

# **“Are the Gifts and Calling of God ‘Irrevocable,’ or ‘Without Repentance’? Which One is Right?”**

The KJV translation says in Romans 11:29, “. . . for the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.” But the other translations say, “. . . for the gifts and calling are irrevocable.” Which is the correct one?

The Greek term used in Romans 11:29 is *ametameletos*. It is essentially the negation of the term *metamellomai* which, according to the Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament can mean: (1) feel remorse, become concerned about afterward, regret (Matt. 27:3); (2) change one’s mind, think differently afterward (Heb. 7:21). Thus, if we negate these meanings, the term in Romans 11:29 can really be translated either way, although for contemporary readers it is probably best to translate as “irrevocable” or “incapable of being changed,” for this more clearly communicates the idea to most people today. The phrase, “without repentance,” tends to be a little more archaic, which one would expect for the KJV, as it was originally published in 1611.

Hope this helps.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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# **“I Am Offended by Your Biased Article About Islam”**

I have just read your article titled “[Islam and the Sword](#).” What is very obvious is that there is A LOT of bias and misinformation in your article about Islam, Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), etc. It is very offending and I want you to neutralize your article completely. Objectivity is important if you want to be considered a credible writer and it is clear you are not at all.

You wrote, “Although considered only human, one Muslim writer describes Muhammad as “[T]he best model for man in piety and perfection. He is a living proof of what man can be and of what he can accomplish in the realm of excellence and virtue. . . .”{4} So it is important to note that Muhammad believed that violence is a natural part of Islam.” Where is the logic in this??? Especially in the last sentence. How did you move from saying that Prophet Mohammad, the best of all human beings, embodies perfection and virtue and then say he believed violence was an integral part of Islam? Where are your references? The verses that you took out of context? Any decent person is aware that no religion condones violence or bloodshed and I am telling you Islam is not an exception.

The Badr incident did not occur the way you wrongfully relate it. What you say about jihad and the Holy Prophet’s life is ridiculous and immature. I should not and will not justify that Islam is a peaceful religion and loves the other monotheistic religions (Christianity, Islam). Rather, I am asking you to thoroughly research your ideas before publishing them on the web site, which needs to be cleaned from bias and misinformation.

Thank you for taking the time to express your views regarding my essay on Islam and the sword. I am sorry that you believe my information to be in error. I would be interested in your description of the Badr incident. The Oxford History of Islam describes it as one of a number of raids launched against Meccan caravans in order to seize booty and hostages. I would assume that this was accomplished violently rather than peacefully. I am under the impression that Muhammad's depiction as a warrior and political leader is not very controversial.

My point regarding the life of Muhammad and the model he represents is simple. If Muhammad is to be considered the ultimate model within Islam for human behavior, and if he used violence as a tool to further Islam, then violence is a natural part of Islam.

The idea that no religion condones violence is just not the case. The Norse gods of Germania and Scandinavia worshipped Odin, the god of war. Human sacrifice was a central feature of the Aztec religion in Central America. Religion has been used to condone warfare and violence.

I doubt that anyone writes on history or religion without a bias. But, I do feel that accuracy is important.

Sincerely,

Don Closson

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# “What Can You Tell Me About the Infancy Gospel of James?”

Can you give me some information on the writings of the Protoevangelium of James [also known as the “Infancy Gospel of James”]? I know that has to do with proving the hows and whys that Mary was a perpetual virgin. Can you give me some historical background of it and how we as Protestants refute that heretical teaching?

Thanks for your letter. You can find some helpful scholarly information on this gospel here: [www.earlychristianwritings.com/infancyjames.html](http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/infancyjames.html) The introductory article offers some useful background information. To simply highlight a couple of important points:

1. Our earliest manuscript of this gospel dates to the third century. However, the text itself probably dates to the middle of the second century. This fact, combined with the fact that the historical James (the brother of Jesus) was put to death by Ananias in 62 A.D., clearly make it a pseudonymous work (i.e. it was not actually written by James, the brother of Jesus).

2. In addition, the work is clearly dependent on the infancy narratives found in Matthew and Luke.

3. Since it was not written by James, the brother of Jesus, and since it clearly contains mythological embellishments and historical inaccuracies, the early Fathers of the church were wise not to include the book in the New Testament canon.

