

“How Do You Answer a Person Who Says You Can’t Take the Bible Literally Because It Promotes Killing Homosexuals?”

How would you answer a person who says, “You can’t take the Bible literally because it promotes killing homosexuals” (Lev 20:13)?

There are a number of things that one might say to this, but I will mention just a few. In addition, I will not only speak to the issue of interpretation, but will also address some of the issues which give rise to a statement like this. Of course, we must also remember that there is oftentimes a lot of anger behind a statement like this. Hence, it is important to remember that while we always want to speak the truth, we want to be careful to do it in love. This is the most important thing to bear in mind in responding to someone making such a claim. We want to be kind, gentle, and patient in our response. But concerning the response itself, here are a few things that occur to me as I think about this issue.

First, this particular law was only given to ancient Israel under the terms of the Old Covenant. But God is not relating to anyone under the terms of this covenant today. Rather, God is now relating to all men under the terms of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8). Hence, this is not a law which should be implemented today. In addition, I think it is also important to point out that this passage does not PROMOTE killing homosexuals. This is simply false—and it is important to say so. This particular law requires that those who engage in homosexual activity be put to death. Even under the Old

Covenant, a person with homosexual inclinations or attractions, who refused to act on them, would NOT be put to death. What is at issue here is homosexual *activity*—not homosexual attraction. Hence, even interpreted literally, this law does NOT promote killing homosexuals. Rather, it stipulates that those who engage in homosexual *activity* are to be put to death. But again, it is important to remember that God is no longer relating to mankind under the terms of this covenant.

Second, the law reveals the awful truth about human sinfulness and the holiness of God. God takes sin very seriously and his holiness and moral perfection require that He deal with it as it deserves. Under the terms of the Old Covenant, homosexual behavior was not unique in meriting the sentence of death. Adultery (Lev. 20:10), blasphemy (Lev. 24:16), murder (Exod. 21:12), striking one's father or mother (Exod. 21:15), kidnapping (Exod. 21:16), cursing one's father or mother (Exod. 21:17), and other acts as well, all merited the death sentence under the Old Covenant. Even Sabbath violations received the death sentence (Exod. 31:14). Hence, homosexual activity was not unique in meriting the death sentence under the terms of the Old Covenant.

Third, God disapproves of ALL sexual sin—not just homosexual activity. God disapproves of adultery, fornication, rape, incest, bestiality, as well as homosexual sin. Again, homosexual sin is not unique in being prohibited by God. All sexual sin is prohibited. The Bible allows for sexual activity only within the confines of one man/one woman heterosexual marriage. Any kind of sexual activity outside of this is sin—whether that sexual activity be homosexual, heterosexual, sex with animals, etc.

Fourth, the moral law is based upon the morally pure and morally perfect character of God. If the Bible really is the word of God, then homosexual behavior (along with all other sexual sin) is sin. All such activity, then, would constitute

a violation of God's moral law.

Finally, I think we can agree that we should not ALWAYS interpret the Bible "literally." The Bible, after all, does contain a wealth of figurative and metaphorical language, and it would be inappropriate to interpret such metaphorical expressions literally. The problem in this case, however, is that the verse in question is not making use of such figurative or metaphorical language. Indeed, the writer is quite explicit in spelling things out for us. It would strike me as dishonest to suggest that this passage should be interpreted non-literally or metaphorically. What would it be a metaphor of? What would be the literal truth behind (or underneath) the metaphor? In addition, why should anyone think that God does not disapprove of sexual sin? What sort of argument or evidence is there for believing that God's attitude toward sexual activity is essentially the same as that of a modern secular American? Why should we think that sin (all sin) is not a deadly serious issue to an utterly holy God? It seems to me that the statement you mentioned simply makes some unwarranted assumptions about God's attitude toward human sin.

Of course, the good news is that God has provided atonement for sin through the substitutionary death of His Son, and His resurrection for our justification. Anyone who is willing to turn from their sin, and trust Christ for salvation, can and will be forgiven and saved. No one needs to die for their sins (since Christ has already done so). But everyone who rejects Him and His sacrifice will have to pay for their sin themselves. Hence, we want to communicate, I think, that God takes sin very seriously. But He has also provided for our forgiveness through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross.

