

“I’m a Feminist and a Christian, and I Didn’t Like Your Article.”

Concerning your article [“The Ten Lies of Feminism.”](#)

I believe John Gray has been divorced 3 times. Surely not an expert on women and men’s relationships that you would like the reader to believe.

Remember that before it says women submit to your husbands—it says husbands and wives submit to EACH other.

You said “It’s important for men to experience personal significance by making a mark on the world. But God calls women to trust Him in a different area: in our relationships. A woman’s value is usually not in providing history-changing leadership and making great, bold moves, but in loving and supporting those around us, changing the world by touching hearts. Once in a while, a woman does make her mark on a national or global scale: consider the biblical judge Deborah, Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher, and Indira Gandhi. But women like these are the exception, not the rule.”

Please be aware that besides women, there are few people of color—men AND women—who have gone on to be exceptional in a publicly recognized way. It is not because they are in the “roles” God ordained them to be, but because of the man made white patriarchal society that has oppressed and dominated them.

In the spirit of the Lord who spent so much time with the downtrodden, and rebuffed the Pharisees for only giving lip service to the word, I am careful to not just “accept” what has been instilled as doctrine, but question and question again as God encourages us to do. God is not about oppression.

I could take on everything you have written, but the great thing about this country is our freedom of speech.

I'm a feminist—and a christian.

Just a couple of thoughts in response to your letter. . .

First, citing something John Gray said doesn't mean we endorse everything about the man. Even a broken clock is right twice a day!

Secondly, concerning mutual submission: if you check Ephesians, it does not say that husbands and wives are to submit to each other. The context is that Paul is writing to the entire Ephesian church, and he is telling the Ephesian believers to have an attitude of submission toward each other. The phrase "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" can mean "Everyone submit to everyone" or "some submit to others." It is not addressing husbands and wives. Some relationships are a one-way sort of submission, and this would include wives submitting to husbands, children submitting to parents, employees submitting to employers, and church members submitting to church elders. If you try to turn Eph. 5:21 into a doctrine of mutual submission within marriage, then you have to extend it to the other relationships as well, and common sense tells you that won't (and doesn't!) work. I don't know if you have children yet, but I assure you, Paul isn't telling me as a mom to submit to my kids! ::::smile:::: And I don't know if you are married yet, but I can assure you that submission to a man who loves, cherishes, respects and supports me, and who leads me as he is led by Christ, is not in the least burdensome but a true joy.

Third, I certainly won't argue that women have been disrespected and oppressed women throughout time. I see this as a horrible consequence of the Fall. But as a Christian, I believe that God defines power and influence and what it means to be exceptional very differently from the way the world

does, and I believe that women have been very powerful in ways that the feminist mindset refuses to acknowledge. I respect your identification as both a Christian and a feminist, but please be aware that it is easy to let the world (read: feminist thought) squeeze you into its mold so that you see things from a worldly perspective instead of a biblical perspective. To use a phrase like “man made white patriarchal society that has oppressed and dominated them” tells me that you have bought into the feminist perspective. May I suggest that the evil is not patriarchy, but the sinful abuse of power within patriarchy?

You are right, “God is not about oppression.” He is about freeing the captives through Jesus Christ, not through man-made political systems and philosophy. Jesus was absolutely radical in [His respect for, treatment of and elevation of women](#), and when people follow the Bible’s actual mandates they move from oppressing others to true freedom and celebration of others’ dignity, abilities, gifts and calling.

Sincerely,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Saying Someone Else’s Path is Wrong Misses the Mark”

Firstly let me say, I read your site with interest. Secondly I come from a VERY religious background and spent my formative years attending Sunday School, church, youth fellowship etc.

(I have a very strong set of moral beliefs but they revolve

around personal responsibility, honesty, integrity and REVENGE – not upon blindly following the words of others.)

In all that time I was treated with nothing but contempt (I never did fit in – yes, I do love thrash metal). This is a source of much anger to me.

I have never gained ANYTHING from worship or religion, if god existed he never would have let half the things happen in my life/family that have happened, therefore, I have rejected him.

I feel fine, better for it in fact and I think that for me at least, I have chosen the correct path. Maybe your choice is right for you but to say that someone else's is wrong (just because you believe it to be so) is nonsense. Basically, I feel you miss the mark.