4. Finally, for more information on the criteria of canonicity, please see the section entitled “The Formation of the New Testament Canon” in my article on “Redeeming the Da Vinci Code” here: [www.probe.org/redeeming-the-da-vinci-code/](http://www.probe.org/redeeming-the-da-vinci-code/). Actually, the entire article has much information that is

relevant as background material to your question.

Concerning the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity: although Roman Catholics believe that Mary remained a virgin throughout her entire life, this doctrine seems biblically problematic. In Matthew 1:24-25 we learn that Joseph took Mary as his wife, but "had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus." The verse seems to clearly imply that Joseph and Mary did have normal sexual relations after the birth of Jesus. And this is confirmed by references to Jesus' brothers and sisters in Matthew 13:55-56.

But could these have been children of Joseph from a previous marriage, as some Roman Catholic teachers have suggested? This does not seem to be a very plausible explanation; indeed, it has a very serious difficulty. As one commentator has observed: "Joseph could not have had children by a previous marriage, as some suppose, for then Jesus would not have been heir to the Davidic throne as the oldest son of Joseph." Hence, the most plausible interpretation of the biblical evidence is that Mary remained a virgin until the birth of Jesus, but afterward conceived and bore other children via normal sexual relations with her husband, Joseph.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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## **"Can't God Use Reiki to Heal?"**

Hi Michael,

I am a Christian and I love Jesus with all my heart and

believe in His healing power provided for us at the cross. I believe the provision is there, in the spiritual realm and it is up to us to connect with it and receive healing through prayer and taking authority in Jesus' name. I believe He works through us and doesn't refuse any prayer for healing, but does need us to connect with the healing and bring it into the physical realm.

Many Christians go to the doctors, take medication, have operations and none of these practices are frowned upon as "not being dependent on God for healing," but many do not glorify Jesus in their healing, they usually give the glory to the doctor or hospital who treated them.

I pray for healing and the power to receive and have had healing on many occasions and if I haven't immediately received, I do not for one minute think God hasn't healed me, I know it's my connection or the connection of whoever is praying for my healing that is not quite right.

Yesterday I went for a massage. The therapist asked me about any problem areas. I told her I had had problems with my back on and off for many years, but believed God had healed me. She began the massage, then she suddenly said, "I found the problem spot,"—which she had, she was right on it—"My hand has gone really hot, I'm doing reiki on it." She didn't ask me, she just did it. I didn't mind, didn't know much about it. The next morning I woke up and for the first time in years got out of bed without any pain or stiffness and my back has been great all day, despite lifting and carrying as is the nature of my job. I know it has been healed and I thanked God for the healing and texted the lady to tell her my back was healed. I don't for one minute think she healed me, no more than Benny Hinn heals anyone, he is just a channel like the massage lady was. I gave the glory to God and always will.

I wanted to know more about reiki; that's why I looked on the internet for information and read your article with interest.

I must say I am confused and must look into this further, I only want to do the right thing and I will of course speak with my pastor and other Christians, but my main point is that it seems instead of using man-made drugs and procedures for healing, we used natural energy that I believe was created by God for our use.

I'm glad to hear that your back is feeling better! At the same time, I must honestly say that some of the views expressed in your letter strike me as biblically and theologically unsound. Allow me to explain.

I think your first paragraph is a fairly good example. I personally don't believe that what you're describing here is actually biblical Christianity. After all, where does the Bible teach that God needs us "to connect with the healing and bring it into the physical realm"? What does this even mean? I've read such things in books by Wiccans (I'm being totally serious here), but I don't believe that this is a Christian notion. After all, is God not sovereign and omnipotent? Can He not heal anyone He wants—and at any time He wants?

And if God does not refuse a request for healing, then what do you say to all the truly godly Christian people who (along with their churches and families) have urgently pleaded with God for healing—and not received it? Please think very carefully about this, because you could unintentionally end up causing a great deal of spiritual and emotional pain by insisting that such people do not have enough faith to be healed. Let me offer a bit of biblical support for this contention.

