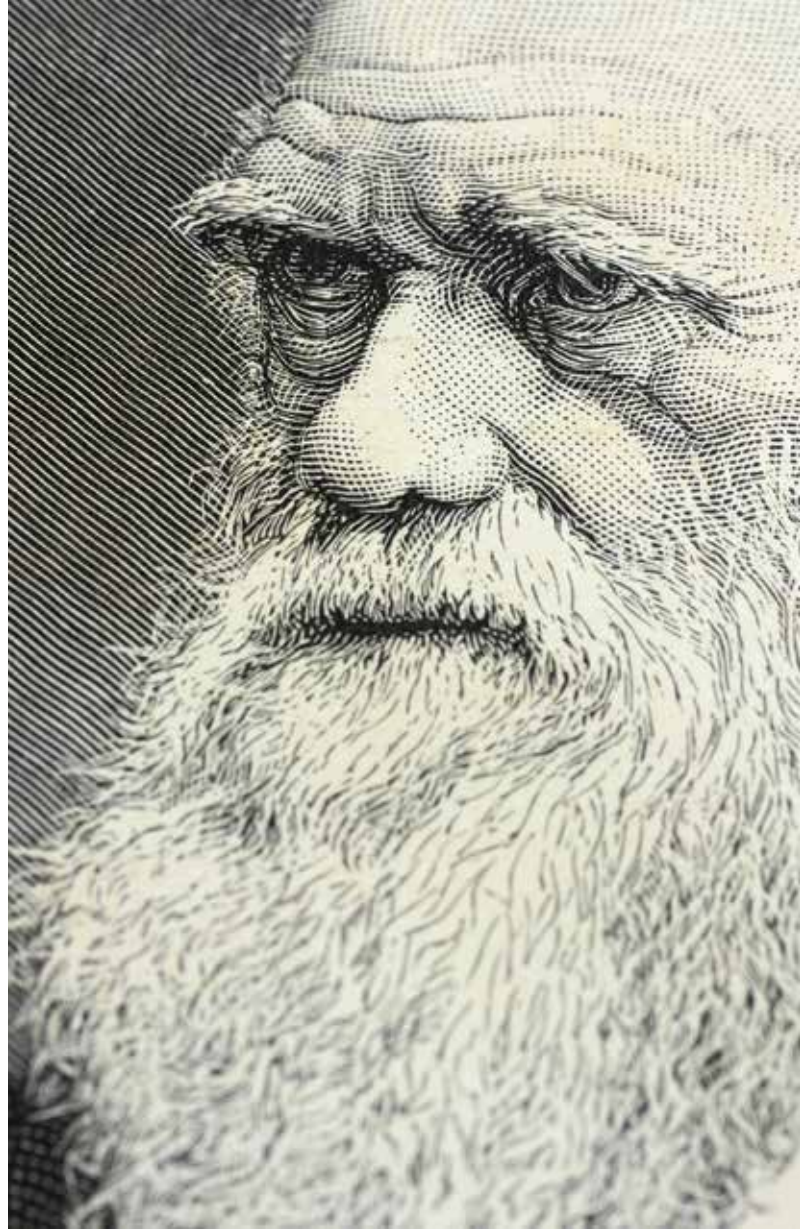
Deplatform Darwin

by Harry F. Sanders, III

Given the rush to ‘cancel’ people, why do so many ignore one of the most influential racists from the 19th century, Charles Darwin?

Racism has been a hot-button issue in the United States for the last year or so with violent riots rocking many major cities across the country. In response, a wave of censorship and appeasement occurred on a nationwide scale, resulting in deplatforming of people whose ideas were not in step with the mainstream narrative. However, the issue has been around for a long time: it is hardly unique to 2020. In fact, if we are going to deplatform people who are deemed racist, it seems very hypocritical not to start with one of the most well-known racists of all time: Charles Darwin.

