

Come Let us Reason Together Says the Lord

Over recent weeks we have looked at the historicity of Adam, Jonah and Noah, and now we summarise what happens when these characters are airbrushed from biblical history.

The Consequences of Adam, Jonah and Noah Being Myths

	<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Implications</i>
Adam	<i>For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive</i>	Humanity is not in need of redemption: Christ does not impart new life to believers
Jonah	<i>For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.</i>	Jesus did not rise from the dead after 3 days in the tomb
Noah	<i>For as in the days before the flood... so also will the coming of the Son of Man be</i>	No second coming of Christ

This morning I passed a sign that said *Full Gospel Church*. Well the table above leaves us with *very little* gospel. The pillars on which the Gospel rests are demolished when we deny the historicity of Adam, Jonah, and Noah. Much of the New Testament makes no sense whatsoever. You see, the Word of God is like a tightly woven garment – everything is connected to everything else, and held in perfect tension. When we start pulling at individual threads the whole garment unravels.

How did we get to this? Well it goes back to the Age of Enlightenment when human reason and observation dragged Europe out of the Dark Ages. The flat earth became round, alchemy became science and Isaac Newton propounded his *Three Laws of Motion*. And humanity began to move forward after centuries of benighted ignorance. Highly intelligent men began describing the world around them by a process of observation and reason.

Problem is that theology – the science of God – is not like the other disciplines. In all other sciences the scientist stands above his subject and extracts information by applying tests and collecting data. However man does not stand above God, nor can he subject Him to the analysis required to extract information. Ultimately our knowledge of God is not limited by our own research or intellectual capacity, but rather by what God chooses to tell us about Himself. When theologians felt the fresh air of the Enlightenment disturbing the dust and cobwebs of their study chambers, they started to place human reason

above the revealed Word of God. And so was born *The Higher Criticism* which came out of Germany in the 18th and 19th centuries. After the war, when things German had lost a lot of their appeal, the *Historical Criticism* gradually insinuated itself into places of Christian learning, and students who enrolled to be trained in the scriptures, were instead indoctrinated with the primacy of human reason. The *Historical Criticism* does not accept at face value, the Bible as the Word of God but rather requires substantiation by the sort of empirical evidence used in other sciences.

I guess we are all aware to some extent of the tension between the so called *Liberal* and *Conservative* views of scripture, even if we have never heard of the *Historical Criticism*. But how have we managed to completely emasculate the gospel entrusted to us. Think that's a bit dramatic? Well consider this. The church globally is growing at a rate faster than at any other time in its history. But in the West the church languishes in a spiritual back water. Why? - because we have dismantled the gospel message that is being preached in Asia, Africa, the Sub Continent and South America.

Was that what we set out to do? Of course not! And yet it's too perfect to have happened by chance. There has to be some structured thinking behind it. A Christian friend, last week emailed me his explanation, "*Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons*" (1Tim 4:1). He believes that there is some higher intelligence at work here. And that seems to be the only explanation that works.

Here is an important but simple test. Which stands higher in our personal value systems, human reason or the Word of God? The Bible talks about. "*casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.*" (2 Cor 10:5). In this essay we have looked at arguments that try to elevate themselves above the knowledge of God. And sometimes we are called upon to hold on to the scriptures in the face of plausible alternatives. "*Let God be true and every man a liar*" (Rom 3:4)

Many years ago Helen bought me a fridge magnet with the words, "*God said it, I believe it, that settles it*". She said that about summed up my theology. And I know I would flunk many a Bible college today because quite frankly, I am yet to find any better theology.