The False Teaching of "The Secret" – A Christian Evaluation

Kerby Anderson examines The Secret and The Law of Attraction from a biblical perspective and finds it teaches a dangerous mixture of half truths and outright lies.

Rhonda Byrne and *The Secret*

The book is called *The Secret*, but it didn't remain a secret for very long. Already the book has sold more than three million copies, and there are nearly two million DVDs of the teaching. There seems to be no end to the public's interest in this message presented by Rhonda Byrne.

Some call *The Secret* a transformative message. Others see it as a popular combination of marketing that parallels the success of *The DaVinci Code* with the message found in Eastern religions and philosophies throughout the centuries. Whatever it is, it has exploded in our culture ever since Rhonda Byrne's first appearance on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

The Secret has been promoted as "a feature length, historic and factually based account of an age old secret" which is said to be four thousand years in the making and "known to only a fortunate few." The DVD and the book reveal "this great knowledge to the world." Supposedly it is the secret to wealth, the secret to health, the secret to love, relationships, happiness, and eternal youth.

The basic premise of *The Secret* was borne from the troubles that affected Rhonda Byrne. She is a television producer and mother in her fifties. A number of years ago she "hit a rocky patch in her business and personal lives."{1} Her father died suddenly and her relationships with her family and work

colleagues were in turmoil. It was at that moment of despair when she "wept and wept and wept" that she discovered a long-neglected book entitled *The Science of Getting Rich*.{2}

In the book she discovered how to let your thoughts and feelings give you everything that you desire. She then dedicated herself to sharing these principles with the world in the form of *The Secret*.

Many have called it marketing genius. After all, all of us want to be in on a secret. So why wouldn't we all want to know *the* secret to life? That is what Rhonda Byrne promised in her DVD. "Torchlights flicker on the 90-minute DVD and the soundtrack throbs portentously before it gets down to giving you the secret for getting your hands on that new BMW."{3}

Its success shouldn't be too surprising. After all, many self-help authors have become celebrities and quite financially successful by addressing American's desperate need for happiness and significance.

Several show up as contributors to *The Secret*. For example, Wayne Dyer has written nearly thirty books on the subject of self-help. His 1976 book, *Your Erroneous Zones*, has sold over thirty million copies. Jack Canfield is best known for his *Chicken Soup for the Soul* book series. There are currently over 115 titles and 100 million copies in print.

The Law of Attraction

Rhonda Byrne's book and DVD on *The Secret* supposedly bring together "the oral traditions, in literature, in religions and philosophies throughout the centuries."{4} These pieces are brought together to produce this life-transforming message.

While it is passed off as new and exciting, there are many other teachers who preceded *The Secret* with a similar message. Charles Fillmore, who founded the Unity School of Christianity, talked about "The Twelve Powers of Man," arguing

that the causes of all things are “essentially mental.” Norman Vincent Peale is best known for his *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Deepak Chopra talks about “The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success.” Motivational speaker Tony Robbins believes “it’s our decisions, not the conditions of our lives, that determine our destiny.”{5}

Rhonda Byrne not only relies on people she calls the guardians of *The Secret*, but also upon a documentary released a number of years ago called *What the Bleep Do We Know?* The film makes all sorts of metaphysical claims based upon their particular interpretation of quantum physics.

According to Rhonda Byrne, the key element of *The Secret* is what is called “The Law of Attraction.”{6} You can summarize the law with three words: “Thoughts become things.” In other words, if you think hard enough about something, it will take place. Think good thoughts, and you will reap good things. Think bad thoughts, and bad things will happen to you. You create your own circumstances, and you can change those circumstances with your thoughts.

A central teaching of “The Law of Attraction” is that nothing can come into your experience unless you summon it through persistent thoughts. Thus, everything that surrounds you right now (both good and bad) has been attracted to you. As you focus on what you want, you are changing the vibration of atoms of that thing so that they begin to vibrate to you.{7} Ultimately, you determine the frequency or vibration so that you can best acquire wealth, health, and fulfillment.

Do you want something? Then you need to focus on it. In one segment in the DVD, a kid who wants a red BMX bicycle cuts out a picture of it from a catalog. He concentrates on it and even obsesses about it. He is rewarded with a bike.

Do you want to lose weight? Do the same thing. Rhonda Byrne talked about the weight she gained after her pregnancies. But

once she applied “The Law of Attraction,” she realized her error: “Food is not responsible for putting on weight. It is your thought that food is responsible for putting on weight that actually has food put on weight.”

