

The Pied Piper is Shamblin

I have the wonderful privilege of reading Bible stories to my grandchildren every night before they go to bed. The oldest, Nathan, is full of questions about why God is saying or doing certain things, or why the people are behaving in certain ways. He then takes this new information and, after we pray together, he heads off to bed. Often, though, we later find out there are some “holes” in his understanding. Recently he was overheard warning his playmates about the “fall gods.” At first we thought he might have been talking about 1 Samuel 5:3 (NASB) where “... *Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD ...*” but no, what he was referencing were “false gods.” We had been reading about false gods and talking about how the people continually got involved in worshipping them, to their detriment, so naturally Nathan had to warn the neighbors. A few days after that misunderstanding was corrected, he told his Mom about the three men who were thrown into the “fiery theros.” A young child’s theology may be earnest, but it can also be a bit skewed. ☺

Scriptural misunderstanding can be very cute and funny when the aspiring theologian is seven, but we hope we find grownups to be, well, grown up in their spiritual understanding corresponding to their physical growth and intellectual capacity. Sadly, spiritual growth and discernment is not always a given. Too many Christians never “*become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ,*” but remain in spiritual infancy, “*tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching, and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.*” (Ephesians 4:13-14, NIV)

Not all deceitful schemers are male, there are cunning and crafty female schemers out there as well, who are seeking to

shipwreck the faith of the weak and the biblically challenged, and draw away disciples unto themselves. One such modern-day, female, false prophet and teacher is Gwen Shamblin. She was immensely successful in getting into churches a number of years ago under cover of a weight-loss program that concealed



her true purpose of making converts for her own religious movement which she named Remnant Fellowship. She also made lots of money in the process by raking in millions from the very churches she dubbed “counterfeit Churches” as she waltzed many of their congregants right out the door. We did several in-depth articles about Shamblin and her *Weigh Down Workshop* in the Fall of 2000, Winter of 2001 and Spring/Summer of 2002 issues of this *MCOI Journal*, which are still available on our web site; so we will not go over all that ground again. Her denials of the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, as well as her

“salvation-by-works” doctrines are some of her more damnable false teachings.

Shamblin’s *Weigh Down Workshop* program, which had infiltrated over 30,000 churches, was hurt by the exposure and thrown out of vast numbers of churches; but she still soldiers bravely on with her Remnant Fellowship cult by placing as many people as she is able under the yoke of legalistic bondage and disrupting families in the process.

Recently, after hearing from hurting family members of Shamblin’s flock, we revisited Shamblin’s Remnant Fellowship web site to see what the Perfidious Pied Piper of Pernicious Phariseeism has been up to lately.

Ironically, on her site, she feigns concern that her flock (and any potential “flockees” or “marks” who might haplessly wander into her internet orbit) might not be able to recognize a “false leader” when they see one, which might be truly humor-

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ous were it not so sad. Of course, her feigned concern in this regard is just another "deceitful, crafty scheme" to keep her members deluded into thinking Remnant Fellowship is the one, true church (which all cults claim, by the way) and that all others are frauds. It is safe to say that if her flock *could* adeptly identify a false leader, they would beat a hasty retreat out of Remnant Fellowship and away from Gwen Shamblin! Still, the irony of her claiming to expose false teachers is too rich for us to let pass without comment.

How Can I Identify A False Leader?¹

This is a great question, and it is how Shamblin begins the "Questions and Answers" section of her Remnant Fellowship web site. It is a very important question that too many churches are unwilling to address—and as a result, the average person who attends church is not sure how to answer. If the average Christians were taught discernment in their churches, false leader Gwen Shamblin and others of her ilk might quickly find themselves "out of business." ☺ For Shamblin to pose and then to answer this question allows her to set up a "straw-man argument"*—and you can bet her definition is not going to point in her direction! She asserts:

This is a vital skill for a child of God to develop. Most of us have grown up in a counterfeit church. Notice that the counterfeit church does not teach you this skill, because it would not be to their advantage. Yet, if you are in the Word of God, you will see that the true, loving shepherds spent much time teaching and warning the sheep to stay away, far away, from false leaders.¹

She is correct about this. Discernment about false teachers and false teachings is "a vital skill for a child of God to develop." And a large part of the New Testament is devoted to exposing false teachers and exhorting the leaders of the church to equip Christians to recognize and discern truth from error. Shamblin thus appears to attain the moral high ground in purportedly teaching a "vital skill" that was sorely neglected in her follower's previous church experience. It also lends an air of credibility, however false, to Shamblin's claim that any church other than hers, of course, is "counterfeit." A church is not necessarily counterfeit because it has neglected to teach discernment; anymore than parents are "counterfeit" if they fail to teach their children properly. As James says, "*We all stumble in many ways.*" (James 3:2, NIV) Any human endeavor, even one instituted by God, is comprised of flawed (and sinful!) human beings. And ignored by Shamblin, is the large number of discerning churches and pastors who do not lack in this regard at all, but they are tarred by her with the same brush as those who have failed. Unfortunately, the rather widespread failure to teach discernment does have grave consequences in the lives of people whom church leadership is charged with protecting, and it also hands false teachers like Shamblin a large brickbat to hurl at the Church in general.

This is a very effective method false teachers employ. They will state something that is generally true, in this case: Being taught how to identify false leaders is of great importance. The follower or prospective follower can agree with the claim and begins to wonder *why* they have never heard that before. A seed of doubt is planted which grows as they hear Shamblin's rant about the so-called "counterfeit church." Had they grown up in a counterfeit church? Maybe. After all, they had lots of questions which were never answered, and they had not been taught how to identify a false leader. Why hadn't they been taught that vital skill?

At this point, Shamblin is very quick to ascribe an evil motive to the churches in this regard—"it would not be to their advantage." Her answer may sound reasonable on its face—churches are afraid to teach discernment because the people would realize they were counterfeit! But *in truth*, the more mundane reason more churches do not teach discernment is because they wrongly *assume* their people already understand these issues; and so they spend little time, energy, and/or resources in this essential area. But, without having to *prove* the churches are "counterfeit" or what she is teaching is *true*, a number of untrained, biblically-illiterate people who grew up in true churches are drawn in and begin to embrace Shamblin's claims. She cunningly follows up this slam against the Church with another true statement:

... if you are in the Word of God, you will see that the true, loving shepherds spent much time teaching and warning the sheep to stay away, far away, from false leaders.²

Shamblin's devious set up is now complete. She made a premise that is true, followed up with two more premises that *sound* plausible but are, in fact, untrue; and she capped it off with something that is biblically right on target. The biblical mandate is for shepherds and leaders to guard the flock from false teachers outside and inside the church. (Acts 20:28-30) This is the central theme of the Pastoral Epistles and occurs in nearly all of the New Testament books at some point. It is something Jesus taught all of his followers to practice. It is also a topic of much of the Old Testament literature, but it is, as we have already said, too often neglected in today's churches.

If Jesus Said ...

Shamblin goes on to give two rules for identifying a "false leader." In "Rule #1," Shamblin explains that one cannot tell the true and false leader by appearance. This is true. False leaders do not have a label emblazoned across their forehead or have particular attire that identifies them as false. False teachers can be male or female, and they come in all colors and ethnicities. They certainly are not going to present you with a "false teacher" business card. In fact, since Jesus said false prophets and teachers come in "*sheep's clothing*," you can be sure they will look like one would expect a Christian to look. Shamblin quotes Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15:

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness.
(NIV)

Cleverly, Shamblin wraps up "Rule #1" with this question:

However, if Jesus said there would be "many," then who have you identified?³

It is mystifying how people who do not know how to identify a false leader could be expected to identify false teachers. What yardstick would the undiscerning use? Luckily for Shamblin's readers though, she has *already told them* their former churches, prior to joining Remnant Fellowship, were counterfeit; so that gives them a good place to start. However, for those who will look to *Scripture* to check out what Shamblin is teaching, her case begins to unravel a bit here. The passage about Jesus to which she is alluding is Matthew 7:15-23, which begins:

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. (NASB, underlined for emphasis)

Jesus is talking about false prophets—who would come and present themselves to Jesus' true followers as true prophets of God. As Shamblin pointed out, you wouldn't be able to distinguish them visually—they would appear to be true prophets. Jesus' followers, who were exclusively Jewish at that time, already had a working knowledge of exactly how to distinguish between false prophets and true prophets from the mouth of Moses in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 teaches false prophets *may even make true prophecies concerning future events*, but goes on to state that if this self-proclaimed prophet attempts to lead God's people to worship false gods and/or accept a different salvation, they are to be rejected out of hand as a false prophet who does not truly speak for God.

