

## Modernism vs. Christ

### Int.

1. Aim: To show that the teachings of the modernists is contrary to Christ and it comes down to the point of whether Christ is right or the modernists are right.
2. II Peter 2:1-2 "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed."
3. Today modern scholars re-interpret certain historical facts in the Bible
  - a. Such is said to be in harmony with the scientific age
  - b. Therefore anything miraculous is considered impossible
  - c. They use such terms to describe miraculous events as "myth", "legend", "fable", "folklore", "superstition", "fiction"
4. If the modern way of interpreting the Bible is correct then the writers of the Bible were dishonest or just plain old liars.
5. Many Old Testament stories disbelieved by modernists were endorsed by Christ as being reliable
  - a. It comes down to who is accurate, Christ or the Modernist
  - b. Notice these examples and see which one we should believe: Man or Christ

## Discussion

### I. CREATION - Genesis 1 - 2

#### A. Bible states

1. God created all things in 6 days - Gen. 1 - 2:7 2:21-23
2. Man was created on Day 6
3. God formed man from dust and put into him the breath of life
4. Eve was made from a rib and flesh of Adam's side

#### B. Evolution says

1. Life originally consisted of a "blob" of protoplasm which after millions of years became bi-sexual resulting in men and women
2. A few years ago we had the "scientific" version of Gen. 1:1 "In the beginning God thought out the pattern of creation. The Lord said let matter and energy form atoms and let atoms combine and condense to form solids and liquids and let stars and planets evolve in their millions; and it was so."
3. With regard to man the scientific version said: "So man evolved, male and female, from higher animals by the spirit of God."
4. This is called Theistic Evolution

#### C. Christ's view

1. He quotes Gen. 1:27 and Gen. 2:24
2. Matt. 19:4 "And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'"
  - a. Made - creation by definite acts not by gradual development

- b. Mark 10:6-9 v.6 "But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.'"
3. Heb. 11:1-3 v. 3 "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible."

D. Who is correct, Christ or the Modernist ?

1. During the late 1940s, Woolsey Teller, second president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, debated James D. Bales of Harding College (now University). During one of his speeches, Mr. Teller exclaimed: "If evolution is accepted, Adam and Eve go out! That story, the Bible fable, is interesting mythology but it doesn't present the true picture of the origin of man" (1976, p. 54).
2. The point is well taken. If one accepts evolution, the Bible does not present the "true picture" of the origin of man or, for that matter, anything else in the Universe. The thrust of Mr. Teller's argument was this: It is an "either...or" proposition, not a "both...and." Either one accepts evolution, or one accepts creation. But it is not possible, logically, to accept both evolution and creation.<sup>1</sup>
3. Who do we believe Christ or Man ?

---

<sup>1</sup> Creation Compromises by Bert Thompson p. 117

## II. **THE FLOOD** - Gen. 6-8

### A. Bible Account

1. Gen. 6-8 - Because of man's wickedness he was destroyed
2. Only 8 souls were saved in the ark which Noah built
3. Gen. 7:19-23 - covered the whole earth, all people died except Noah's family

### B. The modern view

1. They scoff at the biblical account
2. "Legends of a universal flood are found in almost every part of the world. There can be little doubt that where they have not borrowed from alien traditions they go back to some natural event, local in its extent. A universal flood would of course be a physical impossibility. ... The myth of the Flood, it may be assumed, was like the creation myth, ultimately carried to Palestine."
3. They claim that it is a physical impossibility - call it a myth

### C. Christ taught just the opposite

1. "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." Matt. 24:38-39
2. Here Jesus mentions the flood
  - a. He calls Noah by name, he alludes to the ark, and he affirms the universal devastation wrought by the flood.
  - b. Jesus spoke of the flood as if He knew that it happened.
  - c. He did not say it was impossible or just a legend
3. In Matt. 19:26 Jesus says: "with God all things are possible"

### **III. THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM**

#### A. The Bible Account - Gen. 18

1. Because of strife involving his herdsmen, Lot, the nephew of Abraham, took up residence in Sodom.
  - a. The cities of the Plain were terribly corrupt
  - b. God vowed to destroy them, which he did with fire and brimstone
2. Gen. 19:24 "Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens."
3. Gen. 19:26 "But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

#### B. The Modernist have a very different view:

1. "We are most likely, then dealing with a description of one of the last earthquakes that shaped the lower Jordan Valley area. As is frequently the case, the earthquake was accompanied by lightning which ignited the natural gases and seepages of bitumen or asphalt and probably also petroleum, causing a terrible conflagration.
2. "We may assume, then, that in its original form, the Sodom and Gomorrah story was an independent narrative, unconnected with Abraham and his family. The Bible has once again adopted the nucleus of a popular saga to rework it in accordance with its own ethico-religious purposes,"
3. They say it just didn't happen the way the Bible says it did.