Many evangelical biblical scholars believe that Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was some kind of physical malady. But the Lord refused to heal him of it (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Now did Paul really not have enough faith to be healed? Was it not actually God's will that he NOT be healed? Similarly, in Galatians 4:13-14 he mentions preaching the gospel to the Galatians

while he was ill, an illness which was a trial to them. But if Paul could have been instantly healed, then why did he put the Galatians (and himself) through such an unnecessary trial? Finally, Elisha was a very great prophet of the Lord. And yet, in 2 Kings 13:14 we read that he was suffering from the illness from which he died (2 Kings 13:20). But such a state of affairs seems totally unnecessary (indeed, virtually impossible for a great prophet like Elisha) on the view which you have presented. It thus seems to me that we need to adopt a more nuanced, biblical view of prayer. To see what I mean, please carefully read my article on petitionary prayer here: [www.probe.org/problems-and-promises-of-petitionary-prayer/](http://www.probe.org/problems-and-promises-of-petitionary-prayer/).

In addition, please carefully re-read the last section of my article on Reiki entitled, "Does All Healing Come from God?" at [www.probe.org/reiki/](http://www.probe.org/reiki/).

Of course, I certainly agree that modern Western medicine is not perfect. But its reliance on quality control, reproducible results, the scientific method, extensive training, education, and licensing, etc., clearly distinguish it from much of energy medicine. In addition, since those who practice it are not typically calling upon spirit guides and other questionable entities, it is much less likely to entangle those making use of it with possible demonic involvement.

At any rate, I'm sincerely glad that you're feeling better—and I hope that that continues to be the case. But I would caution you against getting any more deeply involved in Reiki energy medicine.

This is maybe not what you were hoping to hear, but I must give you my honest opinion before the Lord.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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# “How Do I Talk To My Brother About Taoism?”

Greetings Mr. Gleghorn.

I recently read your article “[Philosophical Taoism: A Christian Appraisal.](#)”

Recently my older brother confessed to me, “I am not the most religious person in the world, but I do believe in God, a universal consciousness from which all things were created. And I do consider myself to be a spiritual person, though more in alignment with nature and the universe that falls outside the confines of organized religion. I have studied the eastern traditions of Taoism and Buddhism, and while they are separate and distinct from Christianity, the precepts found in the commandments and in western religion, including the concept of forgiveness, are all found there.”

I want to help him very much but I don't want to preach to him. But I believe that God has placed this burden on my heart to help bring my brother into a right relationship with him or at least to use me for some part of this purpose. I would like to know if you could help me with any thoughts or resources that might help me to witness to him or to help him to see that he is on the wrong path for salvation. I do not believe that he is saved at this point in time.

Thanks for your letter. I think you are wise to avoid *preaching* to your brother. As I'm sure you know, however, it is extremely important that you be *praying* for him. Also, it would probably be good for you to familiarize yourself with a few important religious texts which your brother might be reading. Here I'm thinking of, for example, the Tao Te Ching

(the classic text of Taoism). Finally, I would highly recommend reading the chapter on Taoism (and whatever other chapters may be relevant) in Dean Halverson's book, *The Compact Guide to World Religions*. You can find it here: [www.amazon.com/Compact-Guide-World-Religions-Halverson/dp/1556617046/](http://www.amazon.com/Compact-Guide-World-Religions-Halverson/dp/1556617046/).

Finally, be patient. It may take time (e.g. many years) for your brother to come to Christ. Keep praying for him, keep engaging him in conversation, and keep pointing him back to Jesus. Although Taoism does speak of the greatness of forgiveness, it really doesn't have any genuine means of providing it. The Tao is generally understood to be impersonal—not personal—and hence, incapable of extending forgiveness (which, after all, only a personal being can do). Furthermore, Taoism has no atonement for sin. Only Christianity offers a personal God, who loves us, and who sent His Son to be an atonement for our sins. This is often overlooked. But it is the only hope for man—and the only real “good news” there is (at least in an ultimate sense).