Do you want to get healthy? Visualize health. One woman in the DVD claims to have cured her breast cancer in three months without chemotherapy or radiation. She claims she did this by visualizing herself well and watching funny movies on television.

The Seductive Message

The incredible popularity of *The Secret* illustrates the spiritual hunger in our culture. But while people are hungry for spirituality, they are not willing to attend church to be fed spiritually. Instead they go to the bookstore and buy this book or DVD along with other books dealing with spirituality.

A buyer for West Hollywood’s popular metaphysical bookstore, The Bodhi Tree, said that DVD of *The Secret* had “become the biggest selling item in the 30-year history of our store.” Why has it become so successful? Here is what a writer for *Time* magazine concluded:

> Mixing the ancient conspiracy hoodoo of *The DaVinci Code* with the psychic science of 2004’s cult hit *What the Bleep Do We Know?*, it interweaves computer graphics, historical recreations and interviews with “experts” into a study of “intention-manifestation” – the philosophy that contends our emotions and thoughts can actually influence real-world events. In other words: if you really, truly believe you can beat the lottery and visualize scratching off a winning ticket, you can do exactly that.{8}

The appeal of *The Secret* is understandable. People want to be wealthy and healthy. But this false philosophy leads to death and destruction. In Colossians 2:8, Paul warns Christians:

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of the world rather than on Christ.”

There are countless examples that demonstrate that “The Law of Attraction” does not work. If you don’t think so, try this simple experiment. Visualize that you have a million dollars in your checking account. Think lots of positive thoughts about all the money you assume is in your checking account. Then go to the bank and write a really big check. The cashier might even have positive thoughts about your account. But then you will come face-to-face with reality. The bank’s computers don’t have positive thoughts about your checking account, nor do they have negative thoughts about your checking account. They are just doing the math. Despite all the positive feelings you can muster, your check will bounce.

Even those who accept the metaphysical basis of *The Secret* are concerned with its seductive message that appeals to our materialism. After all, practitioners are using this supposed ancient wisdom to acquire material goods. One of the “experts” in the film says: “*The Secret* is like having the universe as your catalog.”{9}

Many wonder if acquiring more possessions is what *The Secret* should be all about. “The get-rich-quick parts really bothered me,” says the buyer at the Bodhi Tree. “It’s my hope that people won’t use creative visualization to obtain wealth for themselves, but in more positive, altruistic ways.”{10}

Spiritually Dangerous

We have already shown that the premise of *The Secret* is false. You cannot alter reality simply with your thoughts. “The Law of Attraction” can essentially be summarized with three words: “Thoughts become things.” That is not true.

But the teachings of *The Secret* are not only false; they are

spiritually dangerous.

Rhonda Byrne makes this observation in her book: “So whatever way you look at it, the result is still the same. We are One. We are all connected, and we are all part of the One Energy Field, or the One Supreme Mind, or the One Consciousness, or the One Creative Source. Call it whatever you want, but we are all One.”{11}

Essentially she is teaching that we can become gods. We are God in a physical body. We are the creative source and the have the cosmic power to manipulate the universe according to our own desires. We are creating our own reality and thus can manipulate that reality to our own ends.{12}

Contrast that with the temptation in the Garden of Eden where Satan tells Eve “you will be like God” (Genesis 3:5). Why is *The* Secret so popular? Because we are tempted to be “like God.”

It is one of the enemy’s oldest tricks in The Book. Satan knows that we are vulnerable to this desire to be “like God.” Satan tempted Eve in the Garden with this tactic, and he is tempting millions today with the same tactic.

John warned us of the temptations in the world: “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world” (1 John 2:15-16).

We must choose that which we love and worship. Are we going to love the world and all that is in the world? Or are we going to love God? We must choose what we will love and which view of reality we will accept.

We are admonished “to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). The principles in

The Secret are not biblical principles but pagan, worldly principles that have been around since the beginning.

The Secret calls upon us to use our thoughts for our own selfish desires. Paul, however, tells us in Romans 12:1-2 that we are to present our bodies as a sacrifice to the Lord. We are to be selfless, not selfish.

(For more information on the spiritual dangers of *The Secret*, see Russ Wise's in-depth analysis, which uncovers the occultic connection with several contributors to the project.)