Then there is the issue of supposed prophets who make false prophecies concerning future events. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 further explains a false prophet is one who claims to speak for God, but their prophecies about future events fail to come to pass. *One, single, false prophecy* was enough to seal the false prophet's fate, and such a prophet was one to whom they dare not listen.

So Jesus' followers are to judge prophets as being false based upon their false prophecies about future events and/or their propensity to lead people to worship false gods or accept a false view of salvation. They are not to be judged on their personal failings and sins—no prophet of the Old or New Testament could stand up to such a scrutiny of their own moral imperfections, nor is that a God-given test for determining who is a false prophet or leader. Jesus is the *only perfect* human being ever born—the only One without sin. The false prophets or leaders are to be judged on their teachings—by their fruit we will know them. Because Jesus uses analogies here with which the hearers would have been familiar, but which might confuse modern readers, we will continue the Matthew 7:15-23 quote with subject identifiers in brackets to help follow the train of thought:

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fore your very eyes Jesus was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? (Galatians 3:1-3, NIV, underlined for emphasis)

What has happened to all your joy? (Galatians 4:15, NIV)

Rule #2—Do, Do, Do!

Shamblin begins “Rule #2”:

If the only way for someone to go to heaven is to DO the will of God (1 John 2:17), then Satan’s servants are brilliant, because they have made themselves look like religious teachers, and yet they have not secured your foundation.

The hallmark of Shamblin’s teachings is the need to be always in the state of doing something—working to earn God’s favor. Shamblin has pushed her followers into a performance trap, where they are in a perpetual state of being sin-conscious but never Son-conscious. This is often the case for those who are under the delusion they can contribute to their salvation and/or sanctification. Yes, Christians are most certainly to do the will of God. And what is the will of God? Jesus says in John 6:40:

For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. (NIV)

So the will of God is to *look to the Son* and to *believe in Him!* Then the bombshell fell on the ears of people who had always looked to the law and their own efforts to keep it as the means to win God’s favor. Jesus was specifically asked:

“What must we do to do the work that God requires?”

Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” (John 6:28-29, NIV)

But what about keeping the commandments of Jesus? John 15:10-11 quotes Jesus on this:

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. (NASB)

Keeping Christ’s commandments involves *abiding* in His LOVE and will give you great joy. Keeping Shamblin’s man-made commandments produces self-righteousness in those who *suppose* they are “good” while keeping those imperfect people who *recognize they are sinners* looking over their shoulder to make sure God is not ready to unleash His wrath upon them. They have nothing at all to do with LOVE and certainly do not—cannot—bring joy.

Unfortunately for Shamblin, Jesus doesn’t stop there to leave us guessing, but He goes on to declare what His commandments are; which, as it turns out, do not concern *doing* something, but rather with *being—abiding—in* a relationship with Jesus and others:

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. ... This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command

you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another. (John 15:5, NIV; John 15:12-17, NASB)

This is critical and something Shamblin hates. Our spiritual growth, just like our salvation, is in God’s hands. Our part is to abide, His is to produce. Jesus said we would bear fruit and our fruit will remain. Our growth comes out of our connection to Jesus in the same way an apple tree’s growth comes from its trunk and roots. God oversees, provides nourishment, sunlight, rain, and everything necessary for fruit development. The tree does not strive to grow, does not work to produce blossoms and apples. The fruit springs from its very nature, as our growth springs from our new nature, what we are *in Christ*. Our old nature, being like the thorn bush of Jesus’ aforementioned illustration, cannot produce good fruit no matter how hard it tries! We, as God’s adopted children, are in God’s hand, and He produces fruit in our lives as we love Him and one another.

Work won’t save us; works cannot sustain our salvation, or make us in any way acceptable to God. All of a Christian’s good works are as a result of *God working through us* as we abide in Christ. We, in fact, are God’s workmanship!

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:8-10, NIV)

Remember the expression, “Stuff happens?” Well, hang around with Jesus (in Him, actually) and good works will happen! ☺

Shamblin (and other works-oriented false teachers) is very much like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day. She accuses the church of not having secured its foundation; but it is Shamblin, like the Pharisees, who has built her house upon the sand of dead works and rules keeping. A Christian’s foundation is faith in Christ—He is the Rock (1 Cor. 10:4). The Pharisees were experts at “doing” and rule keeping, and as a result, they missed the most important aspect of life with God—having a relationship with Him rather than with the rule book. Jesus confronted them directly on this and said:

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me to have life. ... I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. (John 5:39-40, 42, NIV)

They loved the rule book but neither the Father in heaven, nor the One He had sent to save them. If one’s foundation is *anything* other than Jesus Christ—the “**author and perfecter of our faith**” (Hebrews 12:2, NIV), by grace alone through faith alone in Him alone—one is building on a false foundation, no matter how righteous and holy one pretends or even believes themselves to be. Shamblin is a self-righteous, holier-than-thou legalist who has plopped her hapless followers down on a false

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foundation of useless works.

It would behoove Shamblin and her followers to check out Jesus words in John 5:45:

But do not think I will accuse you before the Father.

Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set.
(NIV)

Moses is a very important figure in biblical history, but friends, do not set your hopes on Moses. The law can only accuse and convict (Romans 3:20)—it cannot save; neither can it purify those who are already saved. If you live “by the law,” you will die and be judged “by the law” (Gal. 3:11-12). And neither can you rely on some supposed mixture of the law and grace—that old, infernal “Jesus-plus” plan. They are mutually exclusive. As Paul says in Romans 11:6, concerning the remnant of Israel chosen by God’s grace:

And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. (NIV)

The law cannot save; and neither can it purify those who already trust in Christ. We repeat—the law ONLY condemns. (Romans 8:3-4) in order to lead us to Christ (cf. Gal. 3:23-24). That’s its job.

Easier Said Than Done

Sin is an affront to God, but it is something that is part of our nature even as believers, and is something we continually will battle in this life. Shamblin’s solution is simple:

I look through the “Christian” books and even see some popular authors say, “As I am writing this I am sinning.” I want to say—“Then stop!”⁵

We gather from this that Shamblin considers herself to have achieved sinless perfection in this life. She may fool some of the people some of the time, but you can bet anyone close to her could attest to the falsity of the claim. No one who is alive is without sin.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8, NIV)

The Apostle Paul speaks of this struggle against sin in the book of Romans:

For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? (Romans 7:15-24, NASB)

The more we fixate on what we should not do, the more

power the temptation has over us. The more Paul focused on not sinning, the more sin gripped him, and doing good eluded him. Shamblin’s response to Paul in his misery would be to say, **“Then stop!”** However, Paul’s solution is much different. In the very next verse, Paul is thrilled to say:

Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. (Romans 7:25, NIV)

We will never be sinless in this life, but we will *sin less* as we **“walk according to Spirit.”**

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it is weakened by the sinful nature, God did in sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, so that the requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1-4, NIV)

We—as children of God through faith in Christ—are enabled to meet the requirements of the law because Jesus—our savior-substitute—kept the law perfectly on our behalf! Praise God!

Sadly though, if we reject God’s gift of grace and insist we can meet the law’s requirements ourselves, thank you very much, we will find ourselves in deep weeds. Our sinful nature simply cannot measure up to the stiff requirements of the law, which is nothing less than absolute perfection (Matt. 5:48). As we pointed out earlier, there is no combo deal—it is *all grace* or *no grace*. Paul states that if you put yourself (or let someone else put you) under the law, you are *removing yourself from grace!*

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then, and do not let yourself be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from Grace. (Galatians 5:1, 4, NIV)

Grace is not something from which you want to be removed, my dears. You want to stay right there under the fountain. Some people want to cherry pick which parts of the law they will keep and which ones they will ignore, but Paul points out they are fooling themselves! As he argues in Galatians 5:2-3, Paul says that to put yourself under the law in one respect—in the Galatians case the issue was circumcision—is to be obligated to keep the whole law.

We are to appropriate and wear the righteousness of Christ rather than try to stitch together the dirty rags of our own righteousness. In a culture of self-made men and women, this is a concept that escapes many—including Gwen Shamblin. She comes across as claiming she is righteous in her own right and can sit on the mountaintop in judgment of others. She is not happy that her false teachings have been exposed. So she attempts to deflect criticism and to persuade her followers that she is just being persecuted for her own exalted righteousness.