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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## **“What Sins Disqualify Me For Ministry?”**

I'm a guy in my mid twenties and a few months ago, I resigned from my work as director of a local ministry because I just can't get over my struggle with pornography. I've been “clean”

for weeks and sometimes months, but it seems that inevitably I fall again. I really want to break this cycle of sin and live a life of sexual purity, both inwardly and outwardly. To do that I am seeking the Lord in His Word and through prayer (though not as consistently as I should). I have people that keep me accountable. I meet weekly with a few older men for a study on sexual purity. At the same time, I want to serve the Lord in anyway he wants me to serve. But there is some confusion...I have been presented with many opportunities to serve God (leading worship, camp counselor, teaching Bible study, and doing part-time youth ministry at a local church), but I don't know if I should serve in these ways since I haven't been able to break free of this sin. So my questions: Which sins disqualify me from Christian service and/or leadership? And for which roles would those sins disqualify me?

It breaks my heart to read your question (though I am SO glad you wrote!). Not because of your actual question, but because of the mentality that indeed permeates so many churches and ministries that one has to be perfect (especially in the area of sexuality) in order to serve God. We can't be perfect, so either we allow the enemy to persuade us to disqualify ourselves, or we can find ourselves immersed in an atmosphere of impossible expectations and standards that results in secret sin and resulting hypocrisy.

I prayed about my response and talked to a number of men in leadership at my church ([Watermark Community Church](#) in Dallas), where transparency, honesty and accountability are bedrock values.

First, let me affirm you in your decision to step down from ministry for the purpose of focusing on your relationship with Christ. It's also essential to listen to your accountability group to determine whether and when you are ready to resume a leadership position like the ones you list in your email.

From what you describe, it sounds like you may already have components in place for successfully achieving sexual purity, which is a process and not an event:

1) It's essential to actively pursue intimacy with Christ through prayer, the Word, and developing the habit of daily surrender and dependence on Him. Meditate on the truth of 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 until it soaks down into your soul and you "own" it:

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for **power is perfected in weakness.**" Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for **when I am weak, then I am strong.**

(This is the part that differentiates trustful empowerment from "white-knuckling" it.)

The fact that you admit inconsistency in your time in the Word and in prayer is really key. Allow me to strongly encourage you to make these disciplines your highest priority in this time of learning to become an overcomer. Otherwise, it would be the equivalent of trying to train for a marathon without eating or drinking regularly!

2) It's also essential to build an accountability support system as you live in community with other Christ-followers. Naturally, there are different understandings of what constitutes accountability, but what works very well at Watermark is a network of people with whom we can be honest, on whom we can depend to show us grace at the same time that they speak the truth to us, and who are safe people to whom we can confess our sins immediately before getting caught in a downward spiral of secrecy and dread that allows sin to continue, unrepented, for a period of time. Even people in

leadership, when they confess immediately and ask for help, prayer and continued accountability, do not lose their jobs or, for volunteer leaders, their opportunity to serve through leading, if they are proactive in confessing and repenting to their accountability “safety net.” One of my pastors wrote, “There are times when we need to step back from leadership positions to devote all our energies to focusing on Jesus so that we can deal with the sin that sometimes entangles us. That has happened to a number of our staff who are back in leadership positions today.”

Watermark has the largest Celebrate Recovery ministry in the U.S., so some of the recovery vocabulary spills over into the rest of the church culture. We are all familiar with the phrase “struggling well,” which means actively denying our flesh’s tendencies and desires to stumble and sin, and when we do fall into sin, we immediately confess and repent, receive forgiveness and cleansing from the Lord (1 John 1:9), and get back up again. And we get that struggling is just an expected part of living in a fallen world, and we all struggle against various temptations. One of the pastors I talked to in preparation to answer your email stressed that what disqualifies someone from serving in leadership is not “struggling well,” which is good, but engaging in continuing, unrepented sin—which also includes a rebellious, increasingly hard heart. That doesn’t sound like it describes you, but that’s something you and your accountability team would determine.

The CR Men’s director wrote, “His struggle with pornography sounds like it has been ongoing with consistent defeat. I am saddened that he felt the need to resign, instead of “sitting the bench” for a season. This indicates to me that he couldn’t be honest with his employer (my assumption, of course). In the future, I hope and pray that \_\_\_\_\_ will see his struggle with porn as a platform of authenticity that God can use in his life to relate to and minister to others. As he relates to and

ministers to others, he will experience freedom and fellowship like never before (1 John 1, 2 Cor. 1). He just needs the opportunity to begin sharing. I would highly recommend CR or some other Christ-centered recovery program.”

