



2020 2Q How to Interpret Scripture: Lesson 7 Language, Text and Context

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs, “More than 6,000 languages are spoken...” What does this mean? This entire quarterly has been helping us understand how important the Bible is. We agree that the Bible is God’s inspired Word, useful for teaching, rebuking correcting and training in righteousness. No question about it.

But the lesson has, in various places, made the point that the Bible must be used alone, by itself as our source of truth and knowledge of God, as our basis for salvation. We at Come and Reason have challenged this idea and shown that the Scripture itself teaches that God has provided three threads of evidence to reveal the truth about Himself—Scripture, Science/Nature and Experience—and it is by harmonizing these three we have the most reliable truth.

Think about the two positions—Scripture alone versus, Scripture, nature and experiences of life combined, and then consider what the first two paragraphs in the lesson today have pointed out.

There are 1.5 billion people in the world today (this doesn’t count all those people throughout human history) that do not have a Bible in their language. If the Bible is the only source of truth that we can use to find God and salvation, then is the position the lesson takes would suggesting that all these people without hope? Is that right? Is God only able to reach and save people who have had the Bible translated into their language? Or, who at least have had someone speak the Bible to them in their language?

What about the people who lived on earth before Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible—are those people without hope? Obviously not, as we have the record of Enoch walking with God and being translated into heaven—but Enoch never had a Bible to read—how could this happen? Because Enoch had real life *experience* with God.

Now, we never want to undermine the Bible as God’s inspired word, but when we realize how reality works, then we can reject the idea that the Bible is the sole and exclusive source of truth that God uses to reach people. Then we will return to reality—God has three threads of truth, Scripture, nature, experience. Thus, we read about this very question of God reaching people who have not had the Scriptures starting in Romans 1:20:

For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse....NIV84



First point Paul makes is that the truth about God may be understood from nature, not only from Scripture. Paul is making the point that it is not an excuse for those who have not had the benefit of Scripture. He goes on in the next few verses to describe how despite the evidence from nature about God, they reject this truth and preferred images made by their own hands.

And Paul describes the law of worship in action—a design law, how worshipping idols degrades the mind and character. This is the natural result of violating the law of worship and worshipping the created rather than the Creator.

Then, having established the truth of God in nature, having established the reality of design law, Paul makes this incredible point starting in chapter 2:12:

All who sin apart from the law [Torah—Scripture] will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. 14 (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) NIV84

What is the new covenant described in Hebrews 8? Writing the law on the hearts and minds of people. And what does Paul say happens to these people who do by nature the things contained in the Torah—the law? They have had God’s law written in their hearts and minds—these people are part of the new covenant, the saved of God—yet they have never heard Scripture. How is this possible? Because they have learned the truth about God’s character and methods from nature and have responded to the principles of God’s kingdom as evidenced in nature and have experienced the healing of the Holy Spirit renewing them with the Remedy Christ procured.

But those who say that Scripture is our only source of truth deny the very Scripture that they claim to believe, because the Scripture teaches that some to the saving truth about God via what God has revealed about Himself in nature.

One of the founders of the SDA church, who understood design law wrote:

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment **may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles.** Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. **Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness;** before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. **Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required.** [Do the things the law required? Do you think they were baptized? Do you think they paid tithe? Do you think they partook communion service? Do you think they kept



Sabbath? Do you think they ate at the right diet? Yet This author says they did the things that the law required. Paul says the law is written on their heart—what kind of law—the principles of life—the law of love, truth, freedom!] Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. {DA 638.2}

God is the Creator and His character is revealed in what He has made. This is exciting, it is beautiful and it makes sense. It gives us resources to understand Scripture accurately—God’s testable design laws—so that we won’t be deceived by myths and superstitious teachings made up by people.

But, this truth in no way undermines our confidence in Scripture. Scripture **is** inspired by God and is trustworthy to lead us into all the truth necessary for salvation. So we never want to undermine the purpose, value or trustworthiness of Scripture. We do want to undermine interpretations that teach Scripture contradicts reality and God’s revelations of Himself in His other threads of evidence.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “The Bible was written as a witness...” Again—I want to validate the Bible as God’s inspired Word, trustworthy and reliable to lead us into all truth necessary for salvation.