In 1871, one hundred and fifty years ago, Darwin published a book commonly known as *The Descent of Man*. The lengthy book outlined Darwin’s views regarding the origins of mankind, just as he promised to do at the end of his most well-known book, *Origin of Species*. The comments Darwin made in *The Descent of Man* regarding people who did not share his low amount of melanin in their skin were horrific. Darwin believed that eventually the higher races would replace lower races. To Darwin, this was self-evident. If races exist, some must be better than others. “At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races.”¹ To Darwin, this was self-evident. If races exist, some must be better than others. If evolution occurred, then the most fit races would eventually take over, just as they did in the animal and plant realms. Darwin did not limit this sentiment to *The Descent of Man*. He expressed it clearly in at least two letters published by his son Francis after his death. “I look at this process as now going on with the races of man; the less intellectual races being exterminated,”² Darwin wrote in a letter to Charles Lyell.



Darwin’s So-Called ‘Lower Races’

Darwin went on to define exactly what he meant by ‘lower races.’ In describing the split between man and the apes, he wrote, “The break will then be rendered wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilized state as we may hope, than the Caucasian and some ape as low as the baboon, instead of as at present between the negro or Australian and the gorilla.”³ Darwin makes it very clear that he viewed the Africans and Australians as most closely related to the apes. He was expecting that eventually these ‘lower’ races, would be eliminated and be replaced with superior, more civilized races, widening the gap between apes and man. Were he to make any of these comments today, people would be screaming that he needed to be deplatformed. But Darwin actually went further.

In what can only be described as a precursor to eugenics, Darwin seemed to chide humanity for caring about the weaker races. In a lengthy quote, Darwin wrote:

“We civilized men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our

medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to small-pox. Thus the weak members of civilized societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed.”⁴

Darwin is correct in pointing out that humans are unique in helping the sick and injured get better. However, Darwin regards this as a bad thing for the human race, as it enables the lower races to continue to propagate themselves, rather than being selected out. Remember, Darwin’s view was that the ‘lower races’ were the Africans and Australian aborigines. And lest anyone think Darwin disliked these groups for something other than their skin tone, Darwin explicitly pointed to skin tone as the biggest, most obvious determiner of race.⁵

Darwin’s Blatant Racism

These blatantly racist views expressed by Darwin would be more than enough to get him removed from any television appearances, radio shows, and book deals such a well-known individual could obtain in the modern world. As an example, a teenage girl recently had her acceptance to a public university rescinded for using the ‘N’ word once in a video several years prior, despite no other evidence of racism.⁶ Obviously, she should not have used the word. Yet Darwin openly called Africans lower races, hinted that they should not be allowed to have kids, and hoped for their eventual extermination and he is celebrated. The double standard is baffling.

As Christians, we have the answer to the racist views of Darwin. There is just one race, the human race. We all are descendants of Adam and Eve, and later Noah and his wife. This was a view Darwin explicitly rejected. “It must not be supposed that the divergence of each race from other races, and of all races from a common stock, can be traced back to any one pair of progenitors.”⁷ Because Darwin rejected that all mankind is descended from Adam, he had an ideological justification for viewing some “races” as better than others and acting accordingly. Even evolutionists have recognized the inherent racism of their ideology. The late Stephen J. Gould wrote, “Biological arguments for racism may have been common before 1859, but they increased by orders of magnitude following the acceptance of evolutionary theory.”⁸