You asked for a list of disqualifying sins and “off-limits” places of service and leadership. I don’t know that such a list exists, although I do think it’s important to keep in mind Paul’s command and statement in 1 Cor 6:18–“Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.” Sexual sin (defined as “illicit intercourse,” the meaning of *porneia*, translated “immorality”) is in a different category than other sins. For example, if a man or woman in church leadership has an ongoing sin problem with having sex with anyone they’re not married to, they need to direct their energies into learning chastity and purity, learning to keep their passions under control (1 Thess. 4:3-5), rather than continuing to minister to others in the name of Jesus while practicing the hypocrisy that Jesus condemned.

One of the themes that runs throughout the gospels is the importance of the heart as opposed to outward appearance. What grieved the Lord Jesus was not sinners who came to Him with a broken, contrite spirit (Ps. 51:17), but religious leaders with a hard, rebellious heart. In the Sermon on the Mount, He revealed the way God sees the sinfulness of the heart, even if it doesn’t manifest in outwardly apparent sin. So I would respectfully suggest that what disqualifies someone for a position of responsibility is a hard, rebellious heart.

This may have been more than you expected when you wrote, but I do hope you find it helpful.

Warmly,  
Sue Bohlin

Update 2018: Watermark is no longer using the Celebrate

Recovery curriculum, though we parted from the CR folks on very good terms. We have written our own program called “re:generation,” which a growing number of other churches have brought to their congregations: [www.regenerationrecovery.org/](http://www.regenerationrecovery.org/).

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## “Marijuana is a GOOD Thing!”

I know your article “[Is smoking marijuana okay for Christians?](#)” It’s misleading and untruthful. You don’t take into account of people’s lives and their suffering. You don’t care to think that maybe marijuana relieves depression, anxiety, stress, other mental illness symptoms, and other ailments. If marijuana is a sin to partake, then God made one when he made marijuana. To say marijuana is a sin, is to say God is a devil because he put right in front of our noses and didn’t say anything. It’s not an intoxicant because it does not poison us, it works with us. Please explain to me exactly where in the bible it says we can’t make moral decisions? My point I’m trying to say is this, if it weren’t for marijuana I would have been in jail or dead from alcohol. You can’t overdose on marijuana.

Let me respond to your email one point at a time.

*I know your article “Is smoking marijuana okay for Christians?” It’s misleading and untruthful. You don’t take into account of peoples lives and their suffering. You don’t care to think that maybe marijuana relieves depression, anxiety, stress, other mental illness symptoms, and other ailments.*

Actually, marijuana doesn’t relieve these troubles; it

medicates the symptoms. It's a cover-up, but it doesn't solve anything. Medicating the negative parts of life does not make them go away, even if it gives a feeling of relief in the moment. They're still there when the high wears off.

There are lots of things that people can do to relieve stress and anxiety. A large number of men feel better after they've taken their stress and anger out on their wives and girlfriends by beating them. Simply relieving symptoms doesn't justify using that method.

Then you've got the lingering effects of pot smoking. I did an informal survey of a wide range of people to answer your question, and several shared their experiences of self-induced ADD, muddled thinking and forgetfulness, overwhelming paranoia, and brain changes that resulted in a permanent state of schizophrenia. And then there's the damage to the bronchial passages and lungs. Several told me heartbreaking stories of family members whose lives were ruined as a result of their pot use.

The problem with marijuana is that it can temporarily numb emotional pain, but it can leave even bigger problems in its wake.

*If marijuana is a sin to partake, then God made one when he made marijuana. To say marijuana is a sin, is to say God is a devil because he put right in front of our noses and didn't say anything.*

God made a number of plants that He never meant us to ingest. Consider poison ivy and hemlock. Plus, we don't know the impact of the Fall of man (when Adam brought sin into God's perfect creation) on plants. It's possible some plants were very different before the Fall.

