



How To Respond To Scripture-Rejectors

Selected Passages

TO: LEGISLATORS

FROM: RALPH 661-803-7970

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I trust you had a great Easter with your family back in your district. In that we will not meet until next week, I nonetheless would like to keep you in the habit of studying the Scriptures on a regular basis. Praise God for email!

Over the years, legislators have often asked about or made the point that when they use the Scriptures as their basis of authority when arguing a point that it is common for opponents to say, "But I don't believe in the Bible." Accordingly, should you refrain from using the Word of God as your authority? This week I will attempt to be biblically informative as to how one should respond to those who reject the veracity of Scripture—lest you refrain from utilizing the ultimate epistemological¹ source made known to mankind by his Creator.

INTRODUCTION

The Bible claims of itself thousands of times over to be the Word of God. For instance in 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul states, "All Scripture is given by inspiration." The Greek word for **inspiration**, *theopnuestos* means "breathed out of God."² In 2 Peter 1:20-21 Peter states, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."³ Furthermore, the Bible is referred to as "The oracles of God" in Romans 3:2 and 1 Peter 4:11. Accordingly is Scripture not sufficient or a reliable basis for all matters pertaining to truth and life? Can we not continually depend on the Word of God as our absolute epistemological source to ascertain what is right—both in our personal lives and in the formatting of good legislation? Of course we can.

Therefore how should one respond to another who rejects the Bible's authority? Certainly not by jettisoning the use of God's Holy, inerrant Word to mankind! In the past, too many a legislator has been intimidated into doing this. *To do so is to give one's opponent the home court advantage.* One now must prove their case with similar, inferior epistemological sources. By abandoning Scripture one in essence elevates all opposing ideologies to a competitive level. Such is to be avoided by the mature believer. Please allow me the opportunity to develop this idea herein.

I. THE REALITY OF SUPPRESSION

Unregenerate Members of Congress know that the Bible is true; it is just that they conveniently *suppress* that knowledge. This biblical fact is revealed in many passages of the Bible. Therefore,

SHOULD ONE BELIEVE THE PERSON, WHO STATES, "I DON'T BELIEVE WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS." OR SHOULD ONE BELIEVE WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THAT PERSON?

In order to further understand what is going on in the minds of Bible rejecters, one need examine Romans 1:18-21. Herein, the Apostle Paul states clearly,

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so

MEMBERS WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF FIRST-VOTES-BACK (MONDAY OR TUESDAY NIGHT)

THE CAPITOL FAMILY ROOM

DINNER SERVED

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that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks.

Notice the loud exclamation of this passage: Man *inherently* knows about God and His ways. God's ways are "evident within them" states the Apostle. In other words, man has a conscience that has been given to him by his Creator. The conscience is an instinctive function and ability of the brain that provides man with the capability to ascertain good from evil. Such a phenomenal ability is part and parcel with being created in the image of God. Herein is the ability to pass judgment on one's own thoughts and actions. In Romans 2:15, Paul brings further light and definition to this wonderful internal moral compass stating,

...in that [mankind] shows the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.

The Law can best be understood here as God's moral precepts which were first condensed in the Ten Commandments and then later expanded upon in the Mosaic Law of the Pentateuch. Notice that this **law** is written in individuals' hearts; it is evident within them.

Accordingly, the conscience is to the moral world of man what nerve endings are to one's physical world. Both are designed by the Creator to protect man from moral and physical danger respectively; both of which, without a warning device, are capable of harming or even destroying him. Man's conscience, like the physical nervous system, is a built-in alarm organism designed to go off loudly when violated. Jeremiah the prophet underscores this truth from the Old Testament. He records God's words spoken through him to the nation of Israel and ostensibly to all of mankind when he revealed God's statement: **I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it** (Jer. 31:33). It follows that since God made man that he would carry His resemblance. Greg Bahnsen, a student of the great apologist⁴ Cornelius Van Til, summarizes this so well stating,

THE HUMAN MIND IS CREATED BY GOD AND IS THEREFORE IN ITSELF NATURALLY REVELATIONAL OF GOD."⁵

Fascinatingly, when speaking to the West Point graduates in June of 2002, President George W. Bush revealed his personal and profound understanding of the conscience of man and that truth is evident within them, stating, "Moral truth is the same in every culture, in every time, and in every place."⁶ In the context of this quote it is evident that the President holds to this truth as a foundational presupposition for the way in which he governed and led. All officeholders should aspire to the same. There is no need or responsibility to educate those who would destroy break the law written in their hearts. In one sense there is no need to educate a fellow legislator on a moral issue. "That which is known about God is evident within them, for God [has already] made it evident to them." They already know what is the morally right thing to do, it is just that they suppress it.

