

## **Jesus and Your Bible**

### **Matthew 5:17-20**

Millennial's view of the Bible:

“an outdated book with no relevance for today” - 19%

“a dangerous book of religious dogma used for centuries to oppress people” 27%

Recent Newsweek cover story of the Kurt Eichenwald

*“They wave their Bibles at passersby, screaming their condemnations of homosexuals. They fall on their knees, worshipping at the base of granite monuments to the Ten Commandments while demanding prayer in school. They appeal to God to save America from their political opponents, mostly Democrats. They gather in football stadiums by the thousands to pray for the country's salvation.*

*They are God's frauds, cafeteria Christians who pick and choose which Bible verses they heed with less care than they exercise in selecting side orders for lunch. They are joined by religious rationalizers—fundamentalists who, unable to find Scripture supporting their biases and beliefs, twist phrases and modify translations to prove they are honoring the Bible's words.”*

Amazingly, Eichenwald claims some stance of objectivity. “Newsweek's exploration here of the Bible's history and meaning is not intended to advance a particular theology or debate the existence of God,” Eichenwald insists. “Rather, it is designed to shine a light on a book that has been abused by people who claim to revere it but don't read it, in the process creating misery for others.”

In a predictable move, Eichenwald claims to base his research on “works of scores of theologians and scholars, some of which dates back centuries.” But the sources he cites are from the far, far left of biblical studies and the most significant living source appears to be University of North Carolina professor Bart Ehrman, who is post-Christian. Even so, he makes claims that go far beyond even what Bart Ehrman has claimed in print.

### **1. Trust your Bible**

#### ***\*Manuscript copies***

Eichenwald's first claim is that we cannot really read the Bible, for it does not actually exist and never has. “No television preacher has ever read the Bible,” he asserts. “Neither has any evangelical politician. Neither has the pope. Neither have I. And neither have you. At best, we've all read a bad translation—a translation of translations of translations of hand-copied copies of copies of copies of copies, and on and on, hundreds of times.”

No knowledgeable evangelical claims that the Bibles we read in English are anything other than translations. But it is just wrong and reckless to claim that today's best translations are merely “a translation of translations of translations.” That just isn't so — not even close. Eichenwald writes as if textual criticism is a recent development and as if Christian scholars have not been practicing it for centuries. He also grossly exaggerates the time between the writing of the New Testament documents and the establishment of a functional canon. He tells of the process of

copying manuscripts by hand over centuries as if that seals some argument about textual reliability, wrongly suggesting that many, if not most, of the ancient Christian scribes were illiterate. He writes accurately of the Greek used in the New Testament, and then makes an argument that could only impress a ten year old:

*“These manuscripts were originally written in Koiné, or ‘common’ Greek, and not all of the amateur copyists spoke the language or were even fully literate. Some copied the script without understanding the words. And Koiné was written in what is known as scriptio continua—meaning no spaces between words and no punctuation. So, a sentence like weshouldgoeatmom could be interpreted as ‘We should go eat, Mom,’ or ‘We should go eat Mom.’ Sentences can have different meaning depending on where the spaces are placed. For example, godisnowhere could be ‘God is now here’ or ‘God is nowhere.’”*

Isn't that clever! But there is no text in the Bible in which this is truly a problem. Context determines the meaning, and no mom is in any danger of being eaten due to confused punctuation.

Quote from Hank: Finally, as aptly noted by Dr. James White, the wisdom of God is evident through the way he “protected the text from the one thing we, centuries and millenia later, could never detect: wholesale change of doctrine or theology by one particular man or group who had full control over the text at any one point in its history.” Instead, “because the New Testament books were written at various times and were quickly copied and distributed as soon as they were written, there was never a time when anyone or any group could gather up all the manuscripts and make extensive changes in the text itself, such as cutting out the deity of Christ or inserting some foreign doctrine or concept.” In other words, says White, no one could “gather up the texts and try to make them all say the same thing by ‘harmonizing’ them.” Instead we have absolute assurance that this did not happen! “By the time anyone did obtain great ecclesiastical power in the name of Christianity, texts like P66 or P75 already were long buried in the sands of Egypt, out of the reach of any attempted alteration.”<sup>1</sup>

*The words of the Newsweek article presents an absense of any informed scholarship:* For many centuries, Christianity was first a battle of books and then a battle of blood. The reason, in large part, was that there were no universally accepted manuscripts that set out what it meant to be a Christian, so most sects had their own gospels.