I want to validate the Bible as a historical document that does record eye-witness testimony to events of human history and God’s dealing with the sin problem. So, it does stand as a witness to God’s work in history. And we should value that witness, absolutely.

But, I have a question—what is more valuable evidence, the witness testimony to a work, act, or event, or the work, act, or event itself? Another way to ask it is, what gives eye witness testimony greater veracity? Wouldn’t it be direct corroborating evidence?

To the degree we have direct evidence (and we don’t have direct evidence for all the acts of God such as Daniel and the lion’s den and many of the other valuable stories, therefore we are so blessed and thankful for the history of what God has done that is recorded in Scripture), but to the degree we do have direct evidence in nature and life experiences of God’s works, acts, and the events of history, they give greater veracity to the witness of Scripture and increase our confidence in the portions of Scripture with no direct corroborating evidence.

Remember the woman at the well who spoke with Jesus and then went home and told her neighbors about Jesus, we read from John 4:39-42:

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him [Jesus] because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, **“We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”**



What is described here? Her testimony, her witness, led them to seek Jesus for themselves, and they shifted their belief from being based on her witness to their own experience with Jesus. But their own experience with Jesus did not contradict or invalidate her testimony, but it superseded it—it was more powerful, more authoritative than her testimony because it was direct evidence.

Likewise, the testimony of Scripture is powerful—but isn't the testimony of Scripture to lead us to our own personal experience with God, God's methods, God's laws, the outcomes in our own lives of applying God's laws, of trusting Him, and examining nature for ourselves and the evidences God has provided there? And when we do this, do these evidences undermine our confidence in the witness of Scripture? Absolutely NOT! Because all the truth confirms the testimony of Scripture we value it more!

However, let me be very clear, this approach will result in our rejecting the false traditions of religious systems, the made-up theories of people. It will result in cleansing our minds from the lies taught about God in many religious circles and thus the Scripture becomes clearer to us. However, those who hold theology degrees or church leadership positions and still cling to the false theories will accuse us of rejecting the Scripture or undermining the Scripture if we reject their theories. This is exactly how the church leaders treated Jesus and the Apostles and the Reformers.

What I am saying about how we value Scripture and how we present God's kingdom, is how Jesus taught God's truths, by parables and real-life examples demonstrating how God's design laws work in reality, which are the way Scripture is to be understood.

So, our challenge is to continually integrate Scripture with reality, understanding it through the lens of God's design laws, as we do, the Bible becomes more and more accurately understood and we free our minds from the human myths that have crept in over the millennia.

Read the last paragraph, "Some people not only have the Bible translated..." What do you think of this idea we are to "obey what it teaches"?

I suspect many of you would agree—but isn't there a lot of disagreement among good-hearted people as to what the Bible teaches? Is there disagreement as to what applies and what doesn't, what we are to obey and what we are not to obey?

Does it make a difference whether we read Scripture through imposed law versus design law lenses in regard to what and how we are to obey?

What Bible instructions are we to obey? Consider the following Bible instructions—are we to obey these today because they are in the Bible? And, if we are to obey them, then how are we to obey them? And if you decide that some are to be obeyed and some are not, what is the criteria? If we don't obey some of this Bible commands, then does that mean we have supplanted the Bible with human reason? In other words, are we supposed to think about what the Bible commands and reason through its



meaning and whether it applies and how it applies, or are we supposed to simply say, “The Bible said it, I must obey it?”

