

“Mohammed and David Both Had Multiple Wives”

Hi Pat,

I bought your [“Evidence and Answers” CD series](#) on Islam and listened to the first one today. I must say that it was very informative and enjoyable. In that particular broadcast, you contrasted Islam with Christianity by pointing out that Mohammed had eleven wives. However, the Bible records that King David, described as a man after God’s own heart, also had numerous wives and concubines. Doesn’t that nullify your argument with Mohammed somewhat?

Great question. First, God’s intent was for men to have one wife so David was out of God’s will there, and the Bible shows He did not have a good home life. David was a man after God’s heart but he was not sinless, he only was deeply committed to God. In Islam a qualification for a prophet is that he is sinless after his call. Muhammad is believed to be sinless; that is why this is a key point. David is not believed to be sinless but sincere; Muhammad is supposed to be sinless. The Koran limits men to four wives but Muhammad took several more. Also, Muhammad’s youngest and most favorite wife Aisha was nine years old when they consummated their marriage. David did not marry a child but married women. Finally, Muhammad took his son-in-law’s wife as one of his wives as well. So the character of Muhammad does not point to a sinless prophet.

Pat Zukeran

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“What’s Dominionism?”

Mr. Anderson:

I heard you say on Point of View that your guest, Craig Parshall, can speak on many issues. You were talking about that PBS person, Bill Moyers.

What’s this “dominionism” thing? I went to [Wikipedia](#) and it doesn’t sound like anything a true follower of Christ Jesus would want to be involved with.

I noticed that the May 2005 issue of *Harpers* magazine that Craig Parshall was talking about on the program actually used the term dominionism. I really think the authors in that magazine article and in the Wikipedia entry are misusing the term.

Dominion theology defines a small group of postmillennial Christians who are part of the [Christian Reconstruction](#) movement. They are trying to bring about God’s kingdom on earth through government, societies, and cultures. That would not describe the theology or agenda of the members of the National Religious Broadcasters or the National Association of Evangelicals.

In fact, I can’t think of a single prominent leader in either of these organizations that would hold to that theological position. Perhaps there is one that I don’t know about, but it certainly does not describe the theology of NRB or NAE.

To put it simply, I don’t think the term “dominionist” in the magazine or even in the Wikipedia entry is a fair description of the evangelical leadership in America.

Thanks for writing.

Kerby Anderson

“Why Was God Sorry He Made Man?”

“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He created man on the earth and He was grieved in His heart.”(Gen. 6:5&6 NKJV)

When I read this passage three things stood out to me and seemed contradictory to everything that I have been told about God and have read in other parts of the Bible.

1) God is perfect and infallible. Why then was He “sorry that He created man”? In my mind “sorry” indicates some admission of error.

2) God is pure good. The Word says that all things were created through Him (*logos* the Word) and there is nothing that exists on the earth which He did not create (my summation of John 1). Therefore evil exists, but who created evil: Satan or Lucifer? In my understanding he is the author of rebellion and all kinds of “evil.” OK, so who created Lucifer who is later called “adversary”? Well, God did. The universe and in fact all reality was conceived by God and given life by the Word (please correct if I am wrong, I truly want to believe). So evil had to have been conceived first by God in order for Lucifer to have the ability to rebel. Follow? Nothing exists that God did not create.

3) God is omniscient. If God created time and knows all then

why did he create man when He knew man would turn their hearts to evil? Taking that thinking further, why did he make Lucifer knowing he would rebel? Therefore, why did God create rebellion?

The term "sorry" doesn't necessarily carry the connotation of admitting to an error. For instance, I can be "sorry" that a good friend has been stricken with a terminal illness. But this doesn't mean I'm taking responsibility for the illness, or that I've committed an error of some kind. Similarly, God was "sorry" and "grieved" by man's wickedness (to continue our analogy, the "illness" of sin). But God was not directly responsible for this wickedness rather, man was responsible. God created man in His image and endowed him with genuine libertarian freedom. Thus, man not only had the freedom to do good, he also had the freedom to do evil. Unfortunately, man exercised his will to do what was evil in God's sight. Hence, God was "sorry" that he made man. But the evil was not done by God, but by man whom God had created with genuine freedom (part of "the image of God").

It's true that no "thing" exists which God did not create. But most philosophers and theologians do not consider evil to be a "thing" (i.e. something which exists in its own right). Rather, moral evil is a corruption, perversion, or defect in some good thing created by God. Everything created by God was good. Moral evil entered the picture when the angel now known as Satan freely chose to exercise his will in defiance of God. This angel was created good, not evil. But he chose to do evil, and he did this freely. God did not force him to sin, or tempt him, or anything of the sort. Satan freely chose to rebel against God and was thus corrupted by sin. I personally think the fall of Satan is described in Ezekiel 28:11-19 (for reasons that I don't have time to get into here).