Hopefully some of this will be helpful to you as you continue to wrestle with an appropriate response to claims of this sort.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

Posted May 28, 2012

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“Is It Wrong to Baptize in the Name of Jesus?”

Did the Apostles baptize wrong in the Book of Acts since they baptized in the name of Jesus?

There is a debate that says believers must be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt 28: 19) rather than in the name of Jesus only as the Book of Acts records. The Jesus-only people are also modalists which means they do not believe in the Trinity but in Jesus Only, hence they baptize only in his name. The confusion lies in the different formulas for baptism in Matthew and Acts. The solution is that either formula is acceptable since they are both Biblical. What is not acceptable is the modalist theology behind the Jesus Only belief that denies the personhood of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Lawrence Terlizzese, Ph.D.

Posted Feb. 29, 2012

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“Can You Recommend Apologetics Resources on Different Levels?”

As a Christian, I find it to be of invaluable importance to remain current and educated in fields of history, science, logic and philosophy, etc. At age 20, I'm confronting more and more difficulty sharing Christ with a generation in a secularized society that will less and less have Him. Any books you might recommend? Thank you!

There are many good books and websites which address the concerns you have in one way or another. However, let me recommend two books and three websites that have personally been very helpful to me over the years.

1. An excellent popular-level book on apologetics and evangelism is *I'm Glad You Asked* by Ken Boa and Larry Moody – available [here](#).

2. A superb intermediate-level apologetics book is *Reasonable Faith* (3rd edition) by William Lane Craig – available [here](#).

3. An excellent popular-level website on apologetics is the Probe Ministries website here: [Probe.org](#).

4. An excellent scholarly-level site (with some popular-level material) is the Reasonable Faith site here: [www.reasonablefaith.org](#).

5. Finally, a really great site for biblical and theological issues is [bible.org](#).

I hope these resources prove helpful as you continue to prepare yourself to give an account to all who ask about the hope that you have in Christ!

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

Posted 2012

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“Does Sunday Church Violate the Sabbath Commandment?”

Hello Michael, I read your [article](#) on why Christians go to church on Sunday instead of the sabbath. Our Sunday school teacher gave us an assignment to find out how this goes along with the commandment “Remember the sabbath and keep it holy.” Are we breaking this command? Is there any scripture I can share with the class that explains this?

The command to observe the Sabbath is rooted in both creation and redemption. It was a non-negotiable command for Israel under the Mosaic Covenant. However, it seems to me that this is no longer the case for Christians today, for we are now called to relate to God under the terms and conditions of the New Covenant. Hence, I personally don't think that Christians can violate this command for I do not think it is still in effect (at least not as it was under the Old Covenant).

That the Old Covenant has been made obsolete is stated explicitly in Hebrews 8:13. Paul recognizes that there will be difference of opinion among believers regarding how one observes (or does not observe) certain days like the Sabbath in Romans 14:5-6, 13. He clearly indicates that such observance is not necessary for salvation in Galatians 4:8-11.

In Colossians 2:16-17 he says that we are not to judge (or let ourselves be judged) with respect to things like Sabbath day observances, for these things are but "a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ." Finally, the author of Hebrews reminds us of that true Sabbath rest that remains for God's people today. This, I take it, refers to a "rest" that is available to us in some respects now, but will be fully and perfectly realized only in the future, in the new heaven and new earth. Insofar as this "rest" is available to us now, it is not limited to a single day of the week, but is rather a "perpetual" sort of "rest" that we can enter by surrendering ourselves completely to the will of God and trusting wholly in what Christ accomplished for us through His death and resurrection. In other words, we cease trying to earn God's favor by what we do and we "rest" in the fact that Christ has already done this for us! Properly understood, of course, this does not mean that we cease doing good works, which we are clearly told to do (see Ephesians 2:10 and Titus 2:14). It does mean, however, that we can get off the treadmill of trying to earn God's favor by what we do (and "rest" in the fact that Christ has done this for us).