Here is a partial list of specific Bible commands from God:

- Do not eat or drink blood (Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:10).
- Do not eat leavened bread (bread with yeast) during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:15). This year that was April 8-16, 2020—how many of you ate bread with yeast during those days? Are you obeying the Scripture?
- Do not eat animal fat (Leviticus 3:17). The text actually reads: “This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood.” NIV84—
 - Does this apply or not apply?
 - Do you apply the blood part and reject the fat part?
 - Do you read it literally as a stand-alone text and then conclude no milk, cheese, butter or any product such as cakes, cookies, breads that use anything with animal fat?
 - Or, do you read it in the context of animal sacrifice and apply it only to the internal body fat of the animal and not other animal fats such as milk fat?
- Do not eat pork (Leviticus 11:7–8).
- Do not eat aquatic creatures lacking fins or scales (Deuteronomy 14:9-10).
- Do not eat any meat not killed according to the kosher practice (Deuteronomy 12:21).
- Buy fermented wine with tithe money and rejoice at church (Deuteronomy 14:24-26)
- If male, you must be circumcised (Genesis 17:14).
- Do not worship idols (Exodus 22:20, Leviticus 20:1-5, Deuteronomy 17:2-7).
- Do not blaspheme (Leviticus 24:14-16,23).
- Do not consult a psychic or spiritualist (Leviticus 19:31).
- Do not break the Sabbath (Exodus 31:14, Numbers 15:32-36). But what does that mean? Do we need a list? Is swimming okay? Is riding a horse? What about saddling a horse? What about driving a car, or pushing an elevator button?
- Do not perform any work on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10). Do we need to tie our handkerchief to our clothing lest it be considered work to carry it on Sabbath? What about fireman, should they all refuse to work on Sabbath? What about the people who work for the utility companies, should they all refuse to work on Sabbath?
 - I remember in med school having an orthodox Jewish man on my surgical team. One Friday night we came out of a surgery into the doctor’s lounge and the TV was on. This fellow asked me to change the channel so he could watch a Memphis State basketball game. He asked me to change the channel because it was Sabbath and he wasn’t allowed to change the channel as that would be creating a spark which was starting a fire, which he wasn’t allowed to do on the Sabbath, but he could watch the game if I changed the channel. Are we thankful for all the non-believers who work on Sabbath so that our society won’t fall apart?
 - Do we take Sabbath keeping as a rule prohibiting all work, as something that applies only to the Jews, as a principle that applies to not working for ourselves, but work in service of others is okay?



- One of the positions that we at Come and Reason have taken is that the Sabbath is a sign, an evidence, of God's kingdom and methods of love—of design law government. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. We have asked, if you sin on the Sabbath have you made the Sabbath less holy? If you do righteousness on the Sabbath have you made it more holy? Do our actions in any way impact the holiness of the Sabbath? So are we keeping the Sabbath holy or ourselves holy? And can we keep ourselves holy only one day in seven? So, the Sabbath was made for man—as a sign, flag, reminder, evidence to us that all week we are thinking Remember the Sabbath day—what it reveals—Our God is real, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. He is love and His kingdom is the kingdom of love and operates on design law. So, live in harmony with God's kingdom and principles all week long. We have taught this for some time.
- This week one of our online listeners—and I don't know who it was as this was forwarded to me—sent the following quote from EGW that I had never seen before: ***“All through the week we are to have the Sabbath in mind and be making preparation to keep it according to the commandment. We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a legal matter. We are to understand its spiritual bearing upon all the transactions of life. All who regard the Sabbath as a sign between them and God, showing that He is the God who sanctifies them, will represent the principles of His government. They will bring into daily practice the laws of His kingdom. Daily it will be their prayer that the sanctification of the Sabbath may rest upon them. Every day they will have the companionship of Christ, and will exemplify the perfection of His character. Every day their light will shine forth to others in good works.”*** 6T 353
- You must not ignore the judgment of a judge or a priest (Deuteronomy 17:8-13). When Jesus and the Apostles didn't to follow the judgments to of the priests were they refusing to obey the Bible? Should Martin Luther have listened to the priests of his day? Are we to obey this instruction from the Bible?
- Do not strike your parents (Exodus 21:15).
- Do not curse your parents (Exodus 21:17, Leviticus 20:9).
- Do not be a stubborn, rebellious, profligate, or a drunkard child (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). But, would getting intoxicated on ecstasy or methamphetamine be okay because the Bible doesn't mention them?
- Do not plant more than one kind of seed in a field (Leviticus 19:19).
- Do not wear clothing woven of more than one kind of cloth (Leviticus 19:19).
- Do not cut your hair on the sides of your head or clip the edges of your beard (Leviticus 19:27).
- Do not dress across gender lines (Deuteronomy 22:5).
- Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoos on yourself (Leviticus 19:28).
- You must stand up in the presence of the elderly (Leviticus 19:32)
- Women must not speak in church (1 Corinthians 14:34-35)