The Secret and Science

To prove "The Law of Attraction," the foundational principle in *The Secret*, Rhonda Byrne's DVD presents physicists who imply that the latest scientific discoveries validate this metaphysical principle. One of the "experts" in the film is Fred Alan Wolf who apparently talked about the relationship between quantum mechanics and consciousness. Evidently, most of this wound up on the cutting room floor.{13}

The other "expert" on the film is John Hagelin, who is affiliated with Maharishi University. Both Wolf and Hagelin distanced themselves from the ideas in the DVD and acknowledged that "The Law of Attraction" does not seem to work in reality the way it is described in *The Secret*.

Some of the ideas in *The Secret* can also be found in the film, *What the Bleep Do We Know?* The documentary combines interviews along with a fictional narrative to bring together thoughts about the possible connection between quantum physics and spirituality. The interviews and computer graphics imply that the latest scientific discoveries (in neuroscience, psychology, physics, etc.) suggest that we can manipulate the universe with our mind.

The film even sets forth the principle that the universe is

actually constructed from thought or mental images rather than some substance. It goes on to suggest that "empty space" is anything but empty. And it teaches that our beliefs about who we are and what is reality are influenced by our own thoughts and mental perspective.

The film may be interesting fiction and metaphysics; it is very poor psychology and physics. Scientists have rejected the ideas in the film as nothing more than pseudoscience with no relation to reality.

The message of *The Secret* also bears no relation to reality. It says, "Food is not responsible for putting on weight. It is your thought that food is responsible for putting on weight that actually has food put on weight." Science disagrees.

But the message is also dangerous. Karin Klein with the *Los Angeles Times* recounts the dangerous impact of *The Secret* on those who follow its prescription: "Therapists tell me they're starting to see clients who are headed for real trouble, immersing themselves in a dream world in which good things just come."{14}

It's not surprising that *The Secret* is popular. People are spiritually hungry, and the book and DVD partially feed that hunger. The message is seductive, but as we have also seen it is wrong, and more importantly, it is dangerous. It is one of the enemy's oldest tricks in The Book. We need to exercise spiritual discernment and realize the false teaching in *The Secret*.

Notes

1. Jerry Adler, "Decoding The Secret," *Newsweek*, 5 March 2007, 53.
2. Wallace Wattles, *The Science of Getting Rich*, 1910, www.scienceofgettingrich.net.
3. Adler, Decoding, 53-54.
4. Home page of The Secret,

www.thesecret.tv/home-synopsis.html.
5. Adler, Decoding, 55.
6. Rhonda Byrne, *The Secret* (New York: Atria Books, 2006), 28.
7. Ibid., 156.
8. Jeffrey Ressner, "The Secret of Success," *Time*, 28 December 2006.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Byrne, *The Secret*, 162.
12. Ibid., 164.
13. Adler, Decoding, 57.
14. Karin Klein, "Self-help gone nutty," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 February 2007.

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"Why Didn't God Just Throw Satan into Hell When He Rebelled?"

Why did God allow Satan to deceive mankind for a certain time period? Why did He not just throw Satan into hell first after he rebelled?

You're right, we don't know many things in the mind of God, but some wise people have pointed out that God has Satan on a leash (see the opening of the book of Job), and He is able to use him as an instrument in His plans to produce a beautiful, strong, mature, SEASONED Bride for the Lamb. Spiritual warfare, and the discipline of prayer, are the ways God prepares us to be the Bride of Christ, and the very real warfare (yet pre-decided outcome) is what purifies us,

strengthens us, deepens us, matures us.

If you've ever known spoiled-brat types who have never known hardship or suffering, for whom life was made easy and who never had to experience the consequences of their choices because other people paid them, then you see how ugly untested, unchallenged people can be. God wants better for us and better for His Son. He uses Satan to achieve that goal.

I hope this helps. . . even if its just a little!

Sue Bohlin

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"Why Can't God and Satan Settle Their Differences?"

Why do not all the religions of the world pray to God asking him and the Devil to get together and settle their differences? It is widely held that God answers prayers.

This type of praying would surely head the list of really important things to pray for. I believe it is written at one time God and the Devil were very good friends existing in Heaven together. I also believe it is written while they were living together they had a big argument. The devil lost, and was tossed out. Would not the World be a better place if they improve their relationship?

I am thinking of all the people killed during the Crusades, the 30 years war, the Holocaust, the Civil War, the list is

endless. I am also thinking about future babies, who will be born in the future, with their souls, not subject to future damnation. At least their chances would be better.

I believe God has written "blessed are the peacemakers." Would it be too much to ask for this? I have seen no answer to this question, your answer would be appreciated.

Interesting question!