The Sabbath day rest under the Old Covenant, then, is but a type or "shadow" of this fuller "rest" that we can enjoy in Christ—both now (through faith) and in the future new heaven and new earth.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with setting aside a day for rest each week, provided that one does not think that this gains them some sort of special favor with God, favor that is somehow not available to all who trust Christ for salvation. In other words, as I understand it, a Christian is free to set aside a day for rest, but is not required to do so. All Christians, however, are clearly commanded to set aside time for worship and fellowship with other believers (see Hebrews 10:23-25). This, as I see it, is the primary purpose for Christians to set aside Sunday each week. It is to be a day

for worshiping the Lord and enjoying fellowship with one another, and encouraging one another to love and good deeds.

Of course, not everyone will agree with what I've written here. But this seems to me to be the New Testament teaching about this issue.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

Posted Nov. 28, 2012

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“Can You Recommend Resources for Sharing Christ in a Secular Society?”

Hello, Mr. Gleghorn! I want to thank you for what you do. As a Christian, I find it to be of invaluable importance to remain current and educated in fields of history, science, logic and philosophy, etc. Age 20, I'm confronting more and more difficulty sharing Christ with generation in a secularized society that will less and less have Him. Any books you might recommend? Thank you!

Thanks for your letter. There are many good books and websites which address the concerns you have in one way or another. However, let me recommend two books and three websites that have personally been very helpful to me over the years.

1. An excellent popular-level book on apologetics and evangelism is *I'm Glad You Asked* by Ken Boa and Larry Moody:

www.amazon.com/Glad-You-Asked-Depth-Difficult/dp/B004IEA2Z2/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1323708380&sr=8-1

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5. Finally, a really great site for biblical and theological issues is this: bible.org

I hope these resources prove helpful as you continue to prepare yourself to give an account to all who ask about the hope that you have in Christ!

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“There is No Proof Your Pathetic Manmade God Ever Lived”

There is not one proof that Jesus ever lived. Everything you quoted on your stupid page was all hearsay that was passed

along by g*dd*mn fools. Yeshe was real and lived one hundred years before your concocted fake savior. There was Jesus of Gamala who was another savior. There was Jesus Bar Kocba, yet another savior. Josephus never wrote that passage about Jesus and only a f***ing fool would believe it was anything other than another 'Christian' lie and forgery. Josephus was a Jew and would have been stoned to death for such a statement. You people lie like dogs and couldn't tell the truth if your lives depended on it. There were at least 50 well known authors/historians during the era that your pathetic manmade god was said to have lived yet not one of them bothered to write one word about him. Hell, man don't you think with all his miracles and dead people popping out of graves during his crucifixion that someone might sit up and take notice? There are no people on this planet meaner or more insane than Christians. Also, our Founders did not found this nation on your sickening repulsive deadly religion and most of them hated it. History is completely silent on all the major Bible characters, including the child raping killer Moses and the pimp Abraham. Thank goodness, for you couldn't find a more disgusting and perverted bunch if you spent your life looking. Yahweh was a real b*stard that I wouldn't allow in my neighborhood. Why don't you try the truth for a change?

I am sorry that our material has caused you to respond with such negative emotion.

But if I may, I'd like to engage some of your points.

There is not one proof that Jesus ever lived. Everything you quoted on your stupid page was all hearsay that was passed along by g*dd*mn fools.

This is a fairly broad generalization. Could you refer to something specific so we can get a better idea of what you object to most?

Yeshe was real and lived one hundred years before your

concocted fake savior. There was jesus of gamala who was another savior. There was jesus bar kocba, yet another savior.

Do you have some documentation for these various Jesus characters so we can research ourselves? This is a commonly held notion but the documentation we often see is not reliable.

Josephus never wrote that passage about jesus and only a f*ing fool would believe it was anything other than another 'christian' lie and forgery. Josephus was a jew and would have been stoned to death for such a statement.**

Concerning Josephus, Michael [Gleghorn] clearly indicates that the second passage he refers to by Josephus was likely edited by a Christian scholar to include the references to Jesus as the Christ and other messianic phrases. Most scholars regard the rest of the passage as genuine. www.probe.org/ancient-evidence-for-jesus-from-non-christian-sources/.