Still, that's your personal choice and as such that's your right.

Dear _____,

When bad things happen to people, I have to admit that is a very powerful argument against the existence of God, or at least against the goodness of God.

However, all of us at Probe have been convinced that the evidence that God truly exists and that there is a purpose beyond the horrible things that happen, is greater than the weight of the argument of pain and suffering. Personally, I believe that the shame and contempt that "church people" heap on those who don't fit their mold, like yourself, makes God both angry and extremely grieved. Since the Bible says God made us in His image, then we're supposed to reflect what He is like to the world and most especially, to others who are also made in His image. When people treat others with contempt, they are telling a lie about what God is like, and I think none of us understands the depth of His anguish about

that.

I think I understand where you're coming from in terms of wanting to castigate us for saying that someone else's path is wrong since it is different from ours. That would, indeed, be an arrogant and revolting position to take if it didn't matter because there is no God and thus no purpose in life, no afterlife, and no ultimate meaning. On the same plane, I guess, as saying that someone is wrong for choosing Neapolitan ice cream because chocolate is right.

However, if God has truly spoken and revealed true truth to us, and if He determines what is the right path and the wrong path because He is God and He has the right to do that, then simply agreeing with what He says is neither arrogant nor revolting.

I wish you peace, and I pray for you the ability to sift through what you learned when you were young and sort out what was true from what was merely man's teaching and from the pain you received and understandably rejected. I pray that somehow, God will communicate to you the tears HE cried because of the way you were treated. He made you, He loves you, and He died for you. You were never supposed to experience contempt.

Cordially,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Is the Eucharist the Literal

Body and Blood of Christ?"

I have frequent discussions with my friend, who is Catholic, about our beliefs and one of the things that comes up a lot is the Eucharist. She believes that when the priest blesses the bread and wine the spirit of Jesus goes into them. She also gives me John 6:27-58. Is it literal or not?

This is such a huge issue with grave theological disagreements that we cannot and will not be able to solve. But here are some thoughts that may help.

First, concerning your question about the literalness of the Lord's statements in John 6: When He says, "Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53), does He really mean, "Tear off a chunk of My arm or leg with your teeth and chew Me up"? Furthermore, if partakers literally eat the body and blood of the Lord, it is broken down during digestion, but God has promised that His Holy One would never see decay (Acts 2:27).

In the same chapter, when He says He is the bread of life, does He mean He is made of grain and water and yeast? We also need to look at all the other "I am" statements in the book of John and ask, Does He mean those literally as well? When He says He is the light of the world (ch. 8), is He claiming to be the sun? When He says He is the door (ch. 10), is He saying He's made of wood and has a doorknob? When He says He is the good shepherd (ch. 10), does it mean He gave up carpentry to keep sheep on Israel's mountainsides? When He says He is the vine (ch. 15), is He saying He's green and leafy?

There is a lot of very important and deep symbolism in the book of John that gives us insight into the spiritual truths the Lord Jesus was trying to communicate about the nature of spiritual reality. We need to be careful when we say we take the Bible literally. Yes, we do—in the places where it's

intended to be taken literally. But when a metaphor is used, we need to read it that way.

Secondly, in terms of the nature of communion:

There tend to be three positions on the nature of communion, or “the Lord’s supper” (1 Cor. 11:20). One is that the bread and wine are mystically changed into the actual body and blood of Jesus in a process called “transubstantiation.” A second position is that the bread and wine (or, in many churches, grape juice) are merely symbols of His body and blood. A third position is that the bread and wine are not chemically or supernaturally transformed, but they are still more than mere symbols: that the real presence of the Lord Jesus is *in* and *around* and *through* these tangible elements of His table.

We don’t have an official position on communion at Probe, but I will tell you that personally, I have held all three positions at various times and have landed on the third. I believe that part of the Lord’s grace to us corporately and individually is this gift of something physical and tangible that is a touch point between the physical realm and the spiritual realm, much as His body was that touch point between heaven and earth while He walked among us.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“I Don’t Believe the Holy

Spirit is a Person"

Dear Mr. Zukeran,

I do not believe the holy spirit is a person, mainly because it does not have a name. The names you give all have the word "the" preceding it. This indicates that the following word is a title, not a name. (For example "the President", obviously "President" is not a name.) Also, the words "holy spirit" are at times in lower case. Of course you know names are never in lower case.