And many will make sure that true teachers are called “heretical” or “cult leaders.” Jesus confronted the religious teachers and the counterfeit church in His day, calling them a “brood of vipers,” saying “Woe


to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are!" (Matthew 23:15)⁶

Woody Allen is supposed to have said, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean that they're not out to get you." A corollary here is just because Shamblin claims "many will make sure that true teachers are called 'heretical' or 'cult leaders'" doesn't mean she isn't a heretical cult leader. Indeed, she is just that! In fact, here's a tip: If any group you are ever associated with is called a cult, or its leader is labeled heretical or a false teacher, it might be a good idea to get out a handy dandy checklist, just to make sure. ☺

What Is A False Teacher?

A false teacher:

- can be beguiling—bewitching people with their deceitful words
- leads people to worship another god, another Jesus
- sneaks into Christian churches and/or private homes by masking who they are and what they really preach until damage is done
- tries to alienate people from the church to follow after them
- preaches another gospel—convincing people that rule keeping is the key to gaining God's acceptance
- steals a Christian's joy by putting them *back under the law* supposedly to keep God's favor
- stresses works and mocks grace
- hates Christian freedom and enslaves followers

The biblical texts expose Gwen Shamblin as a false teacher. 

*Straw-man argument = a weak or imaginary opposition (as an argument or adversary) set up only to be easily confuted (*Merrim-Webster Online Dictionary*)



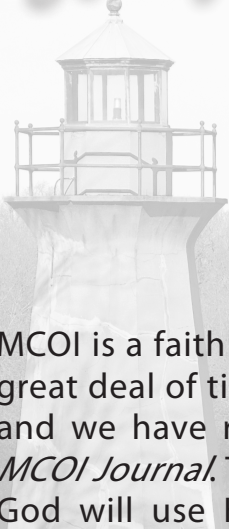
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ENDNOTES:

- 1 <http://www.remnantfellowship.com/rfquestionsnanswers.asp>
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Gwen Shamblin, Remnant Fellowship Introductory Video, 2000, Remnant Fellowship, Franklin, TN
- 5 <http://www.remnantfellowship.com/rfquestionsnanswers.asp>
- 6 Ibid.

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INTRODUCTION TO RABBINIC JUDAISM, PART III

Can one be both a Jew and Christian?

&

Should Messiah already have come?

By Mariano Grinbank

This article will explore two issues: Can a person be both Jewish and Christian? And also, should Messiah already have come?

Jewish and Christian?

Can a person who is Jewish accept Jesus as Messiah and still be Jewish? The basic objection is succinctly stated by Rabbi Doug Kahn:

Logically one cannot believe that the messiah has not yet come, as traditional Jews do, and that he also has come, as Christians believe.¹

This actually is quite logical on the surface.

Judaism generally believes a person can be completely non-religious, agnostic, or even an Atheist and still be Jewish. But the line is drawn, sometimes quite strongly, when a Jewish person accepts Jesus as Messiah. For example, a publication entitled the *Jewish Bulletin of North California* published an article on April 27, 2001 which besmirched the Jews for Jesus organization and then published another article on June 8, 2001 which praised a concoction of Buddhist meditation and Jewish worship. The following are further examples:

“Antimissionary” Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan wrote:

Conversion to Christianity or any other faith is an abandonment of Judaism. ... Christianity negates the fundamentals of Jewish faith, and one who accepts it rejects the very essence of Judaism ... A Jew who accepts Christianity might call himself a ‘Jewish Christian,’ but he is no longer a Jew. He can no longer even be counted as part of a Jewish congregation. Conversion to another faith is an act of religious treason. It is one of the worst possible sins that a Jew can commit ... The truth is that one who falls into their [—] *the missionary’s* [—] net is eternally cast away from before his G-d.²

Rabbi Shmuel Arkush, who is the head of Operation Judaism which works to “combat” the “missionary threat,” wrote:

When a Jew accepts Jesus he not only rejects the

history of his people but, by adopting Christian faith he places himself outside the Jewish religion ... By accepting a Christian god you commit a cardinal sin. You become a traitor to your people and cannot be counted a Jew.³

Jewish culture expert, Michael Asheri, wrote:

The full answer is that to be Jewish you either have to be born Jewish or undergo religious conversion to Judaism ... But what does “born Jewish” mean? Anyone Born of a Jewish Mother Is Jewish by Birth ... it is possible to be Jewish without being religious in any accepted sense ... there are atheists who are, nonetheless, Jews ... the one basic condition of being Jewish: that the Jews are the chosen people of God and that it is precisely to obey His commandments—all of them—that God chose them and they, in turn, chose Him ... Being a Jew is also a great privilege and there are certain obligations attached to that privilege which we are not free to reject.⁴

Furthermore, Asheri wrote the following regarding *Reconstructionist* Jews:

[they] seem to be attempting a definition of Judaism without revelation and, finally, without God, based only on an undefined peoplehood of Israel ... in spite of their denial of everything basic to Judaism, it should not for a moment be thought that these people are no longer Jews. The reason is clear and has already been pointed out: Judaism is more than a religion. The Jews are a *people*. And the Reconstructionists have made it clear that they have not cut themselves off ... If they have not cut themselves off, we cannot cut them off. What is really significant here, to be exact, is that they have not adopted another religion in place of Judaism or, as the early Christians did, created another religion. As for those few people who, having accepted or even solicited baptism, continue to maintain that they are Jews, and, in that guise, attempt to win over faithful Jews to their religion, we should not hesitate to classify them not only as no longer Jews but as active enemies of Israel, deserving of our unceasing opposition and scorn.⁵

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach points out that:

Jews have rarely taken a serious look at the teachings of Jesus. Indeed, in most Jewish households, the New Testament itself is completely taboo ... The Jews will not accept Jesus as savior, but why not as sage? They will not embrace him as god, but why not as guru? After all, many Jews study the teachings of the Buddha, even while remaining faithfully loyal to Jewish observance!⁶

Thus far, we have encountered one side of the issue. Now let us see what the Halacha (or *Halakha*: Judaism's religious law) has to state as we consult various Jewish encyclopedias and dictionaries:

Encyclopedia Judaica 3:211 states:

In Jewish religious law, it is technically impossible for a Jew (born to a Jewish mother or properly converted to Judaism) to change his religion. Even though a Jew undergoes the rites of admission to another religious faith and formally renounces the Jewish religion he remains—as far as the Halakah is concerned—a Jew, albeit a sinner (Sanh. 44a) ... For the born Jew, Judaism is not a matter of choice ... in the technical halakhic sense, apostasy is impossible.

Sanh. 44a refers to the *Talmud* at Sanhedrin 44a which states:

Israel hath sinned. R. Abba b. Zabda said: Even though the people have sinned, they are still called "Israel."

The footnote to this text states:

Israel is the name of honor for the people when faithful to God. Thus, a sinning Jew is still a Jew.

The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia says:

According to the Jewish religious law, every one born of a Jewish mother is and remains a part of Judaism; hence a converted Jew is regarded solely as a transgressor of the Jewish religious law ... converts were more energetically disliked and despised by the Jewish consciousness than by the Jewish religious law.⁷

The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia:

According to Jewish law, the apostate remains a Jew, albeit a sinner, and no formal ceremony is required if he returns to Judaism. Nevertheless, for psychological reasons a ceremony was sometimes considered desirable, prayers for the occasion figuring in some modern rituals.⁸

A Popular Dictionary of Judaism

According to Jewish Law, an apostate is still counted among the Jewish community—he can, for example, contract a Jewish marriage. However under the Law of Return, apostate Jews may not become citizens of the state of Israel.⁹

Consult virtually any Jewish encyclopedia or dictionary

and you will find words that are tantamount to these elucidations of the Halacha. Jewish opinion, whether individual or communitywide, is one issue; but Jewish religious law is quite another. The objections may be logical on the surface and authoritative and strongly worded; and yet, the law is clear: A Jew is always a Jew.

But just what is a *Messianic Jew* or *Jewish Christian*? They are Jews who believe the Jewish Messiah already has come in the person of the Jew, Jesus, as predicted in the Jewish Scriptures and as recorded in the New Testament—which is a compilation of 27 books, 25 of which were written by Jews and two of which were written by a Greek doctor named Luke (who interviewed eyewitnesses).