You people lie like dogs and couldn't tell the truth if your lives depended on it. There were at least 50 well known authors/historians during the era that your pathetic manmade god was said to have lived yet not one of them bothered to write one word about him.

Can you provide us a list of a few of these authors/historians? You have to consider that any news did not travel very far or very fast in that era. Many of Jesus' miracles would be beyond belief for many and would have just been dismissed. It makes sense therefore, that Jesus was noted a few decades later when the number of his followers continued to grow despite severe persecution.

Hell, man don't you think with all his miracles and dead people popping out of graves during his crucifixion that someone might sit up and take notice? There are no people on

this planet meaner or more insane than Christians. Also, our Founders did not found this nation on your sickening repulsive deadly religion and most of them hated it.

I agree with you to a degree. Jefferson and Franklin were likely [deists](#) who used the Bible when it suited them. [George Washington](#) however, seems to be a genuine Christian. Do you have sources who indicate otherwise?

History is completely silent on all the major bible characters, including the child raping killer Moses and the pimp Abraham.

Well, that's not exactly true. Roman and Jewish historians make reference to Jesus and Christians in the first century. Also a stone from around 800BC contained the phrase "House of David." Babylonian records refer to the appropriate kings of Judah in the early years of the Babylonian captivity, both those left in Jerusalem and those taken to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar is real as are the accounts of various Assyrian kings mentioned in Chronicles and Kings. The Babylonian and Persian kings are accurately reflected in Daniel. It's quite unlikely to find any archeological references to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They were nomadic herders who didn't keep any history.

Thank goodness, for you couldn't find a more disgusting and perverted bunch if you spent your life looking. Yahweh was a real b*stard that I wouldn't allow in my neighborhood. Why don't you try the truth for a change?

We are looking for the truth and confidently believe we have found it in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. I suspect that something else besides your perceived lack of evidence is driving the strength of your rejection. Whatever that may be, I am truly sorry that some Christian or group of Christians have grievously harmed you in some way in the past. No true Christians ever claim to be perfect or to have exhaustive

knowledge. But we have seen and experienced the truth in ways that are quite convincing.

Respectfully,

Raymond G. Bohlin, Ph.D.

<https://sites.google.com/site/yahwehelohiym/sons-of-god/the-boundaries-of-the-nations>

Yahweh was just a hateful petty tribal god and one of the many sons of el elyon, the most high god, and your bible proves it but you people do not understand what the hell you read and keep the lies going.

I'm afraid your source is a bit behind the times. While some of what he says is correct, that some names of God go back to the Ugaritic language, his/her reliance on the Documentary Hypothesis is outdated.
www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/09/24/the-documentary-hypothesis.aspx#Article

“Sons of God” appears elsewhere in the Old Testament, in Genesis 6:2,4 and Job 38:7. In each case it is either a reference to men who followed God (Genesis 6) or angels (Job 38). Nothing new or damaging here.

If you just look a little further in the Old Testament you find Isaiah saying;

I am the Lord, I have no peer,
there is no God but me.

I arm you for battle, even though you do not recognize me.

I do this so people will recognize from east to west
that there is no God but me;

I am the Lord, I have no peer.

Remember what I accomplished in antiquity!

Truly I am God, I have no peer;

I am God, and there is none like me (45:5-9)

The God of the Bible is a monotheistic God throughout. And we do have a nearly complete Book of Isaiah from the [Dead Sea Scrolls](#) and the only difference with the Masoretic text of AD 900 is a few spelling changes.

One item at a time.

www.stephenjaygould.org/ctrl/buckner_ncn.html

I also advise you to read *Liars for Jesus* and Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*. Paine helped word our Constitution and Bill of Rights and named this country The United States of America. Few Christians will speak about his book because it cannot be refuted intelligently. His part 3 proves there are NO OT prophecies of jesus and makes jackasses of anyone who says otherwise. Can you people read? Christians don't follow the doctrine of jesus, they follow the apostate liar paul. Read the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* to find the Lord's Prayer and the so-called ten commandments along with many other items the murdering jews (who are not jews but are liars from the synagogue of satan) stole and created their rotten religion. Much of what they stole was from the ancient Sumerians who lived about 1000 years before the hyksos came to be known as Hebrews. Their epic of creation was used by these maggots to create the most bloody and perverted religion this world has known, until Christians showed up.