I don't think it would do any good to pray that God and Satan get together to settle their differences for several reasons:

1. God is 100% good; Satan is 100% evil. Good and evil cannot peacefully co-exist, because good will eventually destroy evil.

2. We need to read the Bible as our only resource on what is true in the spirit realm because God gave us this information (as revelation). From what we can gather of what the Bible says about angels and demons, these powerful spirit beings do not have the capacity to repent as we humans do. They don't even understand what it is like to be forgiven and accepted back into friendship with God. Thus, to ask for Satan and the demons to change is like praying that black become white or negative become positive. It won't happen.

3. God already knows what the future holds, and He has told us a certain amount of that information. He has declared that at the end of time, He will throw Satan and the demons into a lake of fire for all eternity. What God has declared and has recorded in scripture will not change because God already knows what He will do.

God cannot improve his relationship with Satan because Satan cannot and will not become other than what he is. And just as the nature of sunlight is to destroy mold, and the nature of boiling water is to destroy harmful bacteria, the nature of God's holiness is to destroy rebellion and sin. They cannot be

reconciled.

Hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

“Satanism Has Nothing to do with Satan!”

A lot of Russ Wise’s article on Satanism made sense. The only idiot thing he did and every other person on that site did was make a common error due to lack of research. If any of you had researched Satanism properly instead of judging (which made you look very unintelligent) you would have realized that the practice of “Satanism” has absolutely nothing to do with Satan. I have a friend who is Satanic and have studied the religion on my own. In my studies I observed that Satanists don’t worship Satan. They believe in the worship of themselves and giving in to desire. I think everyone should do that every now and then, within reason.

Another thing he did wrong was the way he judged teenagers. Almost every teenager is depressed, or has a low self esteem. Teenagers emphasize social acceptance and few get it, and it makes them feel bad. A lot of children don’t get the proper attention from parents. Seems they’re all Christian to me. A lot of children like vampire movies, which doesn’t mean they’re satanic. I think that Russ and everyone other Christian should open up their eyes just a little and recognize that not everyone will be Christian. Not everyone will believe God. I’m wiccan, but I was Baptist for 14 years.

I’m responding to your email regarding my piece on Satanism.

Let me first say that the piece I wrote was originally limited to space available for a radio transcript. I wish I would have had more space to have elaborated on the topic. I hope to update the article and broaden the information presented so a more comprehensive understanding will be known.

I agree with you that Satanism is primarily a self-centered belief system that indulges the base desires of an individual. However, you must admit that Satanism, as Christianity, is subject to more than one interpretation. I'm sure you have heard of Richard Ramerez, the night-stalker, and self proclaimed Satanist. He without doubt worshipped Satan.

You may not have heard of Sean Sellers, the 17 year-old self-styled Satanist, who killed his mother and father because Satan told him to. I'm not going to hold Satan accountable for Sean's or Richard's actions. However, it is obvious that the influence of a malevolent spirit being is at play here. Likewise, we cannot hold God accountable for every unloving act that His created beings make. As a result of God's love we have free will and will ultimately be held accountable for our actions.

God does not orchestrate our lives as a puppeteer even though He could if He desired. On the other hand Satan, as a created being, cannot as well. But Satan can influence or oppress the individual in a negative manner, thereby causing one to commit evil acts.

If I can be intuitive for a moment, I suspect that you probably do not believe in Satan as a physical being. If so, could your pre-conceived bias color your view of who Satan is and ultimately his influence on humanity? As a Christian, I believe in Satan and his demons and their desire to confuse and confound mankind spiritually. In other words, to rob men and women of the joy and peace that can only be found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Now as for my judgmental attitude of teenagers. I wholeheartedly agree with you that teens are often depressed and suffer from low self-esteem. My observations are simply those made by individuals in the field of psychology and law-enforcement. I do not accept your conclusion that I am judgmental in this case. Maybe others!

It is grievous that many teens do not get the attention they need from parents or other adults. I recognize that when teens do not get what they need emotionally, etc. they are susceptible to negative influences. Sean Sellers is a classic example. I'm sure we could name others.

At the risk of running on, let me thank you for your critique. I consider it part of making my comments more reliable and ultimately more helpful for those who seek truth in the spiritual realm.

Best regards to you in your spiritual quest—remember God loves you!

Russ Wise
Christian Information Ministries
(formerly with Probe Ministries)

"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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"Who Controls the World—God or Satan?"

