

6.22.20 - How to Tell Truth from Error

So often we are confronted by two positions that are complete opposites where both can not be true. If you eat fat you will get fat. If you eat fat you will lose weight. Opposing political candidates claim the same bad policies for their opponent and the same good policies for themselves. Many Christians claim that the Bible teaches that nakedness is a sin using a few verses mis-defined or taken out of context while others claim that non-sexual nakedness is not a sin. Some people think the universe is the result of a big bang and random events over billions of years. Others say that God created everything in six, 24-hour days about 6000 years ago. Some people say that if you do good works while here in this life you will earn a blissful eternity in Heaven, while others say that you cannot earn a blissful eternity in Heaven, that it is a gift from God paid for with Jesus' death on the cross and all you need to do is ask for God's forgiveness and accept His gift. We think you will agree that in most of these cases you do not want to follow error. As you would expect, we are going to deal with nakedness and the Bible, but we might touch on a couple of the other truths as well.

Since there is so much deceit in the world and probably was since the time when Satan deceived Eve, we will always need to be open to being deceived even when we did all the things to find truth. If our position could be wrong, we need to consider the truthfulness of the contrary view. Emotion is not a good test for truth. "I just feel it has to be true" does not equal a proper litmus test. Intolerance is a better test--error can not tolerate truth, but truth can tolerate error. Yes, Jesus was not very tolerant of the money changers in the temple, but that was the will of His Father since He was without sin. We are talking of intolerance from human motives. Trying to intimidate the person who holds a certain view is an indication that the intimidator has little or no grounds for his belief i.e. he is wrong, maybe unknowingly, but wrong none the less. There are exceptions to all these tests, but they can be a help. Now we are going to look at the conflicting views of nakedness and the Bible.

God created us naked and stated that His whole creation was very good including the naked people. That was all before the first sin. How did the fall of Adam and Eve change God's view of the naked body? He made coats for them you say. Does that mean that God wanted people clothed because they sinned? Let's consider that possibility in some detail.

There is lots of evidence that the climate was tropical. Adam and Eve did not get cold and make clothing before the fall means it was warm or hot. The large coal and oil deposits would indicate there was lots of vegetation and animals on the earth at the time of the flood suggesting good growing conditions i.e. tropical climate. Coats as we know them would have been very uncomfortable in such a climate.

We have no definite idea what the garments God made looked like. If Adam or one of his descendants wrote the account of the beginning of time and Moses translated it or if God gave the account directly to Moses, Moses had to pick a Hebrew word that best described the garment at that time. The KJV translators did the same thing for their time based on Moses' choice of a word. A color photo of Adam and Eve in their new garments from God would clear up the word choice confusion. Instead, we didn't even get a description let alone a drawing to help visualize the garment, but what we refer to as a "coat" today does not seem likely given the circumstances of the climate.

If God wanted His image in their bodies covered because Adam and Eve had sinned, this would seem to be the place to give instructions on what needed to now be covered and when. Without these instructions we only know that God made some kind of a garment of animal skins. At this point we are guessing/interpreting what God made and how He wanted it used through time. It is not clear from this account that God wants the body covered because of the first sin. We could point out that the body did the chewing and digesting of the fruit as it did everything eaten before and after the fall. The body followed the commands of the mind

which was covered before and after the fall. It was the mind that chose to go against God's command.

We will try the story of Noah's drunkenness. Remember the climate before the flood was tropical and Adam and all his descendants had to gather their food by the sweat of their brow. The natural solution to sweating is removing clothing so the body cools better. There is a high probability that Noah and his sons worked on the ark naked. If you study the Hebrew words translated to some form of naked, you will learn that the one used in this story usually involves sexual activities. The real cause of the curse was not nakedness, but the sexual activity. Yes, there is some interpretation used in coming to that conclusion, but there is some interpretation used to claim that all nakedness is cursed. For this interpretation an activity involving nakedness and sexual activity is used to condemn all nakedness.

