

Promoting Obedience to God and the Preeminence of Jesus Christ as Revealed in the Holy Bible

Refuting the atheistic, agnostic, materialistic, and humanistic cultures, and the liberal, left-wing religious denominations

Introduction

Jesus never said it would be easy. In fact, He said it would be difficult. In John 15:20, Jesus says, “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” Furthermore, 2nd Timothy 3:12-13 says, “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” Doesn’t this last verse ring true, considering the present state of the world? Matters have gotten worse, and Christians are persecuted more than ever before for proclaiming the Good News and upholding God’s law. We truly live in a world of darkness, where enemies conspire against us for following God. Jesus knew this would happen, as he said, “They hated me without reason” (John 15:25).

During such dire times, it is crucial to declare the preeminence of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Bible, and to address the issues of apologetics (defending one’s faith) and the various shapes and forms the enemies of Christ have adopted. This is essential so that we are prepared to face the adversary’s of Christ. A great battle is being waged on earth between the forces of good and evil, and God has called us to be beacons of Light in the surrounding darkness. Will we defend our faith and declare the Gospel in an increasingly hostile world that needs the Good News more than ever before? Will we show people the way to salvation or sit back and allow sin to overrun God’s good earth?

The Authenticity of the New Testament

The New Testament’s authenticity is essential because it is the foundation of our faith. If one does not believe in the Bible’s accuracy, how can they believe in Christ’s preeminence? So often it seems questions surrounding the New Testament documents’ authenticity lead to doubt and open rejection by would-be believers.

This is partly due to misinterpretation and lack of historical and contextual knowledge. There is a great deal of evidence pointing to the New Testament's validity:

1. The source pool of documents for the New Testament is *extensive*. In fact, there are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts detailing the New Testament.¹
2. Every part of the gospel record, going back to even the most primitive documents, comes to the same conclusion: Jesus Christ was the Son of God and the Messiah.² He is never depicted as less than God in the form of a man.
3. Much of the New Testament was written while people still remembered the stories actually happening.³ Therefore, it is strongly based on eyewitness accounts.
4. Early non-Christian writers do not dispute that Jesus performed amazing miracles. Even early *Jewish* writings do not deny His special powers, although they attribute them to sorcery.⁴
5. Many scholars and historians consider the Gospel of Luke one of the greatest historical texts of all time for its undisputed accuracy.⁵

The Preeminence of Jesus Christ

The opening passage of the Book of John states, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” (1:1-2). This passage, among others in the Bible, refers to the theme of unity – the Holy Trinity, consisting of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The Word refers to Jesus. Jesus was with God, and Jesus *was* God. Furthermore, John 1:14 says, “The Word [Jesus] became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of Grace and truth.” God came down to earth in the form of a man, and He was

¹ F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1981), 10.

² *Ibid.*, 30.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

called Jesus. And before the birth of Jesus, His preeminence was foretold in Matthew; chapter one, verse 23 says, “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” – which means, “God with us.” And even Jesus spoke of His identity as not only the Son of God, but also God, although He was discrete and cautious, often speaking in parables, which only those who believed in Him could understand. At times, however, He was more straightforward: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). Clearly, there is substantial evidence in scripture pointing to the preeminence of Jesus Christ.

Even Satan’s minions could not deny the power and righteousness of the Christ. Luke 4:33-37 depicts a riveting scene in which Jesus exercises a demon from an innocent man. Speaking through the possessed, the demon says, “Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!” Jesus, commanding absolute authority, calls the demon out of the man, and it has no choice but to obey, for evil cannot exist in the presence of such righteousness. Luke 4:36 says, “All the people were amazed and said to each other, “What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!”

But of all the miracles Jesus performed – like healing the sick, driving out demons, or providing food to thousands of people from a small basket of fish and bread – nothing confirms His preeminence like the Resurrection. In John, chapter two, verse 19, Jesus says to the Jews, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days,” meaning, “Kill my human body, and in three days, I will rise from the dead.” And He did. Jesus, entirely blameless in the sight of God, was crucified, bearing all of the world’s sin. He was publicly humiliated, mocked, tortured, and pierced. His blood paid the price for all sins – past, present, and future. Jesus went into the depths of hell in our stead and returned to claim His rightful place beside the throne of God so that we might have eternal life (Luke 24:1-8). There is no one greater than He.

Obedience to God

If Jesus is truly preeminent, unsurpassed in excellence, the ruler of the entire universe, then we certainly owe Him our love and respect. With being in relationship with God comes the call to obedience. Not only is it righteous to obey God’s commands, but it

is also for our own good to obey Him, as it says in Matthew, “Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (5:19). After the resurrection, Jesus tells His disciples to spread the Good News of His life and resurrection, instructing people to obey His Father’s commandments (Matthew 28:19-20). This is our calling.

While the Bible does proclaim that our salvation is not based on works – rather, on faith – it is still important for us to respect God’s wishes, since we are born again with Christ dwelling within us. After all, He knows what is best for His children. Also, concentrating on our Father’s commandments will drive us closer to Him. Our priorities will become more God-centered. Following God should be our sole purpose in life. We live to know and serve Him. By obeying God, we become more Christ-like and enter into deeper relationship with our Father. This leads to sanctification – the process of becoming more like Christ – so we are saved by faith in Christ and not by the good things we do.