The Messiah Already Should Have Come

We will now consider the fact that Judaism believes the Messiah already should have come.

President of Yeshiva University, Norman Lamm, wrote:

The Talmud was ambivalent about messianic speculations; it points out that according to tradition the Messiah should have come at the end of the fourth millennium (since Creation), i.e., some eighteen hundred years ago, but did not (Sanhedrin 97a-b).¹⁰

The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia states:

The messianic figure was the center of a large number of eschatological concepts, and is reflected in the body of Hellenistic-Jewish pseudepigraphic literature from the 1st cent. C.E. Messianic emotionalism became intense shortly before 70 C.E.¹¹

That really should have clarified things right? Well,

just in case, allow me to define some of the terminology in this quotation:

- *Eschatological*: refers to the end times (the *eschaton*).
- *Pseudepigraphic*: apocryphal Hebrew and Greek writings from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D.
- *C.E.*: Judaism and, increasingly, secularism in general, refer to B.C.E. and C.E. (*Before Common Era* and *Common Era*) in place of B.C. and A.D. (*Before Christ* and *Anno Domini*—Year of Our Lord).

While I am at it, I might as well define the word *apocryphal* as being *the non-canonical, non-scriptural writings* (some of which are included in Roman Catholic Bibles as canonical/scriptural). Jewish author David Gross offers the following explanation:

What is the Apocrypha? Popular works of the time that were excluded by the Rabbis because they felt that they contained an excess of non-Jewish influence.¹²

Thus, let us reconsider the words of *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia* with these definitions in place: The messianic

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"Judaism" Continued from page 9

figure was the center of a large number of end times concepts, and is reflected in the body of Hebrew and Greek literature from the first century A.D. Messianic emotionalism became intense shortly before 70 A.D. (when the Second Temple was destroyed).

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver:

Prior to the first century (C.E.) the Messianic interest was not excessive ... The first century, however, especially the generation before the destruction [of the Second Temple], witnessed a remarkable outburst of Messianic emotionalism. This is to be attributed, as we shall see, not to an intensification of Roman persecution, but to the prevalent belief induced by the popular chronology of that day that the age was on the threshold of the Millennium ... When Jesus came into Galilee, 'spreading the gospel of the Kingdom of God,' and saying the 'time is fulfilled' and 'the Kingdom of God is at hand,' he was voicing the opinion universally held that ... the age of the Kingdom of God was at hand ... It was this chronological fact which inflamed the Messianic hope rather than the Roman persecutions ... Jesus appeared in the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate (26-36 C.E.) ... It seems likely, therefore, that in the minds of the people the Millennium was to begin around the year 30 C.E. ... The Messiah was expected around the second quarter of the first century C.E., because the Millennium was at hand. Prior to that time he was not expected, because according to the chronology of the day the Millennium was still considerably removed.¹³

Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (aka *Maimonides*) understood the date of the coming of the Messiah had been prophesied by Daniel, but he points out that the Rabbis forbade its calculation.

Maimonides wrote:

Daniel has elucidated to us the knowledge of the end times. However, since they are secret, the wise [rab-bis] have barred the calculation of the days of the Messiah's coming so that the untutored populace will not be led astray when they see that the End Times have already come but there is no sign of the Messiah.

Thus, he concludes:

It is a fundamental dogma to believe in the coming

of the Messiah, even if he delays. But no one should attempt to guess or fix the time.¹⁴

Professor of Hebrew Literature, Isadore Twersky, wrote the following in discussing Maimonides:

In the *Iggeret Teman* [Epistle to Yemen] Maimonides shows much greater enthusiasm and a heightened sense of expectation for the Messianic era than is discernible in the *Mishne Torah* [code of Jewish law]. He even reveals a family tradition concerning the imminent date of the Messianic era, thereby placing himself in the condemned camp of "calculators of the Messianic era."¹⁵

Now we come to Lamm's aforementioned text from the Talmud at Sanhedrin 97a-b,

The world is to exist 6 thousand years. In the first 2 thousand there was desolation, 2 thousand years the Torah flourished, and the next 2 thousand years is the Messianic era, but through our many iniquities all these years have been lost.

The footnote to this text states:

He should have come at the beginning of the last two thousand years; the delay is due to our sins.


Moreover, the *Talmud* at Sanhedrin 97b states:

Perish all those who calculate the end, for men will say, since the predicted end is here and the Messiah has not come, he will never come! ... All the predestined dates [for redemption] have passed, and the matter [now] depends only on repentance and good deeds.¹⁶

Some Jews claim salvation is gained by good deeds. What ought to be asked is if they realize this belief is based on the Talmud's statements that the Messiah should have already come "around the second quarter of the First Century" (25-50 A.D.).

In the Old Testament (Ezekiel 33:12-16), God makes it quite clear whether good deeds are good enough:

The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him when he disobeys, and the wickedness of the wicked man will not cause him to fall when he turns from it ... If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his righteousness and does evil, none of the righteous things he has done will be remem-



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bered ... And if I say to the wicked man, "You will surely die," but he then turns away from his sin and does what is just and right ... he will surely live; he will not die. None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him (NIV)

It ultimately seems like a "catch 22." If you are righteous and sin, then your righteousness is forgotten. But then you do a good deed, and your sins are forgiven. Clearly, this can become a continuous cycle. But how can one escape such a cycle? Through the finished work of the ultimate Redeemer, that is how.

At this point, I will mention some rather odd occurrences in relation to the Temple.

Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote the following in *Jewish War* 6.5.3:

... so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day-time; which light lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it. At the same festival also, a heifer, as she was being led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple ... the eastern gate of the inner [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. Now those that kept watch in the temple came hereupon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it; who then came up thither, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared that the signal foreshowed the desolation that was coming upon them.

In the *Talmud*, Rosh Hashanah 31b states:

Originally they used to fasten the thread of scarlet on the door of the [Temple] court on the outside. (1) If it turned white the people used to rejoice, (2) and if it did not turn white they were sad. They therefore made a rule that it should be fastened to the door of the court on the inside. People, however, still peeped in and saw, and if it turned white they rejoiced and if it did not turn white they were sad. They therefore made a rule that half of it should be fastened to the rock and half between the horns of the goat that was sent [to the wilderness] ... For forty years before the destruction of the Temple the thread of scarlet never turned white but remained red.

The footnotes to this text state:

- (1) **After the High Priest had performed the service on the Day of Atonement. V. Yoma, 67a.**
- (2) **This being a sign that their sins had been forgiven.**

In addition, the *Talmud* at Yoma 31b states:

Our Rabbis taught: During that last forty years before the destruction of the Temple the lot [For the Lord] did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-

coloured strap become white; nor did the westernmost light shine; and the doors of the *Hekal* [Temple] would open by themselves, until R. Johanan b. Zakkai rebuked them, saying: *Hekal, Hekal, why wilt thou be the alarmer thyself? (1) I know about thee that thou wilt be destroyed, for Zechariah ben Ido has already prophesied concerning thee: Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. R. Issac b. Tablai said: Why is its (2) name called Lebanon? Because it makes white the sins of Israel.*"

The footnotes to this text state:

- (1) **Predict thy own destruction.**
- (2) **The Sanctuary's.**

A very important point to note is the fact we are being told that 40 years before the destruction of the Second Temple, various signs occurred that made it clear to the Rabbis that, among other things, the sacrificial system no longer functioned, and the Temple was doomed. There is absolutely no manner in which to overstate the importance of these statements. Firstly, the Jewish religious leaders were admitting the sacrificial system ceased to function; the very system that was prescribed by God Himself in its various details. Secondly, they knew the Temple was doomed; the very Temple in which God's presence (His *Shekinah*) resided.

Talmudists generally believe this happened due to the disbanding of the Sanhedrin. But what of this reference to **"40 years before the destruction of the [Second] Temple?"** The Second Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., and so 40 years prior takes us back to 30 A.D. What in the world could have occurred at that time to have such an impact upon Judaism? What occurred at that time that caused the Rabbis to conclude that sin was no longer being forgiven through *the Law*?