*It's not an intoxicant because it does not poison us, it works with us.*



Google “marijuana intoxication.” You will find almost half a million entries. The DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) disagrees with you:  
[www.justice.gov/dea/marijuana\\_position.html](http://www.justice.gov/dea/marijuana_position.html)

*Please explain to me exactly where in the bible it says we can't make moral decisions?*

I don't think this is what you mean to say. We make decisions all the time. God gave us the gift of volition (the ability to make choices) and then calls us to use it well. Using marijuana is a choice that we are free to make, but since it's illegal, that makes it a moral choice. Legal or illegal, there would be consequences to smoking marijuana. See above.

*My point I'm trying to say is this, if it weren't for marijuana I would have been in jail or dead from alcohol. You can't overdose on marijuana.*

I'm glad you didn't go to jail (though you could have, since it's illegal) and especially that you're not dead from alcohol. But you did have other choices for handling your stress and pain. And while you can't overdose on marijuana, that doesn't make it wise.

Thanks for writing.

Sue Bohlin

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# “What is the Relationship Between Worldview and Salvation?”

Dear Don,

1) What is the relationship between worldview and salvation? Can you have a predominantly non-Christian worldview and yet accept Christ as your savior? Likewise, can you have a perfectly accurate Christian worldview (perhaps like the demons who shudder) and yet not be saved?

2) What is the relationship between worldview and Christian maturity? How much “accurate Christian worldview” is needed in order to mature as a believer in Christ? Conversely, is there any indication that an increase of worldview data brings about Christian maturity (e.g. fruit of the spirit, characteristics of elders, etc.)?

A quick answer to question 1) is yes and yes. People often come to Christ with a less than biblical worldview. Hopefully they don't stay there. Fortunately, we aren't the judge of how much information is necessary for salvation. If someone claims that they have placed their trust in Christ's work on the cross, God judges the adequacy of their faith. However, we are told to measure someone's maturity when leadership in the church is the issue.

The issue of having correct knowledge but not being saved is a real problem. Traditionally, faith has been described as having three components.

*a) Faith as Knowledge (notitia – Latin, literally: knowledge, from notus, known) Jude 3 “ . . . I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.” Consists of the propositions or*

*content of the Christian faith. Knowledge is a necessary ingredient to having faith.*

*b) Faith as **Assent** (assensus – assent, agreement, belief; approval, approbation, applause) This aspect of faith goes beyond simple knowledge to being in agreement with or accepting the truth of Christian teaching.*

*c) Faith as **Commitment** (fiducia – trust, confidence, faith, reliance) In the case of Christianity, it is commitment to both truth claims and to the person of Jesus Christ as indicated by the way one lives his or her life. Christians may experience different levels of confidence in specific truth claims.*

Merely having the knowledge of Christ's saving work is insufficient for salvation.

Regarding your second question, you might want to look at Barna's book *Think Like Jesus*. It makes the argument that living a life of righteousness depends upon having a worldview similar to that of Christ. Both Romans 12:2 and the verse below seem to imply that knowledge and the renewing of the mind are important components of living a righteous life.

Philippians 1:9-11 "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."

Don Closson

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# “What Do You Make of the Announcement That Noah’s Ark Has Been Found?”

Bill Crouse, a former Probe staff member and Ark hunter, has been studying this issue for years, including making several trips to Mt. Ararat. Here is his assessment of the announcement:

## **Noah’s Ark Discovered Again?**

*Bill Crouse and Gordon Franz*

April 29, 2010

The discovery of Noah’s Ark was announced last Sunday (4/24/10) by a Chinese organization from Hong Kong (Noah’s Ark Ministries, International). The problem with this is that it seems like the “discovery” of Noah’s Ark is getting to be almost an annual event. What in the world is going on? We think it’s a question that is easy to analyze. Genesis 1-11 is the most attacked portion of Scripture for its historicity. Finding an antediluvian artifact like Noah’s Ark could be the greatest archaeological discovery ever. It evokes many wannabe Indiana Joneses to search for Noah’s Ark. We see no problem with this quest, and would welcome such a discovery. *The problem is not in the finding of the Ark, but in its substantiation.* Amateur archaeologists can and do find things that turn out to be fantastic discoveries. Witness the treasure hunter, Terry Herbert, in Staffordshire, England, who recently found a huge cache of Saxon gold artifacts that was reported in *National Geographic*. However, to properly document a discovery, the proper scientific protocol must be followed.