Thank you for your question. The Holy Spirit gives a command (Acts 13:2), He can be lied to (Acts 5), and He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30). This shows the Holy Spirit is an intelligent thinking person. One cannot lie to an inanimate force like electricity or fire. You cannot even lie to a cat or dog—it must be an intelligent cognitive thinking person. Also why does Jesus use personal pronoun "He" and "Him" in addressing the Holy Spirit (John 16)?

Regarding a name. Respectfully, that really is not much of an argument. The previous verses show the Holy Spirit has the qualities of a person; this makes Him a person. You stated because He does not have a personal name you think he is not a person. Allow me to use an illustration. If I say, "the King of Jordan is coming" what do I mean? Do I mean an impersonal, non-living entity is coming, or do I mean a person who rules over Jordan is coming? Obviously I mean a person is coming. Even if I do not know his personal name, we all know I am talking about a person. Just because I do not know if his name is George, Fred, or John but know him as "The King of Jordan" does that mean he is not a person?

The Holy Spirit has all the attributes of a person. He speaks, He thinks, He can be grieved, He can be lied to, etc. . . . Just because we do not address him as Fred or George but by

His title "the Holy Spirit" does not mean He is not a person. I may never know the personal name of the King of Jordan, but whenever I speak of the King of Jordan, I am referring to a person.

Thanks for writing.

Patrick Zukeran
Probe Ministries

Check out some articles and answers on the concept of the Trinity below.

"Did Mary Remain a Virgin After Jesus was Born?"

A Catholic friend and I (Protestant) were having a discussion about the differences in our beliefs, specifically the virginity of Mary. While we have no disagreement that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit in Mary, we do disagree about Mary's ongoing virginity. It's my understanding that Catholics believe (1) Mary remained a virgin the rest of her life; (2) she was sinless; and (3) she was assumed into heaven, circumventing death. My contention was (1) Jesus had brothers and sisters, so Mary could not have remained a virgin; (2) the Bible states that Jesus was the only person to walk the earth sinlessly; and (3) Mary died a normal (human) death and is in heaven, just like believers after Jesus' death. I'm not trying to change his beliefs, but I would like some outside source of information on these topics.

The problem with these issues is that Protestants only accept Scripture as the basis for our authority, and Catholics accept

Scripture AND Tradition as the basis for their authority, with Tradition often winning out. The three disputed doctrines you mention (and you're mainly right except for the doctrine of the Assumption: Mary's death is not disputed. The doctrine of the Assumption says her body was taken into heaven after death) are all based on Tradition.

The "Catholic in the pew" is often committed to what the Church teaches because that's all they know and they are taught that the Church's teachings are infallible and not to be questioned. Logic doesn't get in the way. For instance, I remember a discussion with a Catholic lady about Mary's supposed sinlessness. When I brought up the Magnificat, Mary's wonderful prayer in Luke where she says, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior," pointing out that only a sinner needs a savior, the other lady dismissed it, saying, "Oh, she was just being holy." End of discussion. Logic doesn't get in the way.

The question I would bring up is, What happens when Scripture—which is inspired and inerrant—contradicts Tradition? Asking that kind of question can serve as a seed-planting ministry in your friend's life.

Bigger than the Catholic doctrine issue, and predating even the birth of Christ, is the philosophical underpinnings of these three beliefs. Many of the Church fathers accepted Plato's teachings about the nature of reality, which are that only the unseen, spirit realm is important; the material realm is evil and unimportant. (The other, opposite philosophy at the time, and which still drives a great deal of Western thought, is from Aristotle, who taught that the material world is more important than the unseen realm of ideas.)

Plato taught that the mind and spirit was good and the body was base or bad. Many people, including many of the church fathers, took this belief and arrived at the conclusion that sex is evil, even in marriage, because it is a bodily

function. Thus, because they wanted to believe Mary was sinless, the church decided that she had to stay a virgin because sex with Joseph would have been evil. Most non-Catholic theologians believe that Mary and Joseph had a normal marriage, producing several children which are mentioned in texts such as Matt. 13:55 (“Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?”). This “material is bad” idea is also behind the belief that she could not have experienced the decay of deathlike the rest of mortals, which spawned the idea of her assumption into heaven.