Hmmm. I don't recall claiming that the U.S. is a Christian nation. You won't find that anywhere on our website. But do read from George Washington's farewell address:

Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars

of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

Clearly he doesn't say what religion, but there was little else in America at that time except for different forms of Christianity. Even if he only means a loose form of deism, he clearly questions that government can function for long without it.

So you really want to use Thomas Paine as your source for the conviction that there are no OT prophecies about Jesus? There is so much we didn't know in the late 18th century. Archaeology was barely a fledgling science. So many manuscripts were unknown. We have thousands of OT and NT manuscripts today that Paine had no knowledge of whatsoever. Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12 is about as clear a prophecy of Jesus that you will find. And remember we have a complete copy of Isaiah from the Dead Sea Scrolls, well before Jesus lived.

Liars for Jesus looks like an interesting book. I have no doubt there has been sloppy scholarship on the part of many in the religious right. At Probe Ministries we make every effort to research with integrity and write with a biblical reasonableness and respect for those we disagree with.

Two of the foremost and revered Jewish Archaeologists in Israel have proven the OT is a lie but preachers will never tell that. They are greedy dogs and deceivers.
www.hiddenmysteries.org/mysteries/history/jehovah.html

I am familiar with the archaeologists you mention and their conclusions are quite controversial. Archaeology comes with a need for publicity to help donors and foundations continue your funding. Making such an outrageous claim would certainly get headlines and keep the dollars flowing.

I'm not surprised that there are "official" documents declaring that YHWH had Ashterah as a consort. The Jewish histories of the Bible are filled with condemnation for continuing to worship in the high places and using Ashterah poles for fertility. They did indeed worship many gods at times. The Bible doesn't hide that.

But again, this document refers to the Documentary Hypothesis and the P source. This has been debunked for decades but is still used in many secular universities because it fits their predetermined conclusions about biblical texts.

By the way, you can find documentation for the House of David inscription [here:](http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/category/archaeology/)
www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/category/archaeology/.

Also we do have the oldest form of writing from Tell Mardikh, the Ebla Tablets. These date to between the 26th and 23rd centuries BCE. There are names, of places, people, and customs similar to those found in Genesis. If Genesis was supposedly written in the 7th century BCE as many claim, these names, places and customs could not be known.

evidenceforchristianity.blogspot.com/2008/11/ebla-tablets-ancient-sumerian.html

Elba Tablets?! Ha, your man was long ago discredited. You must keep up.

www.infidels.org/library/modern/james_still/reliability.html

Everything the so-called jews have or ever had was stolen from other cultures. It is easy to understand why those horrid creatures have been tossed out of every nation they tried to infiltrate with their money making schemes and corruptions. They were the central bankers our founders hated and tried to keep out of this nation. The Presidents who came against them were assassinated. Jackson managed to survive the attempts they made on his life but they still managed to gain the upper hand again and now the swine damn near own this entire nation. The only method used to gain control of Palestine was more lies. Go figure. You don't have a clue what is even happening in this world and who is in control.

I don't think Mr. Still refutes much of anything about the Ebla Tablets. He admits that Pettinato is a Sumerologist and therefore will have skills of translation. The only quibble Mr. Still seems to have with Pettinato is his claim to find the name Yah, similar to Yahweh. OK fine, he just offers another opinion. He says nothing about the names of the cities on the plain. He lost almost all credibility with me in his opening three paragraphs, claiming that Christianity is just a faith and mystery religion according to Paul. Then says Josh McDowell's theology is in tension with this since McDowell wants an inerrant scripture based on facts. Sorry, I don't see any tension at all. Paul refers to actual events in his letters, things that happened to him and things he learned from the apostles. Paul is the one in 1 Corinthians 15 who puts a lot of weight on the historical resurrection. There's no tension. He's making mountains out of ant hills.