Scientists are trained to gather and analyze evidence. They then publish their research so that other scientists can test their results. These "Indiana Joneses" invariably do not do this. They put the cart before the horse by holding a spectacular press conference declaring what they discovered rather than publishing their results in a scientific journal. The news media, on the other hand, is all too eager to comply for what gets good ratings, and at the same time put evangelical Christians in a bad light.

This Hong Kong group claims they are 99.9 % sure that the wood they found belongs to the Ark of Noah. Since we have spent a few thousand hours digging into the subject of the Noah's Flood and the Ark, we have the following questions about the alleged discovery:

1. When archaeologists make a discovery they must be able to prove exactly where they took their specimen out of the ground. How do we know this video showing the rooms was filmed where they said it was?
2. It is claimed that this discovery was found in an ice and rock cave on Agri Dagh, also known as Mt. Ararat. It is a known fact among geologists that nearly all of the icecap on this mountain consists of moving ice, that is, glacier. A glacier is a river of ice which flows down the mountain. Any wooden structure inside this ice would be ground to bits from the glacial action. In their news releases they have reported this site to be at 13,000 feet and in another report at around 14,000. With these altitudes it would have to be on the ice cap or at the very edge.
3. Most geologists believe this mountain was formed in relatively recent times, i.e., after the Flood. It is a complex volcano with no clearly discernible layers of sedimentation that would have been laid down by flood waters.

4. The group claims they have had the wood carbon dated by a lab in Iran with the results being almost 5000 years old (with the Flood occurring about 3000 B.C.). Why did they have the wood tested in Iran, we ask? Will other scientists have access to the lab results? Are there any good labs in Iran that can do this kind of testing? Or, was the wood tested in Iran because the lab results might be harder to trace by other scientists? Why wasn't a lab in the United States or the United Kingdom used? Just asking!

5. Is this wood coated with pitch (bitumen)? The Bible says God instructed Noah to treat the wood with pitch, either asphalt or pine pitch (Gen. 6:14). At least some of this wood should test positive for this coating. Also, has a botanist examined the wood to determine what kind of wood it is?

6. What about motives? Only God knows their true motives, but it sure makes one nervous when these groups looking for the Ark are planning a documentary video so early in the project before any truth claims are established. One of the members of this Chinese group just happens to be a filmmaker. Most readers interested in this subject probably notice that about once a year a new docudrama about Noah's Ark appears on one of the cable channels. They would not keep doing this if they didn't make money. Hopefully, this group's motives are other than financial.

7. What are the plans to publish this material in scientific peer-reviewed archaeological and geological publications? We would have hoped that this would have been primary to a news conference and videos. True archaeological is not forwarded by this sequence, but we certainly understand their excitement and the desire to be the first to report such a discovery.

In addition to the above questions, we have some reasons to question the integrity of this discovery for the following

reasons:

1. This group had a local guide who is a known for his deceit and fraud. It is this guide who initially informed the Chinese group that he knew the location of the Ark in 2008. However, since then he has led them to more than one location. The first location was a cave at a low altitude, a small cave with a tree growing in front! Apparently the current cave is at the 13,000 or 14,000 foot level on the icecap.

2. The specimens taken from this first cave (at the lower altitude) were claimed to be petrified wood from the Ark. In actuality, they were nothing than volcanic tuff.

3. In one of the photos of the rooms straw is seen on the floor and even a spider web in one of the corners. Really! Do spiders live at 13,000 or 14,000 feet? Can they survive the freezing temperatures?

4. There is a real problem with evangelists (which is what they claim to be) who use this kind of discovery to prove the Bible, and hence convince non-believers of its authority, when in fact the truthfulness of the discovery had not been established. I [Bill Crouse] know firsthand of one "Indiana Jones" who spoke eloquently and emotionally about his adventures, and when he gave an invitation at the end of his presentation, many in the audience stood up to commit their lives to Christ. When the speaker was confronted about the truthfulness of some of the stories he told that night, he replied: "But look how many stood up to receive Christ." This becomes very problematic when at some point the convert learns the real truth. They often become very embittered about all things Christian, and understandably so.