I suggest you check out this web site for further information:
www.reachingcatholics.org/

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“My Boyfriend and I Are Committed to Each Other, So Why is Sex Sinful?”

My boyfriend and I have both have been faithfully committed to each other for 4 years. He is now questioning the issue of fornication and is having a hard time in dealing with this issue. He believes that it is a sin to have sex out of marriage.

I agree, but I believe that we are committed to each other, and in God’s eyes I am committed 100%. The only difference is

that we are not legally married. We do plan to marry, maybe in a few more years. We do not live together. Please help me understand why do I see it OK??

Dear _____,

I would gently take issue with your choice of words. If you and your boyfriend are not married, you may like each other and even love each other, but you are not in a committed relationship. A committed relationship is marriage. Right now all you have is strong feelings and good intentions. God's standard for what makes sex holy and right and not sinful is a marriage relationship, which means you have gone through a wedding, a public declaration of commitment that makes you a new social unit in the eyes of the community.

I'm glad you care about this issue. But how can you say you are committed in God's eyes when He has already told us what He thinks? In God's eyes you are committing fornication, because you are not married. It really is that black and white.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“What is a Christian Perspective on War?”

Is there anywhere in the Bible where God or Jesus speaks or justifies the Christian needing to go to war? I know we are to obey those who are in control of the government, unless the demands go against biblical principles. I also have read the

various passages concerning loving our enemies and blessing those who persecute us. But what of war? What about the issues of defending our homes for the cause of freedom, right to worship, or when others infringe on the rights of those living in other countries?

There are essentially three Christian views concerning war:

Activism – it is always right to participate in war.

Pacifism – it is never right to participate in war.

Selectivism – it is right to participate in some wars.

Most Christians generally hold to the third position. This led to the development of what has come to be known as the just war criteria.

A just war would include the following elements:

- Just cause (defensive war)
- Just intention (just peace)
- Last resort (negotiations)
- Formal declaration
- Limited objectives
- Proportionate means
- Noncombatant immunity

There are a number of books that have been written on this subject of war and the Christian. Here is a short list of books that you might find helpful.

- Clouse, Robert. *War: Four Christian Views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, revised 1991.
- Holmes, Arthur, ed. *War: Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, revised 1991.
- Payne, Keith and Payne, Karl. *A Just Defense*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987.

• Schaeffer, Francis; Bukovsky, Vladimir; and Hitchcock, James. *Who Is For Peace?* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983.

Kerby Anderson

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“Why Did God Create a Flawed World Where Eve Could Eat the Forbidden Fruit?”

I found Rick Rood's article on [The Problem of Evil](#) helpful in some way, but I was hoping to find some additional information. No where in my search have I seen anyone address the issue of why God allowed Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge. Surely God knew Eve would be tempted by Satan (the serpent). Why did he allow this? Surely he must have known this would be the downfall of his creation, Earth? And subsequently the root of all pain, hate, and evil to come in the world, both behind and ahead of us. If God had intended for us to live in a Paradise here on Earth, he never would have permitted this event to occur, indeed the event that destroyed what civilization could have been. Instead, God MADE it necessary to save us from ourselves through Jesus. WHY WAS THIS NECESSARY? WHY THE DRAMA? IS GOD SO LONELY AND SELFISH HE CONCOCTED THIS FANTASTIC REALITY SO THAT MANKIND WOULD LOVE AND REVERE HIM? TO THINK THAT WE COULD ALL BE HAPPY AND LOVING AND TOGETHER AS A PEOPLE HERE ON EARTH, RATHER THAN THE CESSPOOL WE HAVE TODAY, MAKES ME SCREAM OUT IN ANGER AT THE GOD WHO SAYS HE LOVES US.

THE EVIDENCE THAT GOD IS NOT ALL POWERFUL AND ALL LOVING IS ON

**TV. DOES GOD LIKE THE ATTENTION? IS ANY ADVERTISING GOOD
ADVERTISING FOR HIM?**

It seems to me God wanted this to happen—he made it happen. He WANTS us to suffer, in order to be driven TO Him. That must be the only way he figured we would love and come to Him? I've heard that God does not need us. But surely he does, or he would not have introduced pain and suffering to the world to drive us to him. Without it, why would we need him, goes the argument.