This is just a partial list of all the instructions in the Bible—and the lesson says the most important thing is that we obey the Bible. Hmmm....



Does it matter whether we approach the Bible through human imposed law lenses, level 1-4 moral development, or through design law lenses, levels 5-7?

What is true Bible obedience?

In the New Testament the Greek word for obedience, obey, to obey is: **πακοή** [*hupakoe* /hoop·ak·o·ay/

And it has two halves—the first half is where we get hypo, as in hypoglycemia, or hypotension, or hypodermic and means low, or under, and the last half is where we get acoustics and acoustical, and means to listen or hear. And thus the Biblical meaning of obedience is NOT about performance but is about heart attitude toward God. Specifically, Bible obedience **is a humble willingness to listen, learn, comprehend, hear and embrace, with a heart desire to follow and apply what God is teaching.** It is not about performance, but about heart attitude, trusting God, eager to grow, learn, understand and follow God.

This is why Jesus repeatedly said, things like, hearing though they do not hear, or let him who has ears, hear. So people will say things today like, “Do you hear me?” “Are you listening?”

So what does it mean to be obedient in God’s kingdom? It is not primarily about performance, it is about the motivation of the heart, the desire, the eagerness to understand God and follow where God is leading.

Example: You have two sons, one 3 years old the other 14. One day, while weeding in your tomato garden, your 3 y/o comes up behind you and with a big smile pulls up a tomato plant and says, “Help daddy!” Is this child an obedient or disobedient child? Later you send your 14 y/o out to weed in the garden and the 14 y/o only pulls up weeds, no tomatoes are damaged, yet he curses you the entire time because he isn’t able to play on his Gameboy.

Which child is in harmony with the parent? Which child is considered obedient? Is it about performance of the task, or the attitude of the heart? This is Bible obedience, a willingness to listen and follow with love and eagerness to do and go wherever our Heavenly Father leads.

What about all those specific instructions to the Jews? Remember the context—the Jewish people became actors in a drama—a theater, a symbolic acted out play which was to teach the plan of salvation. Many of the instructions were for the purpose of the play, the drama, and only apply to those who are acting on stage—in the play, which is over since Christ fulfilled what it taught.

But, some of the instructions were basic health and sanitation, others were giving guidance to the law of love—such as how people honor their parents.

So, one needs to understand God’s design laws, then examine the instructions and determine which are part of the theater and only apply to the actors on the stage, and which are guidelines to help live in harmony with the principles, but we practice the principles, not apply the rules.



For instance, the guideline: “Whoever strikes his father or his mother must surely be put to death.”

Exodus 21:15 GNT

- Do we read this as a rule or understand the principle?
- Do we apply both parts of this? Do we want to apply the first part that children should not strike their parents? Do we accept the second part and teach that a child who does strike their parent should be put to death?
- Is this an absolute rule—a child should never strike their parent? What about if the parent had a heart attack and the child did a precordial thump, which is a very firm and hard strike to the chest that can restart the heart? Should a child with medical training, EMT, nurse, doctor, whose parent has a heart attack refuse to do the precordial thump because the Bible forbids them to strike their parent? Of course not, this isn’t about the literal act of striking, but about the attitude of rebellion and seeking to injure and harm one’s parents to rebel against their authority, which ultimately damages the character of the child.

MONDAY

The lesson is pointing out that whenever one language is translated into another language individual words can have a variety of potential other words in the new language. Further, one word can have a variety of different subtle nuanced meanings that the new language word may not contain.

