

VOC July 24, 2016

Is That in The Bible?

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come.
(I Corinthians 10:11)

Hello again dear Listeners;

These last few weeks we've been busy on this program with God's amazing book called the Bible. One of the confessions of the churches that sponsor this broadcast speaks about "The Sufficiency of Holy Scripture".¹ It says (in part),

We believe that this Holy Scripture fully contains the will of God and that all that people must believe in order to be saved is sufficiently taught therein.

That confession is based on the bible's own words, words inspired by the Holy Spirit and recorded in 2 Timothy 3:16.

Yet also these words of the most Holy God are not embraced with believing hearts by all people. Far from it. I was going through some older printed messages first heard on what was then *The Back to God Hour*, a radio ministry of the Christian Reformed Church ² It was written by the late Rev. Dr. Peter Eldersveld, a faithful and gifted minister, some of whose messages can still be heard on YouTube.

¹ [The Belgic Confession](#) art 7

² Now known as Back To God Ministries International

He called to mind an advertisement he'd come across in the *New York Times* for a book that attacked the bible as

*A piece of obscene and immoral literature because it describes the sins of its characters in plain language.*³

The *Times* was not the first, and no doubt will not be the last to refer to various Bible stories as the most objectionable and lurid fiction. There are those addicted to sensational writing, who evidently would like to undermine the faith of people in God's Word.

So they scoff at the validity of the bible as being even less than a workable code of morals.

But then, we shouldn't be surprised for "*Yes, that's in the Bible all right!*" Eldersveld went so far as to say, "The people who attack the bible that way are in it too!"⁴ You see, they may not realize it, but it is the judgment of God which hangs heavy over their heads. The fact is that the bible is honest and straightforward about the condition of humankind. In speaking of God's own people in Zechariah 7: 11-14 where "The Lord Almighty" says,

But they refused to pay attention and they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as flint and would not listen to the law...

³ Dr. P. Eldersveld, "Is That in The Bible, in The Back to God Hour, 12-10-61, p. 2

⁴ Ibid p. 2, 3

The bible doesn't hide the sins of people. It spells them out that we too might know how it is with us, and what the Lord thinks about these sins. Not only that but what He did and does about the guilty. In plain words, it tells the truth about man as well as about God.

You see, God's Word is not some smooth piece of religious propaganda in which all the offensive passages have been removed such as the history of brutal wars, lustful kings and queens, jealous and proud church leaders, etc. At least one writer in modern times suggests "*No other book ever written has vibrated with more agonizing honesty*" .⁵

We must be thankful for this honesty, as the bible itself testifies (in 1 Corinthians 10: 6-11),

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were, as it is written, " The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry. ⁶We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did and in one day, twenty-three thousand of them died.

In our old human nature, so thoroughly by sin, are we different from those who died as punishment for those sins? No, also we and our generation knows of these sins and commits them brazenly. So the Bible has very good reason for mentioning them, that we might be warned and so, driven to repentance.

⁵ Sidney J. Harris in newspaper column on "The Agonizing Honesty of the Bible," quoted in Dr. Eldersveld message p. 4

⁶ See Exodus 32:6

For you see, the Bible was written precisely for sinners, because it tells them the only way of salvation from sin. In all these stories, authored by God himself we are to see ourselves. It is indeed a dark story of evil deeds which are never minimized or excused but always condemned and punished UNLESS...

Yes, unless there is a wholesale turnaround in people's lives. Unless there is a great cry for forgiveness in the realization that each and every sin hurt, grieves and angers the LORD of life.

But then, this too is in the Bible. There is something beautiful and brilliant and life-giving. It is the truth concerning a Man. Yes, One who though "Very God of Very God" ⁷ became man. One who though pure and holy, stood out, like a pure white flower in a dirty, muddy, polluted pool of water!

That Man, is the LORD Jesus Christ, "Born of a woman, born *"Under the law"* as the apostle Paul writes in Galatians 4:4 *"To redeem this under law"*, that believers might be called God's true children. Did we deserve everlasting death because of our complicity in the rebellion of our first parents, Adam and Eve? Christ came to give us life, life everlasting.

Here is another purpose for the bible - that we might know the wonderful story of salvation though it is told against the dark and dismal background of our sin.

⁷ Nicene Creed

Not only do those scoffers and sceptics Dr. Eldersveld mentioned fail to see themselves in the tragic stories of people's grievous sins against the LORD and against other people. They miss seeing the One who is the real subject of the whole Book: Jesus Christ the Savior of the world! Though He is the Only Name given under heaven by which we, and they can be saved (Acts 4:12).

Someone has rightly said that if you don't want the bible to tell you the story of your sin you cannot have the story of Christ. Then too there is no use celebrating Christmas for you can't have Christmas if you don't have the bible; and you can't have the Bible unless you know and confess your sins.

Why do people try to dethrone the Lord Jesus? Why do they want to make of him someone like everyone else, a sinful human being, perhaps even one prone to immorality. Why would they deny His virgin birth, His deity, His resurrection and ascension into heaven?

Is it perhaps to make themselves look better than they really are? Could it be that they consider His purity and His holiness a constant rebuke to them? Or, as appears to be the case with people who simply sniff at the Word of God and dismiss the bible as "outdated myths" - do they do so in order to try and escape God's inevitable judgment?

But then they are foolish and living an illusion, for the only way to escape God's wrath is to turn to that very Son of God, who came to bear God's wrath for all who believe. They miss the joy, the sheer and lasting joy of knowing an intimate relationship with the Saviour. A relationship of God's covenant love and grace.

O if only more would search the Scriptures and learn of Christ. If only there would come a wholesale return to the Gospel, the Glad Tidings of salvation which is God's Word. What a different society ours would be. Then people would have true rest for their souls, their lives. They would know what the bible calls, "*The peace that passes understanding.*" (Philippians 4:7). Then so much restlessness, and loneliness as well as hopeless trusting in shadows would disappear.

Well then, dear listeners, treasure the Bible. It is a very, very good Book. Not because we are in it, but because Christ Jesus is! Look to Him, and bend your knees before Him and pray. See your Saviour and live! Amen and thanks so much for listening