A friend and I were discussing whose rule the world was under, God's or Satan's. Of course we disagreed because I said God ruled the world and allows Satan to take us through suffering to make us strong and to test our faith. My friend feels that the world belongs to Satan because Eve succumbed to Satan in the Garden of Eden. Please clarify who controls the world today.

Thanks for your letter. Satan has been temporarily granted a tremendous amount of power over this world, as can be seen from the following passages:

> *John 12:31 – Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*
>
> *2 Cor 4:4 – …in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*
>
> *1 John 5:19 – We know that we are of God, and that the whole*

world lies in the power of the evil one.

But God is the One who ultimately rules and reigns over all things. He is the Creator of all that exists (other than Himself of course) and all things are ultimately subject to His will and power. Many passages of Scripture bear this out – e.g. Psalms 9:7; 22:28; 47:8; 59:13; 66:7; 97:1; 99:1; 103:19; 146:10, as well as passages such as Gen. 1-2; Job 1-2; John 1; Eph. 1; Col. 1; Rom. 9-11; Rev. 19-22; etc.

Satan is a creature; God is his Creator. Satan cannot do anything that the Lord does not permit him to do (see Job 1-2) and God will one day cast Satan into the lake of fire for all eternity (Rev. 20:10).

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

Why Radical Muslims Hate You (Short op-ed piece)

If you are a Westerner, an American, a non-Muslim, or a Muslim of a different stripe than they, then some radical Muslims hate you.

Why? The complex answer involves history, culture, politics, religion and psychology. Of course, many—some would say most—Muslims are peace loving and deplore terrorism. Islam is quite diverse. Extremist Muslims do not represent all Muslims any more than white supremacists represent all Christians. Not all "radical" Muslims are violent or hateful. But

understanding extremist Muslim hatred is essential to interpreting our post-9/11 world.

Osama Bin Ladin calls on Muslims to "obey God's command to kill the Americans and plunder their possessions…to kill Americans and their allies, both civil and military…." He and his sympathizers want to eliminate Western influence and restore their version of Islam to the world.

Would you believe that dancing in American churches helped fuel some radical Muslim anger today? Princeton Near East scholar Bernard Lewis illustrates.

In 1948, Sayyid Qutb visited the United States for Egypt's Ministry of Education. His stay left him shocked with what he perceived as moral degeneracy and sexual promiscuity.

He wrote that even American religion was tainted by materialism and consumerism. Churches marketed their services to the public like merchants and entertainers. Success, big numbers, "fun" and having "a good time" seemed crucial to American churches.

He especially deplored clergy-sanctioned dances at church recreation halls. When the ministers lowered the lights, the dances became hot. Qutb's PG description: "The dance is inflamed by the notes of the gramophone…the dance-hall becomes a whirl of heels and thighs, arms enfold hips, lips and breasts meet, and the air is full of lust." He cited the famous Kinsey Reports as evidence of American sexual debauchery.

Qutb, who was dark skinned, also experienced racism in America. Back in Egypt, Qutb joined the Muslim Brothers organization. Imprisonment and torture made his writings more militant. Qutb became what Georgetown University religion and international affairs professor John Esposito calls "the architect of radical Islam."

Some Muslim Brotherhood groups, offshoots, and alumni are mainstream and nonviolent. Others have a violent legacy. A militant offshoot, Islamic Jihad, assassinated Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. Esposito notes that Abdullah Azzam, a radicalized former Muslim Brother, significantly influenced Osama bin Ladin. Former CIA Middle East case officer Robert Baer observes that a Kuwaiti Muslim Brother, Khalid Sheikh Muhammad, became a bin Ladin terror chief.

Princeton's Lewis notes that Sayyid Qutb's denunciation of American moral character became incorporated into radical Islamic ideology. For instance, he says Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, in calling the U.S. the "Great Satan," was being consistent with the Koranic depiction of Satan not as an "imperialist" or "exploiter" but as a seducer, "the insidious tempter who whispers in the hearts of men."

The founder of the faith I follow, Jesus of Nazareth, told people to "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." It is not emotionally easy for me to love Osama bin Ladin or to pray for him. I have to ask God for strength for that.

Certainly bin Ladin's hatred of me and my compatriots—flawed though we may be—does not justify his campaign of terror. His campaign rightly prompts national vigilance, a proverbial cost of freedom. But as we keep the powder dry, might it also be appropriate to individually reflect on the character that seems so offensive to him and his colleagues?

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“Does Lucky Mean Lucifer Has Smiled on Me?”