Thus, the context of how it is being used informs us of the meaning in that usage.

The lesson points out the Hebrew word *chesed* and its use in various places as *kindness, mercy, love*. They cite 1Kings 3:6, let’s read it from a variety of translations and notice, how the various translators translate this one word differently:

- And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great **mercy**, according as he walked before thee in truth... KJV
- Solomon answered, “You always showed great **love** for my father David, your servant, and he was good, loyal, and honest in his relations with you... GNT
- And Solomon said, “You have shown great and **steadfast love** to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness... NRSV
- Solomon replied, “You demonstrated great **loyalty** to your servant, my father David, as he served you faithfully... NET
- Solomon answered, “You were very **kind** to your servant, my father David. He obeyed you, and he was honest and lived right... NCV

None of these are wrong, they are all legitimate translations but there are subtle differences in how we understand the translations. Consider how we use the English word love, it has many nuanced meanings.

- Love can connote kindness, mercy, compassion, patience, truthfulness—*he told him the truth, that was an act of love*



- Erotic love—romance
- *Phileo* brotherly or familial love
- Agape altruistic love
- Attachment, enjoyment—love for cars or music or activities like flying or fishing etc.
- love has many different potential meanings depending on how it is used

Read last paragraph, “The Hebrew word...” This is a good insight, *shalom* does mean more than peace, it does connote wholeness, completeness, well-being—why? Does the law lens we read through impact our understanding? Does design law enlighten and expand the meaning of *shalom*?

Through design law, how reality works, understanding God’s original design, understanding how sin has damaged God’s design and God’s intention and His plan to cure/heal us, we understand that ***shalom* connotes God’s plan to restore and heal us back to harmony with His design laws for life.** Being out of harmony with God and His design laws causes pain, suffering, dissonance, discord, conflict, tension. The natural result of restoration to God’s design is peace—peace with God, peace with God’s design laws, peace with one’s own heart and mind, peace with life as God designed it, thus the results are wholeness, completeness and well-being!

This is not an arbitrary thing—a magical word or an invocation of divine power, but a statement of reality in God’s kingdom of love! Shalom—restoration to God’s design brings health, wellness, wholeness—we are at peace.

TUESDAY

The lesson points out that another literary device of the Bible is the use of repetition to emphasize things. We, in the English language, emphasize things with bold letters, italics, or exclamation points, but the Bible brings emphasis by repeating itself.

They give the example of Genesis 1:26,27:

Then God said, “Let **us make** man in **our image**, in **our likeness**, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God **created man in his own image**, in **the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.** NIV84

What is emphasized by repetition in these two texts?

- The plurality of God as a unified being
- The creation of humankind by God
- That humanity was created as a unified plurality in God’s image

The Bible also emphasizes the holiness of God, “Holy, Holy, Holy...”



What does “holy” or “the holiness of God” mean? Two general ideas are often associated with holiness—purity and separation—the separation means set apart from the unholy—and both apply if rightly understood.

God is the source of all truth, life, purity, love, goodness and in Him there is no darkness, evil, corruption. Thus, God is infinite goodness, infinite purity, infinite healthiness and all evil and sinfulness is distinctly separate from God. Thus God is holy, holy, holy, pure and perfect in an infinite way and completely separate from all defilement and sin—separate in His being and character.

This idea of God’s holiness has been corrupted in some circles to teach God has a negative and intolerant attitude toward sinners and can’t stand for sin to be in His presence. Ideas such as sin cannot exist in God’s presence led to the idea that Mary was sinless in order for sinless Jesus to be incarnate. This is exactly the opposite of the truth. The truth is that in God’s character there is no sin, He is completely holy, i.e. pure—but sin began in heaven in God’s presence, but in the mind/heart of Lucifer, not IN God.

Further, Jesus “who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God.” 2Cor 5:21. Jesus merged His holy divine self with our sinful humanity in order to purge humanity from sinfulness and make humanity holy—sinless and perfect again.