Jesus came during the precise time the Messiah was expected. Jesus died for our sins in 30 A.D.—acting in His capacity as the ultimate Redeemer. ☐



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ENDNOTES:

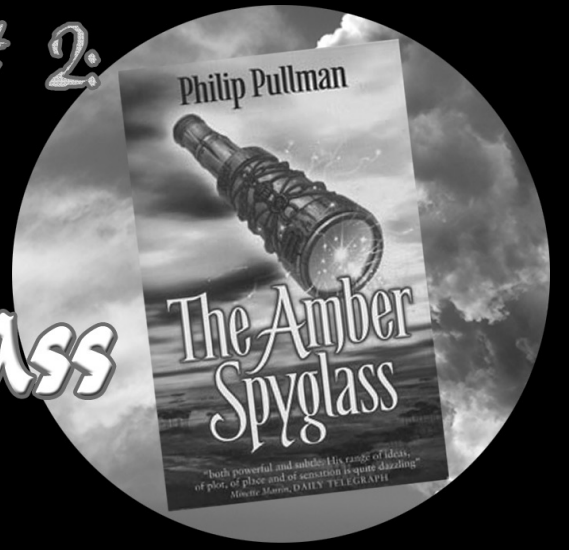
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His Dark Materials, Part 2: A Spiritual Evaluation of Philip Pullman's

The Amber Spyglass

By Marcia Montenegro



"The book depicts the Temptation and Fall not as the source of all woe and misery, as in traditional Christian teaching, but as the beginning of true human freedom something to be celebrated, not lamented. And the Tempter is not an evil being like Satan, prompted by malice and envy, but a figure who might stand for Wisdom."¹

The message of the third book in this trilogy, *The Amber Spyglass*, en't pretty. My grammar en't gone, either. I am merely mimicking the speech of the books' heroine, Lyra, whose poor grammar is vexing throughout the first book, and it becomes absolutely grating on the nerves by the third one. Aside from her bad grammar, Lyra's propensity to lie, her defiance of morality, her trance states in reading the alethiometer (which continue in this last book), and her role in overthrowing the Kingdom of Heaven combine to make her a rather unlikely heroine for a children's book. Lyra, along with Will (a young friend from another world), and her soul companion (the daemon Pantalaimon) have adventures that climax into nothing less than restoring paradise lost.

Pullman manages to infuse the well-written trilogy with enough tender emotion, adventure, and heroic deeds to beguile young readers for whom the books are written. And therein lies the danger: The message of these books is wrapped in a colorful, appealing package, much like poison hidden in a piece of candy.

The Angels: Twisted Views from the Edge

The second book, *The Subtle Knife*, left the reader with Will being guided by two rebel angels—Baruch and Balthamos (Pullman's rebel angels want vengeance for Satan being cast out of the Garden). In the beginning of this final book, the reader learns that these two male angels are deeply in love with each other; and later, when Baruch dies, Balthamos mourns for him to the point of nearly losing his will and strength to live.

These angels explain to Will that although most angels were never men, some were, like Baruch.² However, Lord Asriel, who is Lyra's father and the one leading the war on the Authority

(God), is told that the chief angel of the Kingdom of Heaven, Metatron, was at one time the biblical Enoch. Enoch is presented as one who would institute a permanent inquisition far crueler than any before in history.³ In contrast, the Enoch of the Bible is one "who walked with God" and whom God found to be pleasing, so that he was taken directly up to be with God without experiencing death.⁴

Metatron is also depicted as lusting for Mrs. Coulter, and he tells her that when he was Enoch he had several wives, but none as "lovely as you."⁵ He also tells her that he lived for "sixty-five years" and then was taken by the Authority to his kingdom. Once again, biblical ignorance is exposed. Pullman apparently did not read past Genesis 5:21. Verse 22 tells us Enoch lived 65 years and then had his son, Methuselah; after this, Enoch lived another 300 years, while fathering other children before God took him up. In verse 23, we are told that Enoch was on earth for 365 years. Furthermore, the Bible records in Genesis 4:19 that Lamech, the son of Methusael, who lived before Enoch, took two wives; but there is no record that Enoch had more than one wife.

The notion that men become angels or can die is nowhere to be found in the Bible. Since the Bible clearly teaches that men and angels are separate from each other, it is difficult to understand why one who is writing against the Bible would insert some things that reveal such an ignorance of it.

While Metatron, the angel who serves the Authority, is evil, the rebel angels are the story's heroes who aid Lyra and Will and others in the fight against God. Once again, the author seems to be turning good into evil and evil into good. Xaphania, a rebel angel, tells Serafina Pekkala, the witch friend of Lyra and Will, that the "rebel angels, the followers of wisdom, have always tried to open minds; the Authority and his churches have always tried to keep them closed."⁶ The view of rebel angels as keys to wisdom goes back to the Gnostic tales of Lucifer as an angel of light attempting to bring wisdom to man, but being thwarted by a cruel and petty God. This belief is called Luciferianism and is found not only in Gnostic beliefs (whose earliest writings date to the second century, after the canon of Scripture was completed), but also in the New Age and in contemporary Satanism. This does not mean Pullman holds to these ideas, but he is making

them a core philosophy of the books.

Pullman's God and Good and Evil

The main theme of this third and final book of the trilogy is the great war on the "Authority" and the Kingdom of Heaven, a theme which was escalating in the second book, *The Subtle Knife*.

The Authority is presented as a God figure and is even given the biblical names of God such as: "**the Creator, the Lord, Yahweh, El, Adonai, the King, the Father, the Almighty.**"⁷ Balthamos tells Will that the Authority is a created angel who declared himself to be God, and later this is repeated to Mrs. Coulter—Lyra's mother.⁸ Could this be Pullman's actual view of the biblical God? If this Authority was a mere pretender or false god, as many reviewers have contended, then it would follow that a true God would be revealed somewhere in the story; but a true God is a being to whom the books never allude. In fact, the book has just the opposite view: There is no God—and the God in whom men believe is a fake.

Mrs. Coulter wonders where God is and refers to God speaking with Adam and Eve in the Garden; then she states God withdrew from man.⁹ She seems to ignore the account of man's disobedience to God, and how sin broke the relationship between man and God. She continues pondering God as the "**Ancient of Days**" in the biblical book of Daniel, and she speculates that maybe this means God is "**decrepit and demented, unable to think or act or speak and unable to die, a rotten hulk;**" and if so, wouldn't the "**truest proof of our love for God**" be to find Him and "**give him the gift of death?**"¹⁰

"*Ancient of Days*" in the biblical context actually has nothing to do with being chronologically old, but instead, it is a title that refers to God's eternal nature. Although technically it means "**advanced in days,**" the term also suggests "**dignity, endurance, judgment, and wisdom.**"¹¹ Another source states, "**In contrast with all earthly kings, his days are past reckoning.**"¹² Putting Daniel's vision together with the vision of the Apostle John in Revelation, this title can be seen as a foreshadowing of the vision of Christ in the latter book.¹³ This is another one of numerous examples of biblical ignorance in the book.¹⁴

Despite the war on the Authority as a theme, the death of the Authority, which comes a full 100 pages before the book's end, is not the climax and is treated almost as a minor event. Will and Lyra find the Authority in an enclosed litter* that had been carried by angels who fled or were killed. The Authority is "**demented and powerless,**" mumbling "**in fear and in pain,**" and had "**no will of his own.**"¹⁵ As Will¹⁶ and Lyra help him out of the litter, he vanishes into the air as a result of having insufficient substance to sustain his existence.¹⁷ Mrs. Coulter's musings on God's decrepit state are verified by this incident. Will

and Lyra are seemingly completely untouched by their witness of the Authority's death, and they turn to other matters almost immediately.

Not surprisingly, Christianity is treated in the book with perhaps even more disdain than is God. The former nun, Mary Malone, tells Will and Lyra the story of why she left the Church. She does this because a dead woman told her to "**tell stories;**"¹⁸ Mary did not question this at all, which is rather ironic given her defiance of God. Why believe the voice of an unknown dead woman yet question everything else? Mary tells Will and Lyra she realized there was no God, "**no one to punish me for being wicked,**" and she recounts how she removed her crucifix and threw it into the sea.¹⁹ Later, Mary declares, "**the Christian religion is a very powerful and convincing mistake, that's all.**"²⁰ She states that she thought according to how the Church told her to think,²¹ which is yet another apparent misunderstanding on Pullman's part regarding Christianity, the church, and the Bible.