I would like to know the meaning to the word LUCKY. I have been told that it means Lucifer has smiled on me and blessed me. If this is true where do I find this information?

If you go to dictionary.com, this is what you’ll find:

lucky
adj. luckier, luckiest

1. Having or attended by good luck. See Synonyms at happy.
2. Occurring by chance; fortuitous.
3. Believed to bring good luck: *hoped to draw a lucky number.*

There’s nothing there about Lucifer. What you heard is something someone made up, and there’s nothing to it.

From a Christian worldview, there IS no such thing as luck, because God is in control of everything. There’s such a thing as blessing, but not luck. God is in control; Satan is not. In fact, at the cross he was stripped of all real power (see Col. 2:15). All he has is wiles and lies, and if we arm ourselves with the truth we can fight him all the time.

Hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“I Have Some Basic God Questions”

Question #1: In John 1:3 it says, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Did God made Satan?

Question #2: Where was God when heaven and earth were not yet created?

Question #3: In John 10:30 Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” Does this mean that Jesus is the Father also?

Question #4: Does this mean that Jesus knew all the events as the same as the Father also?

Question #5: In Ephesians 2:9 it states, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Does this mean “good works” is not necessary?

Question #1: Did God made Satan?

“Satan” means adversary. God created the angel who became Satan (i.e. the Adversary), but God created this angel (and everything else) good (Genesis 1:31). The fall of Satan may be described in Ezekiel 28:11-19. If so, note that before his fall he was created perfect and blameless (vv. 12, 15).

Question #2: Where was God when heaven and earth were not yet created?

Where was God before the creation of heaven and earth? Since God is omnipresent (i.e. present everywhere – See Psalm 139:7-12), He was present “everywhere.” Of course, prior to the creation of the universe, it’s difficult to know precisely what this might mean. However, since God is eternal, He has always existed; since He is omnipresent, He has always existed “everywhere” (whatever this might mean).

Question #3: Does this mean that Jesus is the Father also?

No; Jesus is the incarnate Son of God. The Father and Son are both God, but they are distinct Persons within the Godhead. John 1:1 helps us to see this. Notice that the Word (God the Son) was WITH God (i.e. the Father). This implies a distinction between the Father and the Son. But we also read that the Word WAS God. This implies that the Son, like the Father, is fully God. This obviously leads us into the mystery of the Trinitarian nature of God. God is one in essence, but subsists as three distinct Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christians do NOT believe in three Gods. They believe in ONE God who subsists as THREE distinct Persons.

Question #4: Does this mean that Jesus knew all the events as the same as the Father also?

While incarnate on the earth, there were some things that were known by the Father, but not the Son (see Mark 13:32). I see this as a temporary and voluntary limitation of the Son's exercise of His Divine attributes while incarnate upon earth. Philippians 2:5-11 indicates that Jesus "emptied Himself" by becoming a Man. He did not give up His Divine attributes (for then He would no longer be God), but He freely consented to a temporary limitation of the exercise of these attributes while incarnate upon earth. As God the Son, He knows everything that the Father knows. Both the Son and the Father are omniscient (i.e. all-knowing).

Question #5: Does this mean "good works" is not necessary?

Good works are not necessary for salvation, for salvation is a *gift* of God (Ephesians 2:8). Nevertheless, good works are important, for as Paul says in Ephesians 2:10, believers are "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (see also Titus 3:8). In other words, we are saved by God's grace through faith in Christ, completely apart from our works. But we are also saved

"for good works" (Ephesians 2:10). Genuine salvation (which comes first) produces the fruit of good works (which come after salvation).

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"Christ Was Around Before Satan?"

In your essay on angels it states that Christ created the angels, wouldn't that mean that Christ would have to have been around before Satan? It states somewhere in the bible (can't remember at the moment where exactly) that he is a "fallen angel." Your statement confuses me at this point—please, if you can, explain. And I apologize if this shows naivete on my part, but like I said, it's just a question.

Yes, that's exactly right. Jesus Christ has existed eternally, in loving fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit; He was not created, He has always existed. He didn't come to earth until 2000 years ago when He took on human flesh and became fully human as well as remaining fully God, but He DID exist before there was anything else. He created the universe, the earth, and the angels (John 1:3, Col. 1:16). He watched Satan choose to rebel and become a fallen angel, and He agreed to come to earth to redeem us and pay the penalty for our sin by dying on a cross for us, and then coming back to life three days later. Then, forty days after that, He went back to heaven, which is where He came from in the first place.

Does this help?

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