So, holiness is sinless purity and perfection and God is holy and perfectly pure and sinless and all darkness and sinfulness are separate from God’s nature and character.

But notice how when we use the human law model we corrupt the holiness of God by incorporating death into the view of God taught; this happens when people teach that God, in order to be just, must use His power to inflict death upon sinners. They make God out as the source of death to punish sin. This is not so, God is holy—He is the source of only good, only life, only righteousness, and death is the result of no longer being in unity or at-one-ment with God.

This is why the Bible teaches: The one who sows to the carnal nature from that nature will reap destruction.” Galatians 6:8 Or, “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23) not the punishment of God is death. Note, in this very verse Romans 6:23, the Bible teaches what actually comes from God—“the wages of sin is death, but the **gift of God is eternal life!**”

Christianity has become so infected with the imposed law lie that essentially every Christian denomination teaches that God is the source of inflicted death. How sad—it is no wonder the Lord has not yet returned. God is waiting for a people to stand up and make a right judgment about God—reject the imperial law pagan god from Rome and glorify God by returning to worship Him who made the heaven, earth and fountains of water—our Creator whose laws are design laws.

So, God is truly holy. We can NOT make ourselves holy but are instructed to be holy as God is holy. What does this mean? That we are to cooperate with God to be healed, cured, saved—restored to godliness. We are to have sinfulness cut out of our hearts and minds (metaphorically circumcision of the heart by the Holy Spirit). As we are healed by God we separate from fear, selfishness, sin,



corruption and become partakers of the divine nature thus we become holy—i.e. purified with new hearts and right spirits.

Places and objects used by God to assist in our healing, our purification, are also called holy—such as the ground where Moses talked to God at the bush, or the Sanctuary and its instruments, or the Sabbath day. All holy because they are used by God to assist us in healing, in becoming restored to unity with God i.e. purified from sin.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Words in Scripture...” I like this paragraph because it helps us see that there is not just one context to a passage of Scripture, but multiple contexts to Scripture.

- The immediate context within the sentence
- The context within the paragraph
- The context within the book
- The context within the entirety of Scripture
- The historical context
- The prophetic context
- The Great Controversy context

All of these must be considered to get the most accurate understanding.

The most important context, in my view, is understanding the Great Controversy over God’s character and government, which means that we must understand the truth of God’s design laws, and then we must understand the purpose of Scripture. What is its purpose? To give insight into the truth in this battle between Christ and Satan raging for our hearts and minds.

If we believe the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible writers, then we believe there is harmony among the Bible passages in regard to God’s character, methods, principles, design laws, and the plan of salvation.

So, let’s examine another text in light of these various contexts and see if we gain any insights into potential meaning. As we look at the following passage, it is okay if you ultimately come to a different conclusion than I have, but I want you to consider, is your conclusion most consistent with God’s character, methods, principles, or is it based on long held assumptions?

Let’s look at Psalms 139:13-16:

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven



together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. NIV84

Is this translation the most accurate, or has this translation introduced ideas that are not actually intended by the author and even introduce false ideas into our understanding about God and led to many bad theologies?

If we take this translation as it reads, then we conclude that God is the one who directly acts to create each individual human being inside their mother's womb. But then, it really wasn't in the womb, it was in the depths of the earth—oh but we are not to take the depths of the earth literally—but we are to take the first part just as it reads?

Well, let's consider that we are to take it as many teach that God literally knits us together in our mother's womb. If this is true, that God knits each of us together individually in our mother's womb, then God is responsible for birth defects. If a child has spinal bifida well, God must have had a bad knitting day. If this is the correct rendering, then God's divine creative power must be less powerful than a bottle of vodka since so many fetal alcohol children are born. Worse, since we are born in sin and conceived in iniquity, if this rendering is literally true that God is forming each of us directly with His divine power then God is creating sinful, defective humans—which is absolutely not true.

The Bible truth is that God was directly involved in the formation of only three human lives: Adam, Eve and the incarnation of Jesus. And all three of them, when God acted, were sinless. Jesus stayed that way, Adam and Eve did not.