Consequences of Darwinian & Christian Worldviews

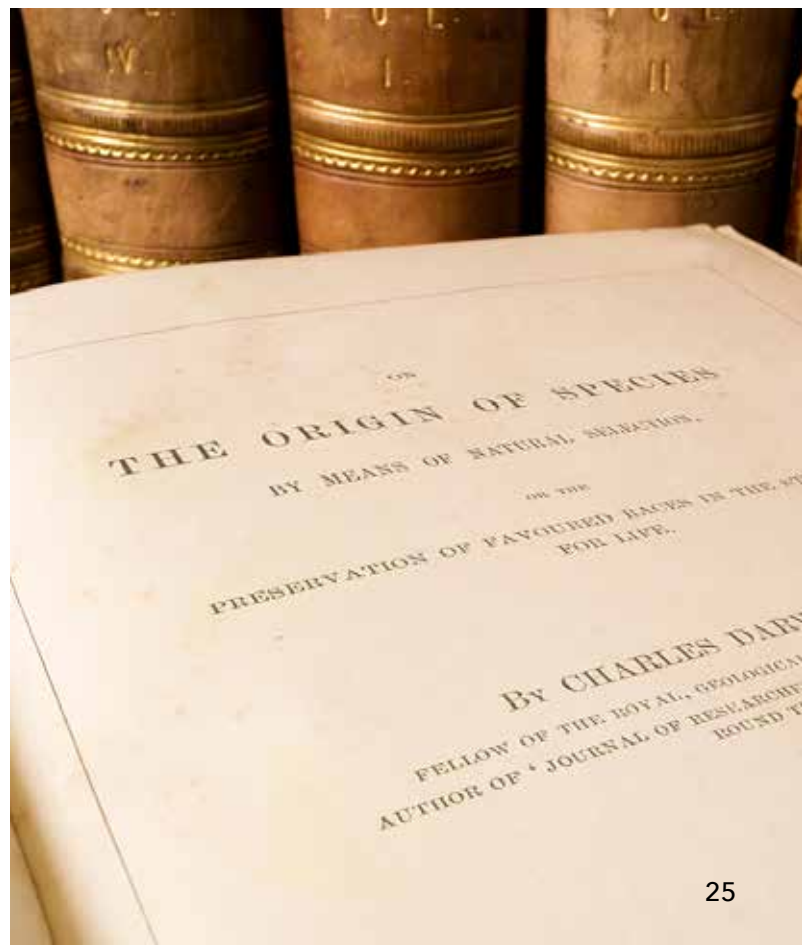
While evolution is inherently racist, that does not mean all evolutionists are racists, nor does it mean all creationists are not racist. However, to be a consistent evolutionist, you must believe some races are better than others. To be a consistent creationist, you must believe that we are all one race. Those

beliefs will manifest in actions. In Darwin’s case, it led to eugenics. For creationists it should lead to treating everyone with respect and kindness, regardless of their skin tone, you know, like the Bible says (Matthew 7:12, 22:39; Galatians 5:14).

Footnotes

1. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1871), 201.
2. Letter to Charles Lyell in *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, ed. Francis Darwin John Murray, London, 1887.
3. Darwin, *Descent*, 201
4. Darwin, *Descent*, 168.
5. Darwin, *Descent*, 241.
6. Ashe Schow, “He was offended by a private video she sent to a friend. So he waited a year to post it and ruin her life,” *Daily Wire*, <https://www.dailywire.com/news/he-was-offended-by-a-private-video-she-sent-to-a-friend-so-he-waited-a-year-to-post-it-and-ruin-her-life>.
7. Darwin, *Descent*, 235.
8. Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977).

This article by Harry F. Sanders, III first appeared on <https://answersingenesis.org/charles-darwin/deplatform-darwin/> on February 5, 2021. It is used by permission of Answers in Genesis. Their website is located at www.answersingenesis.org



COMPETING INTERESTS



Matthew 6:24-25,31-33 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [wealth]. Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Have you ever attempted to work two full time jobs? How about attempting to vacation while still on call for work? Or here’s a good one—as a child did you ever attempt to play chess or checkers ‘against’ yourself? Life experience teaches us early on that we don’t have the physical or mental capacity to properly serve competing interests. This is also true in the spiritual realm.

Christ’s words from Matthew 6 are a clear reminder that to faithfully serve the Lord we cannot be consumed with the cares of this life. Pursuing wealth and being anxious over the future is a competing interest with the Lord’s work. When we are overly preoccupied with our needs and our comfortability it drains our time, energy, and focus from the Kingdom work. We only have so much capacity given to us. If I am consumed with job advancement, a purchase, ease of life, or even the meeting of my practical needs I am unable to simultaneously put my ‘all on the altar’ for the Lord. If I fear that the Lord will not supply my needs I will ‘hedge my bets’ and shrink back

from a full commitment to Him. This is a simple fact and our Lord’s teaching on this matter reinforces this as true.