5. There seems to be more than the usual gullibility here in that the Hong Kong group was warned about this local guide

who has led others astray. We say usual gullibility, because it seems to be a characteristic of some ark-hunters as well, in that they tend to uncritically accept all the local lore. While many of these ark-hunters mean well, it seems that they want to believe every report seemingly at all costs; putting everything through a rational grid often is avoided as being too skeptical.

At this point we are skeptical of these new claims but would rejoice in the end if they proved to be true. If this someday is the case, we will be the first to apologize for our doubts. We would strongly urge the Hong Kong group to follow proper scholarly procedures and publish this material in scientific, peer-reviewed archaeological and geological publications so that the scholarly community can examine the material first hand and critique it in order to offer helpful, and constructive, criticism. For the person in the pew, we caution you to not get too excited about something that is at best, unsubstantiated; and at worst, a fraud perpetrated by an enterprising local guide!

*The authors are both members of the Near East Archaeological Society and the Evangelical Theological Society. We both believe that Noah was a real historical person and that the Flood was a literal event in space-time history. In our own research we came to a different conclusion about the landing place of the Ark. Nothing we have seen so far causes us to doubt or change our position. If you care to read of our research it can be found at [www.rapidresponsereport.com](http://www.rapidresponsereport.com).*

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# “Is Reiki Just Another Means to Medicine?”

I have a daughter who is 8 and [whose health] is very compromised. We have been to doctors, etc. who have yet to come up with an answer. I have had several people recommend Reiki. I have hesitated because I am very leery of “energy” based healings. I am a believing, Bible reading Christian. There is a woman in our church who suggested Reiki and is trained in it. In “testing” her [words against Scripture] I catch a lot of New Age phrases that I am not comfortable with and [it has] become clear she is not actually reading the Word of God...(vs. just attending services).

Your answer supplying [a Christian Perspective on Reiki](#) was the best in terms of guiding me that this is wrong. I think that the reason Reiki is more questionable is because it is reaching out to the “spiritual realm” that does not glorify God. Yet, I am wondering, given that conventional medicine does not glorify God (more so it glorifies the doctor) is Reiki just another means to medicine? Or is it not considered viable because it is so spiritually based?

I just do not understand energy healing and many people (including Christians) suggest we explore energy healing. Given my faith...I know that God is sovereign and can use ALL things...but He also warns us. Do you mind if I ask you to further elaborate? Given modern medicine is simply a tool of God, it does also violate some scriptural things if you look at Old Testament teachings (i.e. vaccines contain animal DNA and we are not to mix this, etc.)

I just want to put this to rest once and for all and know if I am not neglecting an avenue of potential healing for my child. Thank you.

Thanks for your letter. I'm truly sorry to hear about the health difficulties your daughter is struggling with! However, I could not, in good conscience, recommend Reiki energy medicine as a possible solution. You mentioned an email response which I wrote on a Christian perspective on Reiki, but I'm wondering if you read the article I wrote on Reiki? If not, you can find it [here](#).

In the article I go into much more depth than I can do over email. I offer an overview of Reiki energy medicine, look into the question of whether or not there is any legitimate scientific support for such energy, ask about Reiki's alleged success stories, and discuss some reasons why I believe that Christians should be concerned about Reiki.

First, and foremost, I think that we should be concerned about the spiritual aspects of Reiki. As my article spells out in much more detail, I think that we should be concerned about where the power of Reiki really comes from (provided that there is any real power there to begin with). This leads to my second main concern: if Reiki really has no power whatever to effect genuine (as opposed to merely psychosomatic) healing of the body, then we could end up endangering people's lives by sending them to a Reiki practitioner, instead of a properly credentialed medical doctor. I also explain my reasoning here in more detail in my article.

Of course, modern Western medicine is not perfect. But its reliance on quality control, reproducible results, the scientific method, extensive training, education, and licensing, etc., clearly distinguish it from much of energy medicine. In addition, since those who practice it are not typically calling upon spirit guides and other questionable entities, it is much less likely to entangle those making use of it with possible demonic involvement.

At any rate, as my article shows, it seems to me that there are sufficient reasons for Christians to be wary of Reiki and

to avoid it. Others may disagree, but this is definitely my opinion on the matter.

I hope this is helpful and, again, please check out my [article](#) on the subject (if you have not done so already).

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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