We have the perfect Villain—Satan—to blame everything bad on. But Satan did not create Adam and Eve. Satan did not make the Tree. And where was God when the Serpent came sliding in in? Did God not know Eve would eat it? TO ME, THIS IS THE MOST CRUCIAL QUESTION IN ALL OF HUMANITY. Assuming God is all knowing, he knew what would happen, the chaos for all time it would bring, and chose to do nothing. Or rather, let it happen. Had God stepped up at the crucial moment, we would all be loving and happy and together here on Earth, JUST AS IT WAS INTENDED. GOD MADE THE WORLD WHAT IT IS TODAY. GOD CREATED MAN'S HEARTS, GOD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THAT HAPPENS. UNLESS YOU BELIEVE SATAN IS ON PAR AT EQUAL STRENGTH WITH GOD, THEN GOD HAS TO BE ACCOUNTABLE. IT'S TIME RESPONSIBILTY WAS PLACED WITH THE RIGHTFUL OWNER.

Hi _____,

I will be happy to talk to you about this, but first I have a question: do you have any children?

Sue Bohlin

Thank you for your response, I really do appreciate it. No, I don't have any children. I smell an analogy using children coming...Something like "As a parent, we do things in the best interest of our children, and it is only until later in life that those same children understand the actions that were taken...". One analogy I have heard puts God in the example as

the parent and us as the children. I would never have children until I was able to resolve these questions in my own mind and heart. Otherwise I am sure I would pass on the same frustration about God to my family.

After even more thought, I guess the Root of my problem/question is creation, and specifically why God created a flawed world intentionally. I use the word "flawed" in the sense that he

- *Knowingly created an access point for evil for all the world (apple tree)*
- *Had foreknowledge Eve would eat from it*
- *Knew that eating from it would result in Sin throughout mankind*
- *That the sin would cause great suffering to all of God's People*
- *That it would be necessary for God to "save" the world through his Son*

Is God so selfish he would intentionally and knowingly cause all this so we would "choose" him through the salvation in Jesus and 2) He must have known it would turn out like this (the hell that is our world today).

I must sound like a maniac, but I'm 29, well educated, catholic raised and partially practicing, with a good heart. I want to love God, but when I am honest with myself I realize I don't. In fact I hate the person I have concluded God to be. I love Jesus, and of course do believe he died for my sins. My problem is with the Father, and why this grand scheme to make everyone love him was necessary. He could have designed us that way. I finally stopped prayer almost entirely 3 years ago, because I would get so mad and angry at God during prayer—because I would find myself 1) praying for the same

stuff with no result 2) many of the things I was praying about were caused by God (natural disasters, human suffering, etc.) When I say human suffering is caused by God, of course I understand free will and that people cause suffering. I hold God accountable for allowing evil and pain and suffering to exist.

Hope this provides you with a little more insight into my problem. If you are able to assist or offer a new perspective that would be great. Thank You.

Dear _____,

I believe the answer to your question is the fact that God has a very big plan for creation that we cannot see from our vantage point in space and time. He knew before He created anything, what would be the best way to get to His final desire, which is to provide a Bride for His Son. Just as any man wants a woman to marry him freely and out of love and commitment and support, the Lord Jesus wanted a Bride who chose Him freely. The only way to have a Bride who chose Him freely was to create people who could also choose freely to reject Him.

Could God have made people who couldn't have chosen NOT to love Him? No. Love means choice, and the other alternative would have been to create automatons who were programmed to behave in a certain way. If I read your e-mail correctly, you believe God could have made a world in which we were "happy and loving and together as a people here on earth," but He didn't and you're mad at Him for that. People without choice cannot be happy and loving. (Have you ever used a word-processing program that automatically changes what it thinks are misspellings and punctuation errors? No matter what you type, the program rearranges your letters, removing your choice. I don't know about you, but "happy and loving" doesn't describe me when I growl, "That's not what I meant! Let me type things MY way!"<smile>)

I would suggest that an ant colony is busy and productive, ant-wise, but they are not happy and loving. They ARE together, but in the scope of eternity, what does it matter? Their behavior is programmed, but there is no depth to any of it.