I think it's a mistake to say that God created rebellion. God did not create rebellion. Rather, God made rational moral agents (like humans and angels) and endowed them with genuine

moral freedom (which necessitates the genuine freedom to do good and/or evil). God's creatures some of them, at any rate chose evil. God did not. Of course, God knew the creatures would choose evil. So why did He create them? Apparently, He considered it worthwhile to create such free creatures even knowing ahead of time that they would sin. He provided a means, at His own expense, for man to be redeemed and saved from his sins. Satan and the demons will simply be destroyed.

At any rate, it's important to assign blame to whom it is due. God created free creatures and thus the possibility of moral evil. But it was the creatures themselves, not God, who actualized this possibility by freely choosing moral evil. God did not tempt them to sin, nor did He force them to sin. They freely chose to sin.

Hope this helps. By the way, an excellent website which you may want to visit is bible.org. They have thousands of helpful resources for studying the Bible.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“I Have Some Questions on the Separation of Church and State”

Mr. Anderson,

I read your article on the [Separation of Church and State](#) and

have a few questions for you. At the end of your article you wrote of an “‘open public square’ (where government neither censors nor sponsors religion but accommodates religion).” First of all, I’m curious as to whether you feel that the architects of the First Amendment intended for the protection of religion in general (as in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, etc.), or for the protection of strictly Christianity, as many of them were Christians, or at least claimed to be Christians? In addition to the latter part of that question, do you feel it was added more to prevent the rights, morals, etc. of Christians from being infringed on by a future non-Christian president, or do you feel it was added in order that a Christian president did not infringe on the beliefs of those of other faiths? Secondly, I am wondering as to the purpose of an “open public square” in the context of religions other than Christianity. Ideally, how would you see something like that functioning?

Thank you for your questions about the separation of church and state. Let me try to answer them in order.

1. Did the architects of the First Amendment intend to protect religion in general?

Although the primary religious faith in the 18th century was Christianity, it certainly appears that the framers intended the First Amendment to be inclusive of all religious faiths. For example, in James Madison’s *Memorial and Remonstrance*, he says:

Because we hold it for a fundamental and undeniable truth, that religion or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence.

He seems to be defining religion as the duty we owe to our Creator. I would take that to apply to nearly any religion, not just the Christian religion.

2. Was it added to prevent the rights and moral of Christians from being infringed?

Some who ratified the Constitution did not even want a Bill of Rights, but others would not ratify the Constitution unless there were specific protections to prevent the encroachment of the newly formed federal government. The framers clearly stated that Congress shall make no law meaning that the federal government can't tell citizens what to pray, what to read, what to think, or even where to assemble. These protections apply to all citizens, not just to Christians.

3. What is the purpose of an open public square?

As I mentioned in my article, I believe that this would be a world in which all religious perspectives would be given an opportunity to express themselves in the public square. Although we supposedly live in a society dedicated to tolerance and [civility \(see my article on this topic\)](#), religious values are often stripped from the public square. This naked public square only seems to permit secular ideas and values rather than all ideas and values.

A good example of an open public square would be the Equal Access Act passed by Congress in 1984. Religious students should have the same equal access to school facilities as non-religious students. If a school allows the debate club or the Spanish club to utilize the school facilities after school, they should also allow students who want to start a Bible club to have the same privileges.

Kerby Anderson

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“Help—My Daughter Just Attempted Suicide”

My 19-year-old daughter has been hospitalized because she has tried to commit suicide. This has not only created a moment of crisis with in our immediate family but a very big puzzling question. Why would a person who professes to believe in Christ attempt to commit suicide? What should I say to her? How can I tell her that Christ is bigger than any of her problems may be?

Please know that I will be praying for your daughter and your family in this difficult time.

Teenagers are universally having a difficult time sorting out their lives in this new millennium. There are so many competing pressures and influences that they easily get overwhelmed. While suicide is indeed a drastic measure, it is more common today among our youth than ever before.

If your daughter is a believer, as you suggest, she might be wondering where is God in her life and circumstances. She may have a false expectation that knowing God should make everything better. While Proverbs makes clear that we are better off living with wisdom and insight, there are no guarantees against trouble. In fact Jesus warned that we would have tribulation in our lives. We can often see the ungodly and wicked succeeding in life and wonder why we should bother doing things right. Asaph wondered the same thing in Psalm 73. Check out my article on [Where Was God on 9/11?](#) for an exposition of this important Psalm.

She may also rationalize that heaven will be a far better place than earth and why not get there sooner if her life seems impossible for whatever reason. This logic is hard to refute especially since we believe in the eternal security of

the believer. Suicide does not forfeit your place in heaven if you are a true child of the King.