His account of how the gospels came about is some shoddy tying together of weird threads. The so-called "Q" document does not

exist. It is only supposed to exist because it fits this model. He refers to some of the church fathers to back up some of his points but not to the early tradition among those same church fathers that Mark was written by Mark from Peter's recollections. Luke is indeed an historian. Still's confusion over the middle chapters is not worth responding to. Most conservative scholars now suggest that all the gospels were written before AD 70 because none of them mention the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple when Jesus specifically predicts this in all three synoptic gospels. It would be easy to add this as an editorial proof that Jesus got it right. Especially if these gospels were supposedly cobbled together from sayings and other recollections.

Last, I really liked the part about Jesus waving a magic wand over Lazarus in the catacombs indicating they saw him as a magician. I haven't actually seen the picture though I looked for one. Found a few articles stating the same but no documentation. I suspect that it's another Everest out of an ant hill.

I'm still working on the Thomas Paine refutation of messianic prophecies. Not terribly impressed though. As suspected some of his objections no longer hold up. He also assumes away the supernatural so when Isaiah refers to the Persian Cyrus who wasn't even born in Isaiah's time, he uses that to say that obviously Isaiah was written after 500 BCE. It's bad form to assume away what you are trying to discredit.

Funny how you keep claiming that men like Paine just assume things while he at least existed and that is more than you can say about your bible supermen. It would be one thing to have one of these paragons of virtue (not) to disappear but to have the great majority of them to vaporize from all historical records should wake up even the village idiot. I guess when a man makes his living off conning the sheeple he will stand by

his deception until the end. Religion is now a trillion dollar a year BUSINESS. That is like waiting for a used car salesman to tell the buyer to be ware, there may be something wrong with his intended purchase. If Christians really claim the bible is the word of god they must really be confused about what the book says since there are over 3000 sects of Christianity and they disagree on many points. If god is not the author of confusion he sure messed up with his only written word to man. Not only is the bible a mess of contradictions and falsehoods, it is by far the filthiest and bloodiest book ever penned by man. You claim the Creator of this entire world had any part of that filth and to me that is where blasphemy truly is found. You are obviously rooted in lies or you are just taking advantage of brainwashed people to make a living. Either way, you will never open your eyes. Enjoy the holiday of greed and materialism with the rest of the Christian world.

Your hatred blinds you at least as much as you would say my faith blinds me.

I will readily admit that much that passes for Christianity indeed is little more than business. But I would say you are guilty of following the old adage of throwing out the baby with the bathwater. We're not all liars, cheats and frauds.

Jesus did/does exist.

He indeed fulfilled dozens of OT prophecies about the Messiah.

Performed signs and miracles beyond the plain ability of a simple magician, control over nature that frightened even his own disciples, raised a man dead for four days, healed a man blind from birth.

He died for my sins and for yours.

His historical resurrection proved his claims of deity and opened the door for all who call Him Lord and believe that God

raised him from the dead, will be saved. Ten of eleven disciples died a martyr's death, believing all that they saw and heard was real.

You are following the imaginations of those who are guilty of seeking to destroy what they simply don't like. Besides, as the evolutionary biologist J.B.S. Haldane said, "If my brain is simply composed of atoms, and my thoughts are simply the interaction of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose my brain to be composed of atoms" (loose paraphrase). In a fully materialistic universe, there is no truth, no way to truly know what is real; truth is simply what works, for the moment. Truth is indeed relative and ultimately unknowable. So why bother with your crusade? If some choose to believe a benevolent fiction, what do you care? Obviously you do care, you believe some things to be true and false. I only observe that you need to borrow from a Christian worldview to do so.

Pascal's wager is still worth considering; if I am wrong and death is the end and there is no afterlife, I've lost nothing. I've lived a good life, loved my wife and kids, kind to my neighbors, supported an Indian boy, and help give others hope. If you're wrong, you lose everything.

I will enjoy the celebration of the Incarnation that the now secular culture of the USA has turned into a necessary economic ritual. My family will enjoy a very modest Christmas.

I hope you can enjoy some time with friends or family during this end of year.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ray Bohlin

Posted Dec. 26, 2011

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“What Do You Do When Your Pastor Preaches Other People’s Sermons?”