God created a world in which the people WERE happy and loving and together, and they chose to trash it. I guess you don't have any trouble accepting that reality; if I'm not mistaken, what you want is all the benefits of Eden without the choice to trash it. I can certainly understand that! □ But you also haven't seen the end of the story, either, when everything is made right again, and that's exactly what we will have. I respectfully suggest that that's the part you're missing. The big picture where God restores creation to its original perfect state. I also respectfully suggest that the evidence of the world today that God is not all-powerful and all-loving, is actually evidence that God is very patient. He's not finished yet. He's allowing a certain amount of pain and suffering—which He will redeem, every bit of it—because there is a larger purpose behind it. Our inability to see it doesn't mean it's not there.

I asked if you if you had children because this is one of the things we can learn about God as parent when we have children. I passionately love my children, but I allowed them to experience pain of immunizations and school tests and other things they hated because I had a larger purpose for them besides preventing discomfort and pain in their lives. For instance, now that my son is in college, he's glad I made him do his homework in 5th grade although he sure didn't at the time. I never lost sight of the big goal, of maturity, because I am his mother who loves him and wants the best for him. God never loses sight of His big goal either.

You have a lot of company in being angry with God for allowing pain and suffering to exist. In fact, many wise people have said that pain and suffering is the single biggest evidence

that God is not good. Or that He doesn't exist. (But then, if there were no God, and we evolved by chance, then where did we get this idea that life is unfair and broken? Life just IS, according to that worldview. But we are haunted by the sense that things should be much better than they are. And sure enough, God has revealed that we live in a fallen and broken world that is so much less than what He originally created for us. We're the ones who blew it.)

But you're not there; you know God exists, and you apparently resent Him for being a bad God for allowing life as we know it.

I'm afraid all I have to offer you is what God has revealed to us: that there IS a bigger plan, than He will make all the pain and suffering worth it some day. If you insist that there was a way for God to create people who could freely choose to either love Him or ignore/hate Him AND there be no chance for pain and suffering in the exercise of that choice, then I guess you will continue to be irreconcilably angry. You may as well fume over God not making a "square circle" or "light-filled darkness." God is a powerful God, but He is not able to create nonsense.

You know that Jesus came to earth and was tortured and died to pay the penalty for our sin. And bless you, you love Him for it. Jesus coming into the midst of our suffering and pain is the clearest indication of the Father's heart there is. He didn't do or say a single thing that was not the Father's will, and to see Jesus is to see the Father. So to hate the Father and love the Son is inconsistent. They are one God with one heart. It cost the Father everything to let the Son pay for our sins, and it cost the Son His life. That's how valuable we are to Them.

The bottom line here, _____, is that what you want God to have done is something He couldn't do. He couldn't make a world for Him to lavish with His love that didn't include the

ability to reject that love. Otherwise creation would have been pointless, and God never does anything pointlessly.

May I suggest, humbly, that you try a prayer again, even though it's been three years, and ask God to show you what you're not getting? Ask Him to open your eyes to see the truth about Him and His ways? And ask Him to help you deal with your anger? He's not intimidated by it; He fully understands your frustration. And He'd love to relieve you of the burden of that anger and replace it with His peace.

I hope this helps, even a little.

Sue Bohlin

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“Is There A Verse About Casting One's Seed in the Belly of a Whore?”

All my life I've heard that somewhere in the Bible there was a statement to the effect, “It is better to cast your seed in the belly of a whore than spill it on the ground.” This alleged statement was a topic of discussion with some of my friends today, including one unbeliever who adamantly stated a preacher had told him that such a statement was contained in the Bible. I have previously attempted to research the existence of this very statement through computer searches to no avail (which was really no surprise to me). Can you comment?

There is no such verse in the Bible, although it seems to be a biblical “urban legend.” The reference to spilling one’s seed on the ground comes from Genesis 38:9:

Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother’s wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother.

I like the way David Guzik explains this passage in his commentary:

When Onan’s brother died, the levirate custom of that time (which was codified into law in Deuteronomy 25:5-10), was that if a man died before providing sons to his wife, it was the duty of his unmarried brothers to “marry” her and to give her sons. The child would be considered the son of the brother who had died, because really the living brother was acting in his place. This was done so that the dead brother’s name would be carried on; but also, so that the widow would have children who could support her. Apart from this, she would likely live the rest of her life as a destitute widow. Onan refused to take this responsibility seriously; he was more than happy to use Tamar for his own sexual gratification, but he did not want to give Tamar a son that he would have to support, but would be considered to be the son of Tamar’s late husband Er. Onan pursued sex as only a pleasurable experience; if he really didn’t want to father a child by Tamar, why did he have sex with her at all? He refused to fulfill his obligation to his dead brother and Tamar. Many Christians have used this passage as a proof-text against masturbation; indeed, masturbation has been called “onanism.” However, this does not seem to be the case here; whatever Onan was doing, he was not masturbating! This was not a sin of masturbation, but a sin of refusing to care for his brother’s widow by giving her offspring, and of a selfish use of sex.