The four canonical gospels were written much earlier than the so-called Gnostic gospels. The Gospel of Thomas, the best known of the Gnostic documents, is a translation from the Syriac, and scholars have shown that the Syriac traditions in Thomas can be dated to 175 A.D. at the earliest, more than a hundred years after the time that the canonical gospels were in widespread use. Adam Gopnik in *The New Yorker* wrote that the Gnostic gospels were so late that they “...no more challenge the basis of the Church’s faith than the discovery of a document from the nineteenth century written in Ohio and defending King George would be a challenge to the basis of American democracy.” The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, however were recognized as authoritative eyewitness accounts almost immediately, and so we have Irenaeus of Lyons in 160 A.D. declaring that there were four, and only four, gospels. The widespread idea, promoted by *The Da Vinci Code*, that the Emperor Constantine determined the New Testament

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<sup>1</sup>Hank Hanegraaff, *Has God Spoken?* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011), p. 26.

canon, casting aside the earlier and supposedly more authentic Gnostic gospels, simply is not true

### ***\*Archaeologists spade***

Pools

Assyrian archaeology

Dead Sea Scrolls

### ***\*Prophesy***

Isaiah 48:5: “

John 14:9: “

*Big mistake evidenced how determined the author was to be the outlet of disinformation to the masses:* “There are also deep, logical flaws here that should be apparent to anyone giving the Bible a close read. Many Christians read the Old Testament as having several prophecies that the Messiah will be a descendant of David, a towering biblical figure who was the second ruler of the Kingdom of Israel. And both Matthew and Luke offer that proof—both trace Jesus’s lineage to his father Joseph and from there back to David.”

Ancestry

Birthplace

Crucifixion

Domain - Galilee

Gentiles

## **2. Turn to your Bible**

-this article would have you believe that the textual variants of the adulterin pericope and the long ending of Mark; the creation account being in two types; the crucifixion stories and the resurrection stories - you cant trust this book

### **A. God’s law prepares our hearts for the Gospel**

Builds our values and worldview

Causes us to hunger for Christ

**Galatians 3:22-25 “But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. <sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. <sup>24</sup> Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* <sup>25</sup> But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”**

He calls Hebrew story telling in doublets the equivalent of walking through a hall of mirrors  
what has God said

Jesus said that the words of the Bible present the way to live

## **B. God's law points us to Christ**

Find Christ

**Romans 10:3-4: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. <sup>4</sup>For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."**

*No idea how to handle the word of God:* In other words, Orthodox Jews who follow Mosaic Law can use Leviticus to condemn homosexuality without being hypocrites. But fundamentalist Christians must choose: They can either follow Mosaic Law by keeping kosher, being circumcised, never wearing clothes made of two types of thread and the like. Or they can accept that finding salvation in the Resurrection of Christ means that Leviticus is off the table.

**Luke 24:44: "Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me."**

**Acts 10:43 "To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."**

The old covenant is revealed in the New, and the New Covenant is veiled in the Old.

- Augustine<sup>2</sup>

The New is in the Old contained, and the Old is in the New explained.

-Graham Scroggie<sup>3</sup>

## **3. Teach your Bible**

Found in Billy Sunday's Bible

Twenty-nine years ago, with the Holy Spirit as my Guide,

I entered at the portico of Genesis, walked down the corridor of the Old Testament art galleries, where pictures of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Isaac, Jacob, and Daniel hung on the wall.

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<sup>2</sup>Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), p. 53.

I passed into the music room of the Psalms where the Spirit sweeps the keyboard of nature until it seems that every reed and pipe in God's great organ responds to the harp of David, the sweet singer of Israel.

I entered the chamber of Ecclesiastes, where the voice of the preacher is heard, and into the conservatory of Sharon and the lily of the valley where sweet spices filled and perfumed my life.

I entered the business office of Proverbs and on into the observatory of the prophets where I saw telescopes of various sizes pointing to far off events, concentrating on the bright and morning Star which was to rise above the moonlit hills of Judea for our salvation and redemption.

I entered the audience room of the King of Kings, catching a vision written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Then into the correspondence room with Paul, Peter, James, and John writing their Epistles.

I stepped into the throne room of Revelation where tower the glittering peaks, where sits the King of Kings upon His throne of glory with the healing of nations in His hand, and I cried out:

All hail the power of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem  
And crown Him Lord of all.

- W. A. Criswell, *Why I Preach That the Bible is Literally True*