Humanism and Materialism in Modern America

The prevailing mindset of modern America can easily be categorized under Humanism, a complete emphasis on the self. Merriam Webster’s Dictionary defines Humanism as, “A doctrine, attitude, or way of life centered on human interests or values: a philosophy that rejects supernaturalism and stresses an individual’s dignity and worth and capacity for self-realization through reason.” At first glance, this might not look so bad. Human dignity? Human values? Self-realization? These phrases do not immediately conjure up negative images. The allure of Humanism is that it seems okay, and it seems okay to us because it feeds our conceit. It tells us what we want to hear – that we are deserving. But it’s not okay because of its solid rejection of God, and we are far from deserving. On the contrary, we are all sinners in need of God’s grace. Many individuals have turned their backs on God, choosing to live for themselves rather than their Maker. We think we can get by in life without any help from a higher power. We put our hope in our own devices. We don’t pray; we don’t help other people; we only help ourselves. Our resistance to God is prideful. Many Christians even struggle with ignoring God and shrugging off their dependence on Him.

Materialism, which is closely related to Humanism in that it, too, is fueled by human conceit, is another major problem in America. We live in a society driven by desire for material possession. Everyone is in competition to own more things. According to allaboutphilosophy.org, American Materialism is on the rise: “The pursuit of the American dream has become rather costly in that it is fraught with a large quantity of material possessions... The increase in high tech, computerized, and digitized devices in the areas of electronics and household appliances has altered the landscape of the American home and family.” Materialism has had many negative effects on American society, such as increases in teen suicide, depression, divorce, the disintegration of the family, bankruptcy, and despair. Even though possessions do not fulfill us, we continue to buy more things.

Jesus spoke about materialism in the Book of Matthew:

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (6:19-21)

Here, Jesus speaks about the condition of our hearts. We want things that will not last – earthly possessions we can take with us neither to the grave, nor heaven – because we believe they will bring happiness and fulfillment. Our compulsive, selfish behavior comes from our longing for God, although we often don’t realize it. As if a brand new sports car or the newest videogame console will bring eternal joy. Only relationship with God can accomplish such a feat. Jesus says, “Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?” (Matthew 6:25). We must look beyond society’s definition of success and happiness, turning to God’s definition, instead. By setting our gazes towards heaven, we will find eternal fulfillment.

Other Things to Watch Out For

Nowadays, it is even easier to fall into the Humanism trap without realizing. There are plenty of liberal religious denominations that either promote or tolerate homosexuality, abortion, and

evolution. While no church is perfect, every church should be brave enough to proclaim God's truth despite its unpopularity. In addition, some churches spend more time trying to help people fix their problems than they spend leading people to God through scripture. These are important things to watch out for when choosing a home church.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is another organization we must resist, because it promotes sin under the guise of civil rights. It is steeped in Humanism, always self-seeking, pushing God as far away as possible. In his book, *In America We Betrayed*, Peter S. Grasso says the ACLU is "cloaked within the pretense of civil liberties" and has "followed the path of least resistance by leveraging liberal judges to rule and judicially create law to circumvent the will of the people, establish new precedents in constitutional law, and undermine our constitution."⁶ It is also interesting to note that the ACLU's founder, Roger Baldwin, "was a professed communist" and an anarchist who sought to abolish the State.⁷ The following is a list of just a few of the ACLU's cases or policies:

1. The legalization of prostitution.
2. Fighting against legal prohibitions on the distribution of obscene material, including child pornography.
3. The decriminalization and legalization of all drugs.
4. Trying to take away a parent's right to shield their children from exposure to pornography.
5. The promotion of homosexuality.⁸

The list goes on, but from these five issues alone, the ACLU's mission is clear. Furthermore, the ACLU is guilty of religious persecution. The "suppression of religious freedoms" is one of their primary goals. Grasso writes, "...the "separation of church and state" Supreme Court Ruling of 1947 was the result of the ACLU's successful ploy to move this country away from the common law at that time, which was God-centric, to that of a secular humanistic policy and mindset."⁹

⁶ Peter S. Grasso Jr., *In God We Betrayed* (Xulon Press, 2006), 44.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

Conclusion

We live in a dangerous world where Satan and his minions run rampant, whispering words of deceit, causing people to fall further from God. The state of man has always been sinful, but still, the founding of organizations like the ACLU and the development of new technologies that offer people opportunities and outlets through which they can feed their conceit like never before, have made matters so much worse. The curse of Adam and Eve brings us into this world with a sinful nature, so we are naturally selfish beings. Therefore, we must ask God for the strength to resist worldly temptations. Only by receiving Jesus as our Savior and living for God alone will we find ultimate fulfillment.

The world is changing rapidly, and we must keep up the pace, always ready and willing to resist those who openly encourage sin and shun God. We have turned our backs on our Father long enough. He's given us a charge to declare the Good News to all the nations, to uphold His good name and to show people the way to truth and salvation. If Christians will not lead America back to God...who will?