C. But notice what Jesus says:

1. "Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 "but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all."

Luke 17:28-29

2. Then he adds: "Remember Lot's wife." Luke 17:32
3. Here is what one modernist writer says: "The stories of Lot contain a large admixture of folklore from various sources, and their heterogeneity suggests very strongly that they have been grouped artificially a-round a single figure. To most Bible readers Lot's wife is better known than Lot; her story is easily explained by the similarity of a standing column in the eroded country at the south end of the Dead Sea to the figure of a standing woman. "
4. He did not believe that Lot's wife was turned to a pillar of salt.

D. Who are we going to believe? Man or Christ ?

#### **IV. THE PLAGUES**

A. Exodus 7-12 - The Bible tells us about the 10 plagues

1. Pharaoh did not want to release the Israelites from Egyptian bondage
2. (1) water to blood (2) frogs (3) lice (4) flies (5) Murrain (6) boils (7) hail (8) Locusts (9) darkness (10) Death of 1<sup>st</sup> born child
3. After the 10<sup>th</sup> plague he let them go.

B. A modernist from the theological department at Vanderbilt says:

1. "The plague stories are a legend or myth used by the Israelite community in its celebration of the Passover rite."
2. Just a legend to tell at the feast of Passover

C. What did Christ think about this event

1. He was introduced by John the baptizer as "the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" John 1:29
2. Jesus accepted the introduction, admitting that He was the anti-type of the Passover lamb.
3. Christ endorses the feast of the Passover which went with the 10<sup>th</sup> plague.

## V. MANNA

A. Bible account - Exodus 16

1. While the children of Israel wandered in wilderness God gave them manna and quail
2. Exodus 16:4 "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you."
3. They ate it for 40 years. "And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan." Exodus 16:35
4. It was a miracle

B. Modernists do not believe it. They say:

1. "In the early summer several types of desert trees and shrubs, notably the tamarisk, exude a sweet sticky substance such as this appears to have been. It drips to the ground, crystallizes and turns white. The comparison which likens the manna to hoarfrost and the observation that it tasted 'like wafers made with honey' (verse 31) show that this natural substance was the origin for the manna story. "
2. They claim that the manna was provided by natural means, not miraculous.
3. They call it: "the Manna Story".

C. Christ believed the account to be true

1. "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die."  
John 6:49-50
2. "This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." John 6:58
3. Jesus cites history - not mythology

## **VI. THE BRONZE SERPENT**

### A. Bible Account - Numbers 21

1. The people had murmured and spoke against God
2. God sent serpents among the people - many of them died
3. God gave them a chance to be saved from the bite of these serpents.
4. Numbers 21:9 "So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived."

### B. Here is the way a modernist by the name of McKenzie describes this:

1. "According to the cult legend preserved in Numbers 21 this object was constructed by Moses when the Israelites were attacked by 'fiery serpents'."
2. He calls it a Cult Legend

### C. Christ made this statement showing He believed it.

1. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:14-15
2. Christ knew what he was talking about

## **VII. JONAH AND THE WHALE**

### A. Bible record - in the book of Jonah

1. Jonah was a prophet of God commissioned to preach to the citizens of Nineveh, a task which he hardly relished, hence, he attempted to flee from the Lord.
2. He headed toward Tarshish by boat.
3. But Jehovah sent him to "school" for three days in the belly of a great fish or whale. He graduated the third day with honors!
4. Because after 3 days he was vomited up on dry land and he promptly obeyed God.

### B. Modernists call this the great "fish story" of the bible

1. Edgar J. Goodspeed's comment on this matter in *How to Read the Bible*, (1946, p. 149) said:
2. If people would recognize it as fiction., they might get more from its meaning, which was never more needed than today
3. Fiction = something invented by the imagination or feigned ; specifically : an invented story [Merriam-Webster dictionary]

### C. Christ knew that the account of Jonah was not fiction

1. When certain false teachers sought a miracle from Him, Christ declared,<sup>39</sup> "But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup> "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." Mt.12
2. Christ knew that he must be buried in the earth 3 days as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for 3 days.

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Who is correct? The modernists or Christ?
2. If the modernist are correct, then Christ was either ignorant or teaching lies.
3. Or shall we regard what Christ believed as accurate and conclude that modernism is wrong?
4. If we do not believe in the miraculous events of the Bible then we can't believe in the Bible as being the word of God.
5. Which do you believe - Christ or the Modernist ?
6. II Tim. 3:16-17 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

---

### **Sources Consulted**

JESUS CHRIST VERSUS MODERNISM - Reason and Revelation August 1981 Vol. I No. 8

---

---

Sermon by Arthur Pigman - Sunday Evening March 15, 2009  
Evans Church of Christ  
515 Gibbs Road  
Evans, Ga. 30809  
706-855-1249  
evanscoc@bellsouth.net  
www.evansgachurchofchrist.org