But when God created Adam and Eve He gave them a godlike ability, the ability to pro-create beings in their image. After Adam and Eve sinned they changed themselves and became sinful. **But they still had the ability of pro-creation** and thus could create beings in their image—and their image was now corrupted with sin. This is why we are born in sin and conceived in iniquity—Ps 51:5

God does not control the use of the abilities He gives us. We can use them as God designed, or we can abuse those abilities. When people have children it is by the choice of those individuals to use the pro-creative abilities God has given them. When a man abuses the ability and rapes a woman and she becomes pregnant, this is not an act of God. The woman is not to think, "Well God did this to me." Such an act is a human being abusing an ability, not God acting.

So, back to our passage,

The Hebrew word translated in many Bible versions as "formed" or "made" is קנה [qanah], and according to the New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries is translated most commonly as "bought," "buy," "purchased," and also as "redeemed." So formed is more accurately translated as "redeemed."

The Hebrew word translated as "inmost being" is כליה [kilyah /kil·yaw/] means "seat of emotions or affections."



The Hebrew word translated as "knit me together" according to the Enhanced Strong's Lexicon is סִדַּךְ, סָכַךְ, שָׁכַךְ [cakak, sakak /saw·kak/] v. and translates as "cover" 15 times, "covering" twice, "defence" once, "defendest" once, "hedge in" once, "join together" once, "set" once, and "shut up" once.

Contrary to popular translations, the context of this verse is not about physical embryological development, or God using power to physically create a new human life, but is about the plan of salvation. The Psalmist in Psalms 51:5 describes that he was "born in sin, conceived in iniquity" and here acknowledges that despite his sinful origins, God was already there acting to redeem him and cleanse him from sinfulness.

So, from *The Remedy Psalms*

For you have redeemed my heart and mind; you covered me with grace from the moment I was conceived in my mother's womb. I praise you because you are awesome; wonderful and marvelous are all your works, and I know this very well. You know my entire being—how I was built from your secret code, constructed from the elements of the earth. You saw me before I was born; my entire life was recorded in your book of foreknowledge before one day came to be.

This is how the Great Controversy context, with understanding design law, leads to accurate understanding of the Scripture.

In the later paragraphs the lesson points out that "Adam" can refer to "humanity," the first male person "Adam," or the "ground" from which God created Adam the first person. Thus, the context determines which is being referred to, the ground, the first male person, or the species human.

Another view, is that the term Adam is used in this way to help us understand that humanity is a species created from this earth and a male is incomplete, and the human being (man-Adam) was only completed when the female was created and joined the male, that was when a full human was formed. The two shall become one, as this is God's design for the two united as one are the fulfillment of His design and reflect the image of God.

THURSDAY

What is the primary purpose of Scripture?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "In His word..." The standard of character, no doubt, then what happened to the Pharisees who crucified Christ? Did they not believe in the sacredness of Scripture? Did they have a



different Scripture than what God intended? Did they not read and study the Scripture? Did they not memorize it?

Then what happened? How can it be that people can study the Scripture and still experience deformed character such that they end up crucifying Christ?

Because they accept a false premise about God's law and thus everything read is warped to support Satan's lie about God and His character and methods.

Only when we come back to design law do we understand reality correctly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Power of Love Training and Equipping Course is now available online at comeandreason.com All presentations are available video and also in MP3, the power point slides are available with and without the Come and Reason Branding logos and the Syllabus, with its reference guide and study questions is available for download. We encourage you to use this material in small group Bible studies or use the slides and present the series at your church.

September 17-19 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC National Conference in Dallas, TX

October 3, 2020: Come and Reason will have a one day seminar in Chattanooga TN on Healing the Mind, Recovering from Sexual Abuse, the Impact of Digital Media on Kids and more. Details coming soon.

October 9-10, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakewood SDA church in Lakewood OH

November 6-7, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at an AACC River Conference at Plano, TX. More info at <http://theriverconference.com/>