Think now of Olympic athletes. Many of them have trained in their profession since a child. They have foregone many luxuries and distractions in life merely for the chance of reaching the podium. The Lord’s work similarly calls for such a commitment but with a much higher eternal purpose and satisfying reward. I Corinthians 9:24-25 says, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate [that is, self-controlled] in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.” Also, Hebrews 6:10 states, “For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

Let’s consider Christ’s words from Matthew 6 again. Our natural thinking is to say that we should first get our life’s needs met and then when that is accomplished, we can fully pursue the Lord. However, the Lord’s approach is quite the opposite. He teaches us that the best way to ensure that our earthly needs (not wants) are met is to “seek first the kingdom of God” such that “all these things” (food, clothing, etc) will be supplied to us. This thinking runs counter to our natural thinking.

Does the preceding discussion imply that we shouldn’t care about where we work? Does it imply that we shouldn’t seek vocational training or have a working plan for our future? Of course not. What it does mean is that all of our plans and requests should be laid in their entirety at the Lord’s feet for His



approval and blessing. If He grants approval to proceed in a certain direction then we can be at peace. If His plan is different than we expected for ourselves we can also be at peace. In all of this, we can be assured that by submitting to His direction our practical life needs will be ably met. In this lifelong process of pursuing the Lord's daily will for our lives we must ask for His wisdom. James 1:5-6 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind."

We must be willing to have the Holy Spirit expose us in the areas where we are trying to serve competing interests. If the Lord is putting His finger on a certain area of our lives that needs to be submitted to Him why, in the light of eternity, would we kick against it? All of our daily needs will truly be met as we pursue Him! It does seem that we have a short term memory when it comes to trusting our Saviour. Perhaps it is for this reason that the apostle Peter wrote that he was writing his second letter (2 Peter 3:1) to remind his readers of what he had written in his first letter. Also, in the Old Testament we read on several occasions (for example, Joshua 4) that the Israelites were instructed to construct piles of 'memorial stones' to remind subsequent generations of the Lord's miraculous provisions in their lives.

Finally, from Hebrews 13:5-6 we read: "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'"





How to Fight (As a Christian)

THIS COMMAND I ENTRUST TO YOU, TIMOTHY, MY SON, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROPHECIES PREVIOUSLY MADE CONCERNING YOU, THAT BY THEM YOU **FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT.**

1 TIMOTHY 1:18 (NASB)

- FIRST OF ALL: PRAY, INTERCEDE, AND GIVE THANKS FOR ALL MEN AND ALL WHO ARE IN AUTHORITY (1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2)
- DON'T GET DISTRACTED BY USELESS QUESTIONS AND TANGENTIAL DISCUSSIONS (1 TIMOTHY 1:4)
- LOVE OTHERS PROPERLY: FROM A PURE HEART AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE (1 TIMOTHY 1:5)
- GOD'S RIGHTEOUS STANDARD, HIS LAW, IS TO BE USED TO CONVICT SINNERS (1 TIMOTHY 1:8-11)
- PRAY EVERYWHERE (1 TIMOTHY 2:8)
- LEARN THAT SPIRITUAL EXERCISE PRODUCES LONGER LASTING BENEFITS THAN PHYSICAL EXERCISE (1 TIMOTHY 4:7-8)
- BE A GODLY EXAMPLE TO OTHERS IN YOUR CONDUCT AND PURITY (1 TIMOTHY 4:12)
- DON'T BE SPIRITUALLY APATHETIC; FUNCTION PROPERLY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST (1 TIMOTHY 4:14)
- THINK ON PROPER TEACHING AND DOCTRINE; GIVE YOURSELF ENTIRELY TO THEM (1 TIMOTHY 4:15-16)
- COUNT THE AUTHORITIES IN YOUR LIFE TO BE WORTHY OF ALL HONOUR (1 TIMOTHY 6:1-2)
- BE CONTENT; THE PURSUIT OF RICHES IS EVIL (1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10)
- KEEP HOLDING ONTO THE SOURCE OF TRUE LIFE—JESUS CHRIST (1 TIMOTHY 6:12-14)

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'to advance the Kingdom of God by building Godly men on the foundation of Jesus Christ.'

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In every season of our lives, He is faithful.