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God does not write contradictory Scriptures

The Word of God is confusing only when we mix disparate elements. If we toss every ingredient from the refrigerator and the cupboard into a cake batter, we don't get a cake—we get a catastrophe. Likewise, lump together what God told one people with things He told another people, and we no longer have revelation, but rather pandemonium.

When you turn the pages of your Bible from Malachi to Matthew, the programming never changes. It's like flipping through the stations during a big news story: Every head talks about the same thing. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John pick up where Malachi left off. The



story is the same, only the names have changed. Jesus came to Nazareth, not Athens. The Jesus Who wore sandals considered non-Israelites to be dogs (Mt. 15:21-28). If Matthew hadn't recorded this under inspiration of Holy Spirit, I would not expect you to believe it. I, myself, would not believe it. It's too odd; it's too unlikely; it defies the false template that the Jesus of the Four Gospels promoted a universal salvation to the non-Judean world. He did not. Rather, He saved that amazing message for an angry little Pharisee headed to Damascus to kill Christians. ■

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

Excerpts from upcoming book

In this edition of the *Clanging Gong News*, I bring you excerpts from my upcoming book: *The Apostle Paul: God's Radical*

Ever wonder why reading the Old Testament is such a drag?

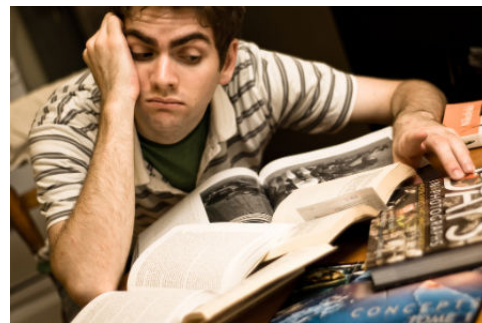
Do you realize why reading the Old Testament has been such a difficult and not too pleasant undertaking for you? Because it's The Israel Channel. It's all Israel, all the time. You think you will get some relief when you get to the New Testament—speaking of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—but you don't. It's still the Israel Channel: All Israel, all the time. You think that maybe the Son of God in sandals is finally *your* prophet—until you read what He says to His disciples in Matthew 10:5-7:

These twelve Jesus commissions, charging them, saying, "Into a road of the nations you may not pass forth, and into a city of the Samaritans you may not be entering. Yet be going rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now going, herald, saying that, 'Near is the kingdom of the heavens!'"

If you had been living among the nations then, how would this have sounded to you? (The following is a Martin Zender paraphrase.)

These twelve Jesus commissions, charging them, saying, "Whatever you do, don't go into any ethnic neighborhoods like Chinatown or Little Italy. I don't even want you stepping into the streets of these neighborhoods, let alone talking to the actual people. This gospel isn't for them. Got it?"

When Jesus said, "Kingdom of the heavens," what did He mean by it? Is the *kingdom* of the



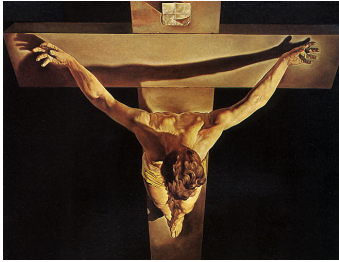
heavens the same as—heaven? How could it be, when God never told Israel anything concerning heaven? He created the heavens and the Earth in Genesis 1:1, and then promptly ignored all besides Earth. The kingdom of the heavens is the same kingdom God promised to Abraham, because, "Christ has become the Servant of the Circumcision, for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the patriarchal promises" (Romans 15:8).

This kingdom is heavenly in *character* (it's the kingdom of the heavens), but its location is on Earth. An Earth-bound kingdom is the only message ever given to Israelites.

Your message is not found in the letters in red. God speaks to you, specifically, through the letters of the apostle Paul. ■

The most thorough solution imaginable

WHEN GOD DECIDED TO JUSTIFY HUMANITY, HE DID SOMETHING NO ONE COULD HAVE DREAMED OF.



“For one who dies has been justified from sin.”
—Romans 6:7

Justification from sin goes

so much deeper than forgiveness, which was the only thing available to Israelites, through law. Forgiveness says: “You did wrong, but we will overlook the penalty.” Justification says: “You did not even do wrong. In fact, you are *right*.”