Lyra asks Mary if her disbelief caused her to stop believ-

ing in good and evil; actually, this is a very good question. Perhaps Pullman is expressing a view that morality exists even apart from belief in God because Mary answers that she decided "**good and evil are names for what people do, not what they are**" and that good is helping people while evil is hurting them.²² But this only begs the question: What standard does Mary use to determine good and evil? Pullman would have the reader believe God is not necessary for the concept of good and evil; but if there is no absolute standard for good and evil, then how does man determine what is good or what is evil? If the standard is purely cultural or personal, it becomes relative and, therefore, meaningless. Furthermore, the authority of the individual or

the culture to determine right and wrong is just another authority only, perhaps, with less accountability. It seems Mary Malone has not thought this one through.

Death, the World of the Dead, and the Afterlife

Heaven is a "**lie,**" and the dead go to a bleak, gray place full of sorrow—a "**prison camp**" set up by the Authority.²³ Lyra and Will travel to the world of the dead where Lyra hopes to free her friend Roger, who died in the first book when her father (Lord Asriel) was creating a bridge to another world.

Despite this grim place of the dead, death is personified and presented as a "**devoted friend**"—a companion who is close to you throughout your life—who then taps you gently on the shoulder, very "**kindly**" says, "**Easy now, easy child, you come along o' me,**" and travels with you in a boat across a misty lake to the land of the dead, and then leaves you.²⁴ While a person is

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Lyra's propensity to lie, her defiance of morality, her trance states in reading the alethiometer (which continue in this last book), and her role in overthrowing the Kingdom of Heaven combine to make her a rather unlikely heroine for a children's book.

“Dark” Continued from page 13

alive, their death companion can **“hide in a teacup. Or a dew-drop. Or in a breath of wind.”**²⁵ One dead girl even misses her death companion.²⁶

Will and Lyra succeed in entering this world, and after some perilous encounters, they lead the ghosts (dead people) out. Lyra finds the ghost Roger, and Will meets up with his dead father—the shaman who was killed in the second book. This groundbreaking exodus of ghosts from the world of the dead means that in the future, all those who die will be able to leave this place once they enter after death. But this escape from the world of the dead does not mean that the dead get to live again, nor do they even have a ghostly existence in the land of the living. Rather, the dead dissipate into the atmosphere and become part of the atoms of the material world.²⁷ The dead exult that they will be **“alive again in a thousand blades of grass, and a million leaves; we’ll be falling in the raindrops and blowing in the fresh breeze; we’ll be glittering in the dew under the stars and the moon out there in the physical world, which is our true home and always was.”**²⁸

This theme is repeated by the deceased Lee Scoresby who, looking forward to reuniting with his dead daemon Hester, happily tells Lyra he will **“drift along the wind and find the atoms that used to be Hester, and my mother in the sagelands, and my sweethearts,”**²⁹ as though dissolving in the atmosphere into a million-plus particles allows one to find and commune with other dead personal beings who are also mere scattered particles. There seems to be small comfort in this concept. Moreover, how can a ghost with no material substance, as they are depicted in the story, become material again?

Despite the logical contradictions and obvious drawbacks of this view, Lyra excitedly tells Will at their parting at the end of the book that after she escapes the land of the dead, **“I’ll drift about forever, all my atoms, till I find you again”** and **“We’ll live in birds and flowers and dragonflies and pine trees and in the clouds and those little specks of light ...”**³⁰ Of course, living in mud, revolting looking bugs, or weeds is not mentioned, as though atoms can be choosy. Furthermore, if one has dissipated into atoms, there is no longer a whole, recognizable person present, much less an intelligence, which renders this perspective a piece of poetic nonsense. This fanciful notion about the atoms finding each other is much harder to accept than a belief in God which, at least, has evidence. But, perhaps, this scenario is the best that someone who does not believe in God can muster.

Love in the Afternoon, or Paradise

The second book made it clear that, in order to undo the mistake that caused the loss of the first Paradise, a new Eve would be necessary. The prophecy was that Lyra is this new Eve, and she fulfills this role in the third book. However, Lyra’s role as the new Eve is based on the mistaken premise that Eve was the cause of sin.³¹ Although Eve was deceived, God’s Word clearly states that Adam is held accountable for the first sin.³² Adam is the one who had directly received God’s commandment to not eat from the forbidden tree, before Eve was even created,³³ and Adam is the one to whom God first calls after Adam and Eve have disobeyed.³⁴

Ex-nun Mary Malone is to play the role of the tempter/serpent, and she does this by telling Lyra and Will a story of sensual desire and love in her life when she was younger, which she

compares to finding treasures in China.³⁵ Will and Lyra hear this while all three are in a world Mary has found; she tells the children, **“snakes are important here. The people look after them and try not to hurt them.”**³⁶ This seems to be an allusion to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Mary’s words arouse something in Lyra; this is clearly a sexual awakening, although Lyra is only 12-years old. Later, acting on these feelings, Will and Lyra kiss passionately and declare their love for each other: Will kisses **“her hot face over and over again, drinking in with adoration the scent of her body and her warm, honey-fragrant hair and her sweet, moist mouth that tasted of the little red fruit.”**³⁷ Knowing they must part, because their daemons cannot live long in a world in which they were not born,³⁸ Lyra later tells Will she wants to **“kiss you and lie down with you and wake up with you”** every day until she dies.³⁹ The pair are described rather lasciviously as **“saturated with love”** and as **“lovers.”**⁴⁰

Such language and descriptions are entirely inappropriate for the children at whom these books are aimed, not to mention being tasteless for characters ages 12 and 13. Yet due to a mistaken belief that somehow God and Christianity are against physical love and sexuality, this carnal scene apparently becomes necessary, at least in Pullman’s eyes, to reverse the loss of Paradise. Pullman evidently has not noticed that God told Adam and Eve to **“be fruitful and multiply”** before the Fall.⁴¹

Will and Lyra’s acts of love cause the Dust—the particles that fall from above and were associated in the trilogy by the Church with original sin—to reverse their flow out of the world. The Dust is actually like a life force, necessary for all living things,⁴² and is renewed by **“thinking and feeling and reflecting, by gaining wisdom and passing it on.”**⁴³ The Amber Spyglass of the title is a device crafted by Mary Malone that allows her to see this Dust, and she is the one who realizes its leakage out of the world has been almost completely stopped by Will and Lyra.⁴⁴

Lyra and Will decide they each will go to the Botanic Garden in their own worlds at the same time every year so they can be as close as possible, even though they are separated by their worlds.⁴⁵ It cannot be accidental that this should happen in a garden, since in this third book, God has been eliminated so that the Garden, or Paradise, can be regained. Ironically, in the real world, it is God, of course, who created the Garden.


From Kingdom of Heaven to The Republic of Heaven

Characters in the story who fight the Authority allude to building a **“Republic of Heaven,”** although no clear details are given as to what this means and how it will be done.⁴⁶ But before the Republic of Heaven could be built, the Kingdom of Heaven had to be overthrown. When Lyra returns to her home at Jordan College after the success of the rebellion, she discovers the power of the Church has decreased, that **“more liberal factions”** are in power, the General Oblation Board (an agency of the Church) was dissolved, and the Church’s **“Consistorial Court of Discipline was confused and leaderless.”**⁴⁷ These changes are a result of the Authority’s death and the victory in demolishing the Kingdom of Heaven.

The only clues as to how this Republic of Heaven will be built are that people must study, work, and think, and become **“cheerful and kind and curious and patient.”**⁴⁸ These actions will replenish the Dust and lead to building this Republic.

Is the reader to conclude that since the Kingdom of Heaven is gone, people will magically become good and altruistic? This seems to be Pullman's point, but this can only be possible if man is basically good and unselfish. Pullman has made the mistake of equating freedom from God's authority with the ability to be truly good. However, history imparts a different tale. Utopia after Utopia has failed due to man's weaknesses, selfish nature, and affinity for treachery. There have been numerous rulers with no belief in the biblical God who brought only destruction and death in their wake (Nero, Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot, Mao, and others).⁴⁹ A more accurate view of humanity is portrayed in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, which demonstrates that man's desire for power is matched only by his corruption upon obtaining it.

Having reversed much that God says is good into evil and having called good what God has declared evil, the trilogy's end—two children prematurely initiated into sexuality, a Garden with no God, and the task of building a Republic of Heaven dependant on sinful men—is a cheerless prospect, indeed.