(From www.blueletterbible.org)

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

P.S. I have received emails from people *absolutely convinced* that they had heard such a verse in church at some point in the past. I promise, having personally read every word of the Bible several times over, there is no such verse. But there *is* such a thing as faulty memory. . .

“What About Those Who Cannot Believe?”

There were small children on the planes that were crashed in the 9-11 attacks on America. What happens to a baby or young child who dies? Do they go to heaven or hell?

When a young child dies, the bereaved parents will often ask, “Where is my baby now? Will my child go to heaven? The Bible does not give us a definitive answer to these questions; however, several statements seem to indicate that heaven is the destiny of those who can’t believe.

The critical issue is what God will do in His justice to those who were not able, because of age or mental inability, to respond to His revelation. If they are saved, how are they saved and on what basis are they saved? Wouldn’t the logic that says a child is saved say the same for an adult? In order to answer these questions, let us look at a few basic biblical principles.

First, God is loving (1 John 4:16), good (Nah. 1:7), just (Zeph. 3:5), compassionate, and gracious (Psalm 103:8). He

“wants all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4) and does not want “anyone to perish” (2 Peter 3:9). Therefore, it is inconceivable that God would damn an innocent child who is incapable of belief.

When we use the word innocent in this context we are not implying that the one who cannot believe is free from sin. The Bible clearly teaches that even infants inherit a sinful nature (Psalm 51:5; Rom. 5:12, 18-19). Their salvation comes not from being innocent from sin but rather from their ignorance of God’s revelation.

Second, Christ’s death on the cross for our sins was for all of us unless we refuse to accept it. God gives us the ability to decide. This means that we can either accept or reject God’s love for us.

But what about those who are unable to accept or reject God? We must first realize that everyone (including those who cannot believe) is lost (Luke 19:10), perishing (John 3:16), condemned (John 3:18), and under God’s wrath (John 3:36). We must also realize that Christ’s death on the cross paid the debt of sin for us. His death appeases God’s wrath (Rom. 5:9), and this provision is available to all unless they reject it. As Robert Lightner says in *Heaven for Those Who Can’t Believe*, “Since rejection of the Savior is the final reason why men go to Hell, those who do not reject Him because they are not able to make a conscious decision enter Heaven on the basis of the finished work of Christ.” [Robert P. Lightner, *Heaven for Those Who Can’t Believe* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1977), 20.]

Third, there are examples in the Bible that seem to support the notion that children who die are bound for heaven. In 2 Samuel 12:22-23 David learned of the death of this son by Bathsheba. In this relationship with Bathsheba David broke four of the Ten Commandments: he coveted, he stole, he committed adultery, and he committed murder. As punishment,

his child was to die. However, when he learned that the child had died, he took heart that his son was in heaven. He said, "I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

In Luke 18:16-17, Jesus used children as an object lesson for the kind of faith that leads to eternal life. He taught that the kingdom of God belongs to such as they (Luke 18:16) and that each believer must accept the kingdom of God as a little child (Luke 18:17). He further taught that God was "not willing that any of these little ones should be lost" (Matt. 18:14).

Fourth, there are no biblical references that even hint that children will be in hell. While there are many references to adults in hell, there are none to children. This is admittedly an argument from silence. But in other passages in which the context might warrant such a reference, none is found. Consider, for example, the accounts of the death of mankind in the Flood (Gen. 7:21-23), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24-25), the slaying of the firstborn in Egypt (Exod. 12:29-30), the destruction of the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:3), and the slaying of the little boys in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16).

The character of God is such that He would not damn to hell those who cannot believe. Further, Christ's death on the cross paid the debt of man's sin and is available to all unless they reject it. We can declare with some certainty that those who cannot believe go to heaven when they die.

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