What do you do when your pastor is preaching other people’s sermons week after week? No credit is given to the sermons he uses. I am starting to question the ease of obtaining other men’s work. This has been going on for at least two years; sometimes the sermons are almost word for word. I am at the point where I google every sermon. Places like Sermon Central and Saddleback offer many choices, I am not sure if they are providing a service/help or providing an excuse for no personal study. I don’t know where to go.

Thanks for your letter. This is an issue which (I suppose) would need to be taken up with the leadership of your local church. Since churches are governed differently, you would need to find out who the leaders of your local church are and take this matter up with them. Of course, you should first probably take the issue up with the pastor himself (Matthew 18:15-17).

Although the pastor should let the congregation know whose sermon he is preaching, there’s nothing inherently wrong with his preaching another person’s sermon. In fact, at various times in church history, when there have not been enough adequately trained leaders, men have read the sermons of others for the benefit of their congregation.

Charles Spurgeon tells how he was once away from his own congregation and attended a little country church only to hear one of his own sermons read from the pulpit! Of course, it’s also true (as you point out) that the pastor should not be

neglecting personal time in the diligent study of the Bible. That, as I see it, is part of his job description!

At any rate, as I see it, this is a matter that needs to be discussed by the leadership in your local church. At the very least, however, the pastor should credit the author of the sermon he reads to the congregation.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

Posted July 2011

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“How Strong Does My Belief Need to be for Me to be Saved?”

This may seem like a strange question, but how strong does my belief need to be in order for me to be saved? I have been living I guess what you would call a carnal life (not praying or even thinking about God) for around 20 years and am beginning to wonder if I have lost my salvation or if I cannot be reconciled. Please help me, something is missing. I am worried that some of the feelings I sometimes have mean that I don't want to serve The Lord.

If you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can be saved (Matt. 17:20). The issue really is not so much the “size” or “amount” of your faith, but the object of your faith. Are you trusting Christ for salvation? If so, then you are saved, for your faith is placed in the only One who is really able to

save you.

Now I must say that it's really not surprising that you don't feel like you have much of a relationship with the Lord, for the fact is that (by your own admission) you don't. If, for the past twenty years or so, you haven't been seeking the Lord in prayer, spending time in His word, enjoying fellowship with other believers, seeking to serve the Lord in your own sphere of influence, etc., then it's really not surprising that you would feel distant from Him. The truth is, at this point in your life, you *are* distant from Him! It would be as if you had a friend that you had not spoken to or thought about in twenty years. What sort of friendship would that be? Not a very close one, right?

The good news, however, is that you can always repent, turn away from sin and turn back to God, and let Him know that you would like to begin to have a "real" relationship with Him. If you have truly trusted Christ for salvation, then your relationship with God is still intact. However, you've been out of fellowship with Him for the last twenty years. You scarcely even know the One you're trusting with your eternal destiny! Nevertheless, if you confess your sins, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). So I would encourage you to go to the Lord in prayer, confess your sins, accept His forgiveness and cleansing, and get back in the game! You might want to read the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. I think you would find this story helpful at this point in your life.

A couple of helpful tips:

1. Begin spending some time each day with God both in prayer and reading the Bible (find a good translation that you like and can read without too much difficulty). You may want to begin reading a chapter a day in the Gospel of John.

2. Find a good, conservative, Bible-believing church where you can get involved with other believers in studying the Bible and serving the Lord. If they have small groups for fellowship and Bible study, then get involved in one of those.

May the Lord bless you as you sincerely begin seeking Him again!

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“What Can We Know about Enoch?”

I did a search on your website on the Book of Enoch and found one of the [answers](#) being that it is fiction and made up. How do we know that though? I'm interested in his life, as he was mentioned in the word to have walked with God, which stood out to me among the other men mentioned as having only lived and died. Is there any way I could get info about his life, if indeed the Book of Enoch is a fallacy? Thank you for your time
□

The book of Enoch is usually referred to as a pseudopigraphical work. That is, it is a book which has been falsely ascribed to the Enoch mentioned in Genesis 5:21-24 and Hebrews 11:5. He is also mentioned as prophesying in Jude 1:14-15—and this section of the work appears to actually go back to Enoch himself.