If she is not truly a believer then she needs the hope only He can bring. Images of the Good Shepherd from Psalm 23 and John 10 (especially verses 9, 11, 14, 15, 27, 28, and 29) can be very helpful to someone struggling to make their way in this messy world. The entire Gospel of John may be a good project for the two of you to read together.

So what do you say? First, you assure her of your love and commitment to her no matter what she has done. As her father, you carry the major load in communicating your love and acceptance of her no matter her failures or perceived inadequacies. You must depend on the Lord to allow you to see her through Jesus' eyes.

Second, she needs to understand that God is sovereign and has planned out her life. In our relationship with Him we need to seek His wisdom and guidance not our own. Things may look bad now but she can't see her life ahead as the Lord does. There is a reason for everything even when it doesn't make sense to us. She may not be ready to trust God with her life yet but she needs to know you trust God with her life.

Third, there is undoubtedly some deep seated need or hurt in her life that causes her to disrespect herself so much. She will likely need counseling to uncover this. But she will need your support through the entire process. You may need to face a failure on your own part in her life that you are unaware of. You have to be willing to face whatever it takes to bring her back to wholeness. For awhile you will need to supply the courage she needs to face every day. You can't do this in your own strength. Remember Isaiah 40:31:

But those who hope in (or wait upon) the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;

they will run and not grow weary
they will walk and not be faint.

Take courage, for your Savior has overcome the world and there is nothing impossible to Him.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ray Bohlin

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“Did Jericho Have Walls Or Not?”

I was reading your article [Archaeology and the Old Testament](#) which states that Jericho was found to have walls. But I was also reading at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/jerques.htm> which states that Jericho didn't have walls.

I was wondering if you could elaborate further or perhaps explain this apparent contradiction.

There are three Jericho sites: Old Testament Jericho, New Testament Jericho, and modern day Jericho. When referring to the city of Jericho, one must be sure which one we are referring to. Also, the walls of Jericho are not standing up on the surface. When cities are conquered in the Middle East, they are often abandoned and are buried by the sands, and often a new city is built on top of them. So the walls of Ancient Jericho are today below the surface. Two outstanding archaeologists on the site are Dr. Bryant Wood, and Randal Price. Randal Price's web site is www.worldofthebible.com.

Thanks for reading the article.

Pat Zukeran

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“You Shouldn’t Talk About Evidence When the Subject Is Faith”

In your article [“Evidence for the Existence of God,”](#) the link between the remarkable things about earth and God is called “faith.” I believe in God. The author misuses the word “evidence.”

The author takes away from issues of religion and faith by throwing in a reference to “Saving the Whales” because there are all sorts of flawed and fraudulent environmental agendas floating around by various groups and the true conservationists are not represented by these groups. “Saving the Whales” is fraught with political ramifications and does not belong in a commentary supposedly “proving” the existence of God. The title of this article is inaccurate and is a disservice to your organization.

Thanks for your comments about my article.

If I indicated that I was trying to “prove” the existence of God, then please help me see where, so I can change it. I don’t think anyone can prove the existence of God, but we can point to evidence for Him. I am very aware that our sinfulness makes it easy for people to dismiss perfectly good evidence of our Creator NOT because the evidence isn’t good enough, but

because they are disturbed by the implications of the existence of a God to whom we are all accountable.

My reference to "Saving the Whales" was simply to make the point that people resort to the moral argument regardless of their relationship to God, because our morality is ingrained in us as people made in the image of God. The politics of that movement really don't have anything to do with the point I was making; I was only concerned with the motivation behind it.

I do think that evidence and faith are not diametrically opposed. We have faith not just because we choose to believe, but because there is good reason to believe; and that constitutes evidence. I think Christianity is an evidential faith; that's why Jesus appeared to over 500 people after His resurrection, so there would be eyewitness testimony (evidence) of the foundation of our faith. For some, the faith comes first, and for others, the evidence comes first and THEN they put their trust in God. Either way, the important thing is the object of our faith and not how we got to Him.

Thanks for writing.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"What's the Difference Between Moral Relativism and Pluralism?"

Moral relativism and pluralism: I said they are, in effect, the same. The Unitarian academics smiled and suggested that I

am unlearned on the topic. What say you? ☐

The two terms are not necessarily linked. One could be a moral relativist and an atheist, which isn't quite the same as a religious pluralist. Theologian John Hick is an example of a religious pluralist who accepts all major world religions as viable paths to what he calls the "Other." However, he would reject the label of moral relativist, claiming that these belief systems cause followers to seek a good beyond themselves and that this lends to their behavior a certain ethical dimension not found in unbelievers.

The problem with John Hick's system is in its rejection of what these religious systems claim to believe about salvation and humanity's destiny in order to blend them into his pluralistic system. Harold Netland has written a helpful book for thinking through the problems of religious pluralism called *Dissonant Voices*.