II. THE TESTIMONY OF THE CONSCIENCE

Notice from the book of Genesis—prior to Moses' reception of the Ten Commandments which does not occur until the book of Exodus—several passages that serve to illustrate the full and operational mechanism in man known as the conscience. It is not that the discernment of right from wrong is learned later in life or that it is shaped by varying cultural considerations or by one's environment along the way, rather it has always been fully developed and present within the human race, and each member of Congress:

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9).

In context, Cain had just murdered his brother. Accordingly, he knew very well where his brother was! Abel was dead. And so Cain lied about it to God and made up an excuse. His phrase, "Am I my brother's keeper?" was ripe with arrogant sarcasm because Abel was a "keeper" of the sheep (Gen 4:2). Why did Cain lie about this unless or course he was covering up something and he was fraught with guilt? The



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chronological point: How else did Cain know that what he had done was wrong apart from his conscience?

"Perhaps my father will feel me, then I will be as a deceiver in his sight, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing" (Genesis 27:12).

How did Jacob know that what he and his mother were stewing up was wrong, and therefore deceptive? Again, this story illuminates the presence of an internal ability to ascertain right from wrong. In Genesis 6:5, Moses states, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Here again Scripture attests that man is internally aware of his wicked ways; he knows!

III. THE TESTIMONY OF THE CREATION

Not only has this knowledge about God's attributes and divine nature been written on man's conscience, or as we say today, his heart, but Romans 1 also states that God's actual character is **clearly seen** by that which surrounds man. In other words, God's very nature is also evident to man as witnessed by God's surrounding creation. In this regard, Psalm 19:1 states, "**The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.**" As previously stated, Paul said under the inspiration of God, that God is **clearly seen, being understood through what has been made** (Rom 1:20). In the book of Acts, Paul further elaborates on God's revelation of Himself through nature when addressing a pagan audience. He states, "and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." According to Scripture then, man has no excuse as to God's existence. God continually witnesses of himself to man both *in* him (through conscience) and *around* him (through creation).

IV. THE REASON FOR SUPPRESSION

By way of recap, we have seen that it is not that man doesn't know of God's existence or what constitutes sin, rather it is that he suppresses it.⁷ Even though man has a God-given sensing ability internally and externally to inherently know what is right and what is wrong, Scripture says that he willfully attempts to suffocate it. Why? John 3:19 and 20 states,

This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

Man's corruption of God's morality does not stem from a lack of education. Rather it *is* the educated and calculated willful rebellion of God's precepts that characterizes every sinner. While some may display this rebellion in active, outward ways, and to a higher degree, others are passive in their resistance and hostility toward their maker. As a matter of fact, in the book of Romans, chapter eight, every unbeliever is said to be at war with God (v. 7) (cf. Col. 1:21). As seen in John 3, this aggressive suppression of moral truth extends out of the evilness of man's sinning ways. This is further illuminated by the following passages that highlight his bias in the direction of, and towards sin.

Mankind's Bias Toward Sin

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

1 Corinthians 2:4 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 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. In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so



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that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Timothy 3:13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Titus 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

Unregenerate people in general, legislators in specific, are not morally-naïve, blank pallets innocently standing by to be scrolled on by the faithful members of the House. They are not *tabula rasa*⁸. The aforementioned Scriptures reveal quite the contrary. Unbelievers carry a bias in the direction of sin because of their endemic sinful nature (cf. Gen. 3). They find themselves resisting the truth lest they condemn their own evil ways⁹. And when left with the choice between suppressing that which they know and outwardly manifesting hypocrisy, many are those who will cop for the former. That too explains why so many avoid the Bible Study groups in the Capitol. They are living in sin and they know it, and to sit in an environment where the Scriptures are being proclaimed is hugely uncomfortable. Better to tell yourself “the Scriptures aren’t true.”

Psalm 14:1 punctuates this pressure to avoid hypocrisy which one faces, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” Note that the identification tag for being called a fool in Scripture is not so much related to one’s lack of intellectual ability as it is a reference to a diminished moral integrity¹⁰. Accordingly, what the Psalmist means is that the one who lacks moral integrity has gone so far in his heart as to deny God’s existence by declaring to himself and those around him that “There is no God.” In an attempt to live with the continual crossing of one’s conscience, there comes a need for the denial of its Creator because it routinely screams of the presence of God! Akin to the Microsoft monopoly trial of the past, God has delivered every human being into the world with His programming already installed! The God-program always pops up!

BIBLICALLY, TO DECLARE, “THERE IS NO GOD” OR “I DON’T BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE” IS EQUIVALENT TO THE FIREMAN WHO SWITCHES OFF THE ALARM IN HIS ATTEMPT TO GAIN SOME NEEDED REST

So don’t buy the excuses of suppressors. Learn to view suppression as one crying out for help. The governmental leader who states rebelliously, “I don’t believe in the Bible” is in need of someone to come along side and help him or her to quit overpowering (by way of self-deception) that which they know to be right. Accurately diagnosed, on display is a strong will in need of deliverance from sin. They need a loving believer to call them to repentance and liberate them from their bondage through reception of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is there any wonder why God mandates every believer to evangelize? The prescription is the central cure to the ailment.

