

*In
Search
of*

Truth and Right

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)

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Anachronism

By Stephen Harper

This past week, I got to witness a large-scale display of anachronous events near the town of Florence as the Society for Creative Anachronism [SCA] put on Estrella War XXIII. [There's humor in that name if you do a little research.] We went down with several other families from my hometown of Surprise to experience life as it was like in medieval times, with the foods, clothing, housing, weapons, and entertainment of those times on display. We got to sit on the sidelines of the 'battlefield' and watch men and women dressed in period battle dress go at each other with large weapons and defend themselves with large shields or their own large weapons. I have to tell you that they didn't look like they were holding back as they whacked each other over the head or swung their maces, clubs, poles, and swords, and I saw that quite a few were knocked down in the heat of the 'battle' that raged on the prescribed 'battlefield.' I, for one, was glad they kept the 'battle' on the 'battlefield' and did not push any further into the crowd of spectators where I sat!

TIMES OF SERVICES	
SUNDAY	
Bible Classes*	10:00 AM
AM Worship	10:45 AM
PM Worship	6:30 PM
WEDNESDAY	
Bible Classes*	7:00 PM
(* Bible Classes for All Ages)	

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The SCA is an organization that puts on events like this, where they stage 'battles' of past history for the public to see what life was like in the past. They have staged Civil War re-enactments, Revolutionary War re-enactments, and have several events across the country where they simply have large-scale 'colonies' of individuals dressed in the garb of certain eras, living in the housing of that specific era and doing things in the way things were done in that era so that others may see what life was like 'way back when.' It is a good way for those of us today to get some idea of what life was like in ages gone by - and to appreciate the many luxuries of life that we enjoy today that simply did not exist then. [Thankfully, we got to ride to the event in air-conditioned automobiles and

not horse-drawn carts!]

All of these events and the various clothing, housing, foods, and weapons on display are purposefully anachronistic; that is, they are things or persons that are not in the correct historical or chronological time. As soon as you step into view of the location where these events are held, you know you are figuratively stepping back in time because the things and people you see plainly look out of place. You just don't see people walking around in full battle armor with double-bladed axes just every day, but in the context of the event, it is to be expected. We who visited their medieval village were the ones who looked out of place, with sneakers, sunglasses, and water bottles!

When it comes to spiritual matters, there are not a few religious 'scholars' and leaders who perceive the Bible as somewhat of an anachronism - a book that may have been correct and useful in times past, but out of place and irrelevant for modern society. Some have not been so bold as to say it is irrelevant, but they effectively render it so when they write creeds, convene for annual conventions, and simply dismiss clear Bible teachings in favor of public opinion and societal mores. When any of this is upheld above the Word of God [that is, the Bible], then we have essentially relegated the Bible to the museums of past history and declared it ineffective and inappropriate for life in today's world.

But is that the case? Is it true that the Bible is a relic of times past and not useful or relevant to today's world? Is it merely a book 'out of time' and was it meant only for the individuals of times past? What does the Bible say about itself?

First, let us consider the argument that the Bible is not meant for our guide today. If that argument is true, then I must ask, "For what age was it meant to be applicable? And when did it cease being relevant and authoritative?" If this argument were true, then there must be something within the written Word of God [the Bible] that would indicate its 'shelf life' [so to speak] - how long it would be in effect as God's Law for mankind. Yet where within God's Word do we find anything that indicates these were words written for only one specific period of time, or that they would not be applicable after a certain period of time? Where does it say that its laws, rules, principles, and examples were meant to be used only for a certain length of time? And what does it say about the standard that would replace it after its effectiveness had reached its end? What should we follow now?

Don't be fooled by self-proclaimed 'scholars' who dismiss the Bible as irrelevant or outdated. For every generation of man that has come and gone since the last inspired words were written, there have been men who were ready to dismiss it as irrelevant, illegitimate, or ineffective; their arguments are not new and they are not true. If the argument were true, then wouldn't they have already told us when it ceased being relevant and authoritative? Did it cease being relevant and authoritative after the first century? After the Middle Ages? After the 1800s? When? And how could this be proven? You see, when men say the Bible is not relevant to 'today's society,' what they are really saying is that they don't believe the Bible is relevant or authoritative to them as an individual. What they mean is, "The Bible is meaningless to me." But haven't all men who rebelled against God's Word said this in their own time? I am quite sure that men who lived in the second century were denigrating the power and authority of

God's written Word even then, and such has been true of most every generation since that time. The argument is old and tired, yet it remains as merely a weak attempt to escape one's own responsibility to it - nothing more.

God's written Word tells us, *"Continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Tim. 3:14-17). If we believe God's Word was ever relevant and authoritative, then we must believe those words are still true. And if we believe them true, then we must believe they are still able to make us wise for salvation, are still profitable for all men of all time for these things, and that by those inspired words a man of God may be still made complete - without need of any further writings - and that he would certainly be incomplete without them.

Many men have argued for the irrelevance of the Bible, but it is an argument often made without having investigated the written Word itself. It is most often merely a statement that indicates an unwillingness to either [1] admit God's existence or [2] abide by His Word - or both. Those who seek to live the worldly life will, of course, be unwilling to accept the authoritative Word of God because it interferes with their desire. When their minds are set on the fleshly pursuits, of course they will be at enmity with God (Rom. 8:7) and of course they will despise anyone who says otherwise.

No, the Bible is not - as some would have us believe - some anachronism. It is not merely a book written long ago but which is now out of place in today's society. It is a book that reveals God's will to man that we may know we are sinners, that we may know God still loves us, and that we may know there is a means of being made right again in the sight of God. But those same words teach us that we must become a new creation in Christ for that to happen. It teaches us that we must give up ungodliness and the worldly lusts (Titus 2:11-12) that we might become His children.

It is true that when we follow God's Word, we will seem out of place in this world, but that is because we are becoming more like Christ! When the world derides God's Word and God's people, don't be surprised; that is how it has always been.