For Him,

Don Closson
Probe Ministries

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“How Do You Answer the Claim That Jesus Was 100% Man Emptying Himself of God?”

I recently heard a pastor speak about some things that really bothered me. First, he said that Jesus was 100 percent man that emptied himself of God. He said that the miracle of God

becoming man would not be taken away if you do not believe this. His term was, "Jesus was 100% man that was God." He also threw in the comment that Jesus and the Father are one, not as in the Trinity but that Jesus was God and for instance in the garden when He was praying, He was praying to Himself. He also believed that in the temple when Jesus was young, when it says he grew in wisdom and stature that means he was learning, hence that he did not know everything.

Secondly—he does not believe that the serpent in the garden was Satan. He actually seemed that he didn't believe that there is a Satan. He used the meaning of Satan as tempter and not an actual creature. This has really been bothering me and I would like your answers and some advice in where to study this myself.

Thanks for your letter. It sounds like you have some good reasons to be concerned about the pastor. The orthodox doctrine of Christ holds that Jesus was fully God and fully man. He was not a man who "emptied Himself" of God, for in that case He would no longer be divine. What Philippians 2:5-11 rather tells us, I think, is that He "emptied Himself" by becoming human and temporarily (and voluntarily) giving up the independent exercise of His divine attributes. Jesus was fully God, but He voluntarily submitted, for a limited time, to a limitation in the independent exercise of His divine attributes (e.g. omniscience, omnipresence, etc.). Jesus could still exercise these attributes, but only insofar as it was consistent with the Father's will during His earthly sojourn. This, I think, is a better explanation of Philippians 2:5-11.

A good analogy is to imagine the world's fastest sprinter running in a three-legged race. He would voluntarily restrict and limit himself for a time, but even while running much more slowly than he was capable of, he never stops being the world's fastest sprinter. Jesus never stopped being divine even while He voluntarily limited Himself concerning His omniscience, His omnipresence, His omnipotence, etc.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father. Christian orthodoxy believes in the Trinity. God is one in essence, but subsists as three distinct Persons. The Father is not the Son and neither are the Holy Spirit. Rather, each is a distinct Person, but all share mysteriously in the One divine essence. This pastor sounds like he rejects Trinitarianism, or holds to some form of what is known as "[modalism](#)." Some people have described modalism as "the swapping hats" theory: God swaps out the Father hat for the Son hat or the Holy Spirit hat, depending on who He wants to "be" at any given moment. According to orthodox Christianity, rejecting the Trinity or embracing modalism are heretical viewpoints.

Your pastor is correct, however, to say that Jesus grew in knowledge. But He did so as a human being. As God, He is all-knowing. However, as I said above, in the incarnation Jesus voluntarily surrendered the independent exercise of His divine attributes. Jesus Himself confessed that there were some things that He did not know during His time on earth; see Mark 13:32; etc.

Finally, while it is certainly true that Genesis 3 does not identify the serpent with Satan, this identification does seem to be made explicitly in Revelation 12:9. Also, a careful study of what the Bible teaches about Satan reveals that personal attributes are consistently applied to him. The Bible views Satan as a personal being, not as a metaphor for temptation, etc.

Hope this helps a bit. If you would like more information about biblical and theological issues, please visit The Biblical Studies Foundation website at Netbible.org. They have lots of great information about the Bible.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“Is It True That Whites Have a Higher IQ Than Blacks, Per The Bell Curve?”

In *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, the authors maintain that whites have a higher IQ than blacks, but I would not label the authors racist. What do you think?

Thank you for your question. You deserve a longer answer than I can give you in an e-mail, but perhaps I can give you some perspective and let you read further if you are interested.

The Bell Curve (by Herrnstein and Murray) derives its conclusions about IQ scores from the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT). Other researchers (e.g., *Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth*) question whether that test and the assumptions made from developing a bell-shaped curve are valid. The AFQT probably best provides a test of the level of schooling not necessarily IQ. And the authors of *Inequality* believe there has been a good deal of statistical mashing and stretching in order to form the bell-shaped curve you find in the book.

The argument of the authors in *The Bell Curve* is that IQ is a better predictor of life outcomes than the usual measure of socioeconomic status (SES). One concern is that Herrnstein and Murray define SES very narrowly (level of education, income, parents occupations). Each factor was given equal weight even though it is generally assumed that parental income has a much

greater effect than parental education on a child's life outcome.

As I hope you can see, there is some question about the methodology and statistical analysis used in *The Bell Curve*.

So while we can perhaps agree that American blacks score lower than American whites on standard IQ tests, that may be due as much or more to SES.

This is the classic debate of nature versus nurture. I don't think *The Bell Curve* proves that most of life's outcomes are due to nature.

Kerby Anderson
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