How can this be? There is only one way it can be: God must look at a new creation. He cannot justify the old creation, ever. He must do something with humanity that will enable Him to look upon it with new eyes. And this is what He did:

He killed the old humanity—the whole of it—along with His Son. In God’s mind, when His

Son died, the old humanity died. Thus, when He now sees us, He sees His Son.

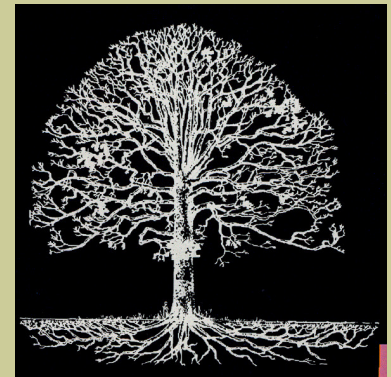
“Our old humanity was crucified together with Him.” —Romans 6:6

Even in the 1000-year kingdom, Israel still will not come to a realization of this. In the kingdom, it will “merely” be that Israel’s flesh has been reformed from an inside-out miracle. There will not be *identity* with Christ. Israel will remain the bride, not the body. One thinks that the bride is close to Christ, until one is told of a people called the *body* of Christ. It is too hard for most people to believe. People are too proud to be dead with Christ. They want to prop *themselves* up.

Be free of that! With us, it is not about propping up flesh, but about the historical destruction of flesh at Calvary—a destruction that allows God to now look at us *and say*: “You are perfect!” ■

Reaching the root

With the law of Moses, sin invited wrath. In Paul’s message, sin invites more blessing. Few today even dare to believe this; the church itself still mixes law and grace. Why? It is because Christians confuse the lamb with the cross. They think they are a bunch of Jews. They invent ridiculous terms such as, “The Christian Sabbath.” They like propping themselves up and condemning others. If



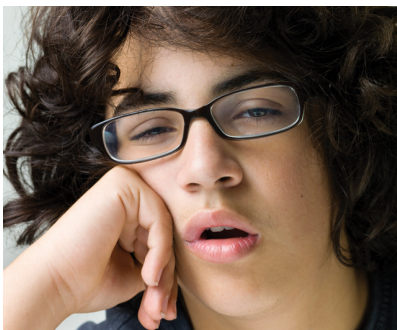
everyone is in the same boat, then where is their advantage? If one died for the sake of all and consequently all died (2 Cor. 5:14), then “there is no one righteous, no not one” (Romans 3:10), and the Christians can no longer prove their worthiness to God.

How Israel loves proving itself to God! Take this away, and they are just like everyone else. This is the worst and most dreadful thing you can say both to a Jew and to a Christian: “You are just like everyone else.” Tell them this, and they will persecute you. If they can get away with stoning you, they will. Yet this is what the gospel of Paul does. It wipes out flesh, pulling it up by the roots.

WE ARE A
NEW CREATION
IN CHRIST

The one passage Rebecca deleted

Rebecca didn’t like this rant in my Paul book, so here it is in the *CGN*.



Some people feel we need to read the Bible through every year. Please, allow me to relieve you of this unnecessary burden. The truth for us, today, is found in the letters of Paul. Yes, Paul mentions people and events of Old Testament times, but only when lessons from the past are a necessary tool to illustrate present truth. If Paul thinks it’s important, he’ll mention it. Other than that—forget it.

You don’t need to read the books of Numbers and Chronicles once a year, or once every ten years, or—frankly—at all. If you want to say you’ve “read the entire Bible,” then go for it; slog through. I have read the Bible through several times, and that’s enough for me. Why would I want to read over and over again about treachery and deceit; children being run through with swords; adults being impaled upon poles; mass killings; women having their babies ripped from their bellies; women eating their babies; and King David saying things like, “Kill all my enemies, Lord!” Sure, it’s fun reading it the first time, but the joy goes away.

This is why Paul gives us the Cliff Notes. If there is something in the OT you need to know about, Paul will tell you. Paul never handed any of the nations copies of the Hebrew Scriptures and said, “Here. Read this.” Why would he want to depress, demoralize, and mislead them?

God is *not* challenging you to wade through Israel’s history once a year. Life is too short—and you need the *latest* truth. Read Romans through Philemon over and over again, instead. I am convinced that, these days, it’s all you need. ■