But the concept of this Republic of Heaven can be a platform for discussing the book with fans. Turn the books' premise back on itself. Questions to ask might be: How would people in the Republic of Heaven determine good and evil? What standard would be used? Would belief in God be allowed? Who would rule in the Republic of Heaven, and how would this be determined? Is dissolving into atoms after death something to look forward to? Where do Lyra and Will get their strong sense of justice and injustice? Carried out gently and with sensitivity, these questions can lead to amiable discussions and opportunities to share biblical truth. 

*Litter—a covered and curtained couch provided with shafts and used for carrying a single passenger. (*Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*)



Before trusting Christ in late 1990, **Marcia Montenegro** was a professional astrologer and taught astrology for several years, as well as having been involved in Eastern and New Age practices. Through her ministry, Christian Answers for the New Age, Marcia speaks around the country and writes on New Age and occult topics.

Based in Arlington, VA, she is the author of ***Spell-Bound: The Paranormal Seduction of Today's Kids***. (Life Journey/Cook, 2006).

ENDNOTES:

- 1 Statement by Philip Pullman on the publisher's web site at <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/pullman/author/qa.html>
- 2 Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass: His Dark Materials, Book Three* (NY: A Del Ray Book, the Ballantine Publishing Group, 2000), 15
- 3 *Ibid.*, 334.
- 4 Genesis 5:22-24; Hebrews 11:5
- 5 *The Amber Spyglass*, 356.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 429
- 7 *Ibid.*, 28
- 8 *Ibid.*, 188.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 293-94.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 294.
- 11 *Holman Bible Dictionary*, <http://www.studydrive.org/dic/hbd/view.cgi?number=T329>
- 12 <http://dictionary.die.net/ancient%20of%20days>
- 13 For a good exposition of this title, see Fr. Steven Ritter, "Who is the Ancient of Days?" http://www.stmaryofegypt.org/library/who_is_the_ancient_of_days.htm
- 14 Other erroneous views are expressed, such as believing that fallen

angels can repent and salvation is by works (415, 419).

- 15 *The Amber Spyglass*, 366.
- 16 Will's name is surely not accidental, especially contrasted here with the Authority's lack of "will." Since one of Pullman's themes is that the Church suppresses free will, it is not surprising that one of the heroes who serves those rebelling against the Authority is named Will.
- 17 This is not explained, although the book implies that this is, perhaps, the result of Will and Lyra leading the ghosts (the dead) out of the world of the dead.
- 18 *The Amber Spyglass*, 386.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 397
- 20 *Ibid.*, 393.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 398.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 *Ibid.*, 29, 286
- 24 *Ibid.*, 232-33; 238.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 235-36
- 26 *Ibid.*, 269
- 27 *Ibid.*, 333. However, left unexplained is the fact that some ghosts, such as Lee Scoresby and William Parry (Will's father) speak and take actions as ghosts in the outside world, and a ghost army joins in the fighting in the war (see 324, 347-51, 371-73.).
- 28 *Ibid.*, 287
- 29 *Ibid.*, 344, 373.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 445
- 31 *Ibid.*, 60.
- 32 Romans 5:12.
- 33 Genesis 2:16-18.
- 34 Genesis 3:9
- 35 *The Amber Spyglass*, 393-97.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 390.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 417
- 38 Will, who has no apparent daemon in the first two books, discovers and sees his daemon after returning from the world of the dead.
- 39 *The Amber Spyglass*, 445.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 421, 447. Also, see 431.
- 41 Genesis 1:28.
- 42 *The Amber Spyglass*, 403-04, 421, 433.
- 43 *Ibid.*, 440.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 421, 428. There is still leakage of Dust out of the worlds and into the windows that have been opened between the worlds, and these windows must be closed. This is one reason why Will and Lyra must part and not see each other again. The other reason is that their daemons cannot survive long in another world. One window will be left open for escape from the world of the dead.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 455.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 325, 437, 465.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 458.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 440, 464.
- 49 See Dinesh D'Souza, "Atheism, Not Religion, Is the Real Killer," http://www.tothesource.org/11_29_2006/11_29_2006.htm

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Pavilions of Protection

Written by Bill Gothard, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Pastor Barry Black
and L.L. (Don) Veinot Jr.



In the last issue of the *MCOI Journal*, we reviewed Bill Gothard's book: *The Exceeding Great Power of God's Grace*. Due to the limitations of space in a publication such as this, a book review cannot be an exhaustive critique. Instead, we will highlight some of the more blatant issues. There are seven chapters in *Pavilions of Protection*. Even the most casual student of Gothard's teachings concerning his "principle of authority" can see that what once was an "umbrella" is now a "pavilion" ... wow, it grew! But of course, that is what leaven does (Galatians 5:9). But fear not, in chapter seven, Gothard returns to his umbrella analogy. Two main points are recurring themes in *Pavilions of Protection*. We will try to limit this review to these two major themes.

Theme 1

Whether he realizes it or not, rather than pointing to man's sin nature (and, thus, man's sinful behavior), Gothard sees everything through the "eyes" of whether or not one is "under the umbrella (or pavilion) of protection." In his "Introduction: Consider These Points," he explains he has written this little book because the "Biblical principle of protection under authority" is under attack. He then quotes or sort of quotes (without attribution) from our book *A Matter of Basic Principles: Bill Gothard and the Christian Life*. We say "sort of quotes" because he also changes a few words in the process. The quotes are from pages 97, 98 and 99 and appear in his book like this:

The essence of Gothard's teaching of submission is not getting under the domination of authority, but rather getting under the protection of authority. According to Bill Gothard, authority is like an umbrella of protection and when we get out from under it, we expose ourselves to unnecessary temptations which are too strong for us to overcome. ... When is Gothard going to supply us with a Scriptural basis for this idea? He is not. ... He is not teaching Scripture, but rather his own ideas.¹

By using ellipses (the ...) he avoids having to actually address or respond to the biblical materials in the book that are used to demonstrate his views are not biblical but only his opinion. By not giving attribution, Gothard, to some degree, keeps the reader in the dark as to where the quote came from and, there-

fore, avoids the possibility his followers might read it in context and discover he is playing fast and loose with the text. This is something he does often. He then goes on to write:

With challenges like this against the clear teaching of God's Word, a message such as the one contained in this book is mandatory.²

In time past, Gothard has never actually demonstrated his view through a "clear teaching of God's Word," and he doesn't begin with this book. He contends:

For someone to claim that there is no Biblical basis for enjoying God's protection as long as we remain under God-ordained authority is to either overlook or reject the first lesson of the Bible.³

This gives the impression he will be supporting his view with a "clear teaching of God's Word" starting with "the first lesson of the Bible."

In the introduction and then in the summary analogy, Gothard mentions Adam and Eve in the garden. A story which is normally understood to be their fall into sin through rebellion, but to which Gothard gives an entirely new spin. In his first mention, Gothard says this:

God created Adam and gave him jurisdiction over the entire Garden of Eden, except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As long as Adam remained under the authority of God's commands, he experienced God's blessing, fellowship and protection.⁴

The first question that comes to our mind is: "Protected from what?" There was no sickness, nothing to break down, no concern for stuff. In fact, we read in Genesis 1:31:

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Well, we have an idea from what Adam and Eve were supposedly protected as Gothard enumerates what they are exposed to as a result of the loss of God's protection:

God then created Eve and placed her under Adam's protection and God's commands. When Adam and Eve went beyond the limits of their jurisdiction, they lost God's protection and exposed themselves and all their descendants to the destruction of Satan's deception.⁵

So, if they were under God's protection and that includes being protected from "Satan's deception," how did Satan get past God, who was protecting them, and deceive Eve? This does not seem at all comforting. If while under God's umbrella of

protection—which protects from Satan’s deception, Eve was deceived and, as a result, got out from under God’s umbrella of protection; are her and Adam any worse off than they were while under the umbrella of protection? It doesn’t seem so.