SUMMARY

Mankind possesses a strong and continual testimony to the existence of God, directly from God no matter where one lives in the world. This is known theologically as general revelation, meaning God’s character attributes and nature are evident within him (via his conscience) and around him (via creation). However, in his sin he suppresses it. Accordingly, his greatest need is to be exposed to special revelation, the proclamation of the Gospel, which upon repentance and submission to it, one is set free and made anew. Paul succinctly stated this truth in his second letter to the Corinthians (5:17).

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come

Further regarding special revelation, Cornelius Van Til wrote,

Whenever the unbeliever encounters the gospel in Scripture, he recognizes the voice of God speaking authoritatively in its words; the divine character, convincing testimony, and self-



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authorizing quality of its message cannot be evaded. Unbelievers immediately discern and understand the evidence about God in their natural experience and recognize the voice of God when they read the Bible.¹¹

This is supported by Isaiah 55:7 which amplifies the role of Scripture in converting the soul:

So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

It stands to reason that Christians in the capitol need to regularly and consistently proclaim the Scriptures, not shy away from them because someone supposedly “doesn’t believe in them.” For in the proclamation of the authoritative Word of God, whether someone is rebellious toward God or not, is the power to change the capitol and the culture. It is in the proclamation of the Word of God that lives and nations are changed!

William Penn, one of the founding fathers of our country keenly understood that capitols and their cultures are the consequences of conversions:

Governments, like clocks, go from the motion men give them; and as governments are made and moved by men, so by them they are ruined too. Wherefore governments rather depend on men than men upon governments. Let men be good, and the governments cannot be bad; if it be ill, they endeavor to cure it.

But if men be bad, let the government be never so good, they will endeavor to warp and spoil it to their turn.

I know some say let us have good laws and no matter for the men who execute them; but let them consider that though good laws do well, good men do better; for good laws [are in] want [of] good men and [will] be altered or evaded by ill men.^{12,}

William Penn was wise to see this. Don’t pay any attention to those who say, “The Word of God is out of date, we shouldn’t use it as our authority.” They are those who are ignorant of what this lesson just explained. And it is only Scripture that changes hearts which change laws, cultures and capitols.

EXPLAIN TO THOSE WHO ‘DON’T BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE’ THAT YOU ARE HERE TO HELP LIBERATE THEM FROM THEIR WILLFUL SUPPRESSION OF THAT WHICH THEY KNOW TO BE TRUTH

Accordingly, rather than refrain from using the Scriptures, proclaim them boldly to those who are bluffing all around you. (Cf. 2 Timothy 1:7)

¹ Epistemology is the study of the method and grounds of knowledge.” In other words, it indicates what your basis is for knowing something to be true.

² “Grammatically similar Greek constructions (Ro 7:12; 2Co. 10:10; 1Ti 1:15; 2:3; 4:4) argue persuasively that the translation “all Scripture is inspired...” is accurate. Inspired by God literally means, ‘breathed out by God’ or ‘God-breathed.’” MSB.

³ Note in 2 Peter 3:15-16 that Peter testifies that Paul was writing Scripture. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 testifies to the fact that the Apostles knew they were speaking and writing the Word of God.

⁴ An apologist is someone who defends the faith (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).

⁵ Bahnsen, Greg *Van Til’s Apologetic Reading and Analysis* (Philipsburg, New Jersey, R&R Publishing) p. 251

⁶ Mindy Belz, *Unmistakable*, World Magazine, 23 November 2002, p. 9.

⁷ Romans Chapter 1 goes on to teach that when mankind continually suppresses the truth of God that is shed abroad in his heart that he begins to dull his conscience. This is known as a reprobate mind, where the conscience no longer functions properly. And gone then is the ability to internally discern right from wrong. It is akin to a man with leprosy who due to nerve damage, can no longer sense danger and becomes susceptible to many a problem that leads to his ruin

⁸ Latin for a smoothed tablet or blank slate.

⁹ Theologically this is known as the noetic effects of sin. Noetic refers to the mind and intellect.

¹⁰ Reference Isaiah 32:6, “For a fool speaks nonsense, And his heart inclines toward wickedness: To practice ungodliness and to speak error against the LORD, To keep the hungry person unsatisfied And to withhold drink from the thirsty.”

¹¹ Bahnsen, Greg *Van Til’s Apologetic Reading and Analysis* (Philipsburg, New Jersey, R&R Publishing) p

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¹² Penn, William