Nevertheless, there is scholarly consensus that the book of Enoch was written far too late to be attributed to the actual historical Enoch mentioned in Genesis 5. If you would like some more information on this book, there is a reasonably good discussion here: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Enoch. A scholarly discussion of the book can also be found at Google books [here](#).

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“I Don’t Feel Connected to God”

April 28, 2011

What should I do if I don’t feel like I need to repent? How can I make myself more humble towards God?

This question is coming from a time of doubt in my life. I just have not been very connected with Jesus lately. I feel somewhat connected with God, though the personal relationship I used to have with His Son has gone out the window. It’s a strange situation. Part of this problem may be coming from not being humble before God – I feel like I can get by on my own sometimes. I don’t have any specific sin, just general ones that I struggle with day to day like pride. I was mostly looking for repentance in general.

Thanks for responding, and I hope this is clarifying. I also hope you enjoy your job. ☐ Thanks!

Hey Kara,

Yes, this is helpful, thanks. It seems as though you're basing the status of your relationship with the Lord only on how you feel. Perhaps you no longer have those warm-fuzzy feelings that you used to have in high school (I'm guessing based upon your email address that you graduated in '09). This kind of experience is very common for several reasons. Firstly, in most of American Christianity (especially in Evangelical and Charismatic circles, and most especially in youth group programs) we over-emphasize [feelings](#). Of course some of this is very natural because as we are growing into adulthood through our teen years, our emotions are developing and often on overdrive, which isn't bad per se; it's just how it is. Other reasons we often over-emphasize feelings have to do with our Church history in this country, especially the Great Awakenings and the efforts made to reach those on the Frontier. At any rate, the point is you're not alone. I have experienced the same exact thing you're talking about.

Here's my recommendation. We are all driven much more by our bodies than our brains. We typically consider this a bad thing, but it isn't. It's how we were created, embodied. I don't start feeling tired until I brush my teeth at night. Why? Because I brush my right before I go to bed and my body associates the two habits. But if I wait until I *feel* tired, I'll stay up way too late. We have all sorts of routines like this. Since we are creatures of habit (by God's design), what we often need are habits and routines (which is a word we're really scared of) to help us remember God because *most of us* feel like we can get by on our own most of the time.

So, some suggestions.

- *Go on walks... without your iPod. You can train yourself to*

pray for your friends, family, the world... during these times. It will take time to discipline your mind, and that's okay; be gracious with yourself. Eventually, your mind will associate prayer with these walks, and it will just happen without your having to think about it. You might need to make these walks at the same time every week or every day, whatever. This can be tricky when our schedules are regularly changing, but that's okay too. The lunch hour can be a good time for this, especially since we are highly influenced by our stomachs. You can take your lunch with you or use that time to fast and pray (which includes, of course, repentance).

- Visit churches with different practices than you're used to. This may seem like an odd suggestion, but if you've only ever experienced one type of liturgy (which all churches have, it's just a church's Sunday morning (or whenever) routine), how can you know if it's a liturgy that is a good fit for you? We're all a bit different, and some habits won't work for some people like they will for others. On the other hand, visiting other churches can help us understand our own church liturgy in ways we never really thought about before, making our Sunday morning practices less mere routine and more spiritually-connected routine. These visits can occur frequently if you're not that connected to your current church or not going to church, or they can be more spread out like once every other month or so. Some churches have weekly communal prayers of repentance. I find these quite helpful.

- Finally, be communal with whatever habits you try. With one or two friends or a mentor you can really trust, let them into this part of your life. Another reason we struggle so much with spiritual habits is because we have the insane notion that we have to do it all on our own—just me and God—like if I tell someone I'm going to try to start prayer-walking or whatever, then I'm just bragging and being unspiritual. This is a trick of the Enemy; he knows us well.

I hope this will be a helpful start for you. Please feel free to let me know how things are going, because, yes, I do really like my job. 😊

Blessings to you,
Renea

Wow,

Thank you very much for your suggestions! These sound like great ideas that will work. I'm especially excited to see what kind of churches I can visit – although I love my own church, that I am involved in, I love to see different ways of worshiping. Thank you very much.

This blog post originally appeared at
reneamac.com/2011/04/28/i-dont-feel-connected-to-god/