Another problem here is that saying **“they lost God’s protection”** (which, according to Gothard’s scenario, apparently wasn’t very effective) is vastly different from saying Adam and Eve sentenced themselves and all mankind with sin’s penalty (Romans 5:12). But for the sake of argument, if Gothard is, indeed, making these equivalent or synonymous, then we seem to have a theological problem here. Redemption through Christ (eternal salvation) would be equivalent to “getting under God’s protective authority” and has nothing whatsoever to do with having peace with God, but rather, the process of realizing we need a security guard to protect us from bad things in life and getting to the place where that security guard can protect us. However, as we have seen, the god Gothard portrays is probably not our best choice if being protected—from bad things in life and Satan’s deceptions—is what we have in mind. But Gothard “muddies the water” even more when he states on page 32:

God is the ultimate “umbrella” over all people and nations. He governs in the affairs of nations and rules over all the universe. He sets up rulers and takes them down. He defines the parameters of His “umbrella” of protection by His law systems. He gave Adam and Eve a law system composed of ten commandments. Four were given directly to Adam and six were given to Adam and Eve together. As long as Adam and Eve remained under this legal structure, they enjoyed ideal living and freedom from death and destruction. However, the moment that they stepped outside this protective “umbrella” they experienced death and destruction.⁶

WHAT? One would look in vain through Genesis 1-3 to find **“a law system of ten commandments.”** (The Ten Commandments weren’t given until much later at Sinai.) Rather, what we find in Scripture is that Adam and Eve fell into sin when Eve was deceived by Satan and partook of the fruit, and then gave the fruit to her husband, and he ate (Genesis 3:1-6). That was the one thing God told Adam *not* to do; and if he did, he would die (Genesis 2:16-17). Thus, all of mankind was plunged into sin and the penalty of sin which according to Romans 6:23:

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

As a result death passed upon all men, Romans 5:12:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

Theme 2

Gothard equates all human authority (parents, government, etc.) with the authority and protection of God and makes the broad assumption that all authority is biblical and must be followed. In the introduction, he writes:

Who has the final authority over decisions that are made in the home: parents or teens? To a large degree parents have surrendered their God-given responsibilities to the wills of their sons and daughters. The results are disastrous: wrong friends, drugs, promiscuity, depression, and suicide.⁷

Gothard’s either/or thinking is evident here. Either teens have someone who makes all of their decisions for them, or they are doomed to **“wrong friends, drugs, promiscuity, depression, and suicide.”** In truth, the “disastrous results” he lists are ultimately the results of the sin nature and do not stem simply from the problem of who will be **“the final authority over decisions that are made.”** If what Gothard is saying about protection is true, then we would have to conclude (mistakenly so) that those spoken of in Hebrews 11 were not heroes of the faith,

but rather, they were individuals who had gotten out from under the protection of authority and suffered the consequences of not being under authority. In truth, all of us suffer the consequences of living in a fallen world. Sin ravages us all and will continue to do so until all is delivered up into the Father’s hands (1 Cor. 15:25-28).

In chapter four, Gothard continues this second theme:

Just as a Roman soldier had to get under the protection of his shield, so we must consciously place our minds, wills, and emotions under the authority of God’s Word and the direction of the Holy Spirit. Those who reject the authority of their parents and other God-given leaders are usually those who have placed their minds, wills, and emotions

above God’s Word and the Holy Spirit. They are soon plagued with doubts about the authority of Scripture and the reality of God. The more they seek answers, the more confused they become.⁸

So, what he is saying here is that human authority is in some way equal to the authority of Scripture and the direction of the Holy Spirit. Now if human authority is equal to the authority of Scripture, the direction of the Holy Spirit, and is our protective shield, then one cannot really know the will of God directly from the Scripture or the Holy Spirit, but rather only through the human authority as they reveal it to us. In addition, Gothard adds this concept to the definition of faith itself and claims that in the Scriptures, in fact, Jesus defines it this way:

One aspect of faith is the confidence that God is able to work through a structure of authority in order to accomplish His will. This kind of faith was illustrated by the wisdom and discernment of the centurion who


—Continued on page 18

“Protection” Continued from page 17

came to Jesus for the healing of his servant. He told Jesus to just speak the word, because he was unworthy for Jesus to come into his home. He knew that a command from Jesus would be effective, because he stated: “I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it” (Luke 7:8).

The response of Jesus is significant: He marvelled and said to the crowd, “...I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (Luke 7:9).⁹

Jesus was not teaching a “future, Gothard, non-optional principle of authority” here. He was simply stating the centurion demonstrated great faith by believing Jesus was able to heal the servant without even going to the house. In other words, Jesus was able to heal the servant “long distance.” This was a sign which Jesus did for the express purpose of revealing Himself as the Son of God, not to show how “**God is able to work through a structure of authority in order to accomplish His will.**” Bill Gothard’s “**principle of authority**”—as seen in his idea of “**the umbrella**” or “**pavilions**”—is rightly identified by Ron Henzel, Senior Researcher for Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc., as the “**error of anachronistic (chronologically misplaced) reasoning.**”¹⁰ This happens when someone projects contemporary culture into their interpretation and application of Scripture. This happens all too often. It is a “bait-and-switch” approach (also

called “the biblical hook” approach) in which a person can wrongly interpret and misapply God’s Word whether purposely or inadvertently. Bill Gothard has done this consistently through the years, and his book *Pavilions of Protection* is certainly no exception. 



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L.L. (Don) Veinot Jr.’s bio and photo can be found on P.7

ENDNOTES:

- 1 Bill Gothard, PH.D.; *Pavilions of Protection*, Institute in Basic Life Principles, Oak Brook, IL, 2006, 5.
- 2 Ibid., 5&6.
- 3 Ibid., 6.
- 4 Ibid., 6.
- 5 Ibid., 6, italics added for emphasis.
- 6 Ibid., 32, italics added for emphasis.
- 7 Ibid., 5.
- 8 Ibid., 17.
- 9 Ibid., 18, italics added for emphasis.
- 10 Don Veinot, Joy Veinot & Ron Henzel, *A Matter of Basic Principles: Bill Gothard and the Christian Life*, MCOI, Lombard, IL, 2003, 97.

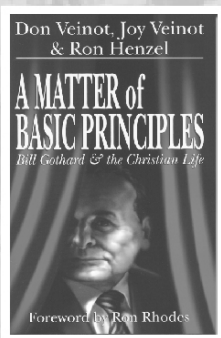
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1. *The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.*

2. *The French eat a lot of fat and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.*

3. *The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.*

4. *The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.*

5. *The Germans drink a lot of beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.*

Conclusion: Eat and drink what you like but learn a new language; speaking English is apparently what kills you.

One of the elements, perhaps the main element in discernment, is asking if certain positions and conclusions are actually true. Coming to a false conclusion that sounds good can have devastating effects particularly if used as the basis for future decisions.



"Judiasm" Continued from page 11

8 *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1992 7th ed., 1959 1st ed.).

9 *A Popular Dictionary of Judaism* (Surrey, TW9 2QA: Curzon Press, 1995).

10 Norman Lamm, *The Religious Thought of Hasidism, Text and Commentary* (The Michael Scharf Publication Trust of Yeshiva University Press. Distributed by Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1999), p. 582. "Source: R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, *Kedushat Levi, Kedushah Sheniyah*, 119b, s.v. "ve-attah neva'er".

11 *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1992 7th ed.), p. 652.

12 David C. Gross, *1,001 Questions and Answers About Judaism* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1990), p. 190.

13 Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* (Macmillan Co., 1927), pp. 5-7.

14 Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, *Igeret Teiman*, Chapter 3, p. 24, and Tzvi M. Rabinowicz, *The Encyclopedia of Hasidism* (Jason Ronson, Inc. Northdale, New Jersey, 1996), p. 400.

15 Isadore Twersky, *Vol. XXII Introduction to the code of Maimonides (Mishne Torah)* (New Haven: Yale Judaica Series/Yale University Press, 1980), p. 450.

16 A discussion ensues as to whether or not repentance is really necessary for redemption. Appealing to Daniel 12:7 as a proof text a conclusion is reached: **"Messiah's coming is dependent only upon the utter prostration of Israel, not his repentance"** (See Sanhedrin 98a, footnote 5, p. 661 of the *Soncino Babylonian Talmud*).

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Ephesians 5:11

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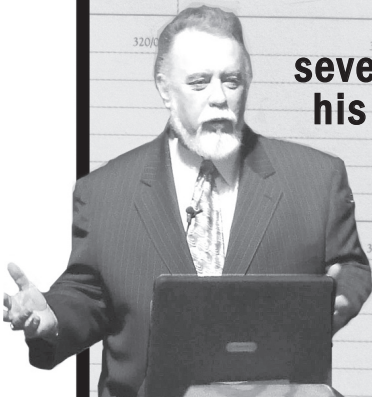
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