Next, we look at the nakedness mentioned in Lev 18. If you are reading the chapter and just skimming quickly through the passage, it seems to tell you that you should not see any close relatives naked. You remember the passage about Canaan and Noah and you assume that you got the right message from the passage. When we look up the Hebrew word used in this passage in Strong's concordance to see what it means and how it is translated in other verses, we find that it is the same Hebrew word used in the passage on Noah's drunkenness. Verses 20 and 22 should make it clear that to "uncover the nakedness of" is properly defined as "to have sex with." In other words, the passage is teaching to not have sex with any close relatives or relatives related by marriage. The passage then goes on to teach not to have sex with men if you're a man and not to have sex with an animal. Does anyone really believe that the passage is saying not to see your pet naked? It is not good hermeneutics to conclude that all nakedness is wrong based on a passage teaching not to have sex outside of marriage.

Going to another story involving nakedness. King Saul was trying to stop God from putting David on the throne after Saul was removed by

God i.e. he was trying to murder David. Saul had learned that David was with Samuel and the prophets. He sent men to capture David and bring him to the King three times and the men joined the prophets instead of returning. Saul could not see the Hand of God in this, so he went himself. When he got there, he prophesied like the men he had sent earlier. It says in **1 Samuel 19:24** that Saul removed his clothing also. It seems clear from the account that God through the influence of the Holy Spirit caused Saul to remove his clothing and maybe even the men that Saul had sent for David. The question that the people asked was not, "Why is the King naked?", but rather "Is Saul becoming a prophet?" This implies that nakedness was not unusual for the prophets, the people, and maybe even the king. However, the question implies it was unusual for King Saul to prophesy. If Saul was influenced by God to join the prophets and remove his clothing, then the only conclusion that one can draw is that public nakedness is not a sin. A God who does not even look on sin will not cause someone to sin!

The textile interpretation on this story suggests that King Saul was still wearing his under garments. That conclusion has two problems to overcome: the cost of clothing and the Hebrew word used. Clothing was made with only the simplest equipment like a hand loom and maybe a spinning wheel. The labor to make clothing this way was costly because of the large number of hours needed and the skill required. This would limit the amount of clothing that most people could afford. Yes, the king could take money from the people to have all the clothing he wanted. History does not seem to suggest undergarments until Roman times. King Saul was many centuries before the Romans. The Hebrew word used here is the same exact word that was used to describe Adam and Eve's nakedness before the fall and also to describe the condition of newborn babies. Now, does anyone here actually believe that God created Adam and Eve with undergarments on or that newborns are born with underwear on? No, we don't either...so why the need to conclude that King Saul was wearing his underwear knowing that the same Hebrew word was used in all three accounts? The only reason to conclude that would be to back up their agenda, rather than seek for

truth. We can safely conclude however, that if God through the Holy Spirit influenced King Saul to strip naked, then God is not opposed to naked people including kings.

Isaiah 20 involves nakedness commanded by God. The clothing and Hebrew word issue mentioned above apply to this chapter also. The textile position is the same also. Now add to the account that God even included “barefoot” to the description of Isaiah’s nakedness and it would be a stretch to think that he had under garments on, but had to remove his shoes. With a command from God to a man of God, it is hard to claim that God is opposed to non-sexual social nakedness.

We need to include one incident from the New Testament to clear up any doubt that you may still have about the naked truth in the Bible. In John 21:7 we have the disciples fishing all night with nothing to show for their efforts. After instructions from a man on shore to cast the net on the right side and the net was filled to capacity, John identified the man as Jesus to Peter. The verse says that Peter was naked and history suggests this is how they fished at this time. We can safely assume that all of them were naked since they were all working on the boat fishing. Peter took his garment with him as you would expect. The important part of the story is what follows. They eat breakfast with Jesus on shore and there is nothing recorded that Jesus even made a comment about their nakedness. This is another time that God and nakedness are together and no comment or instructions about nakedness being a sin.

It is our opinion that if nakedness were a sin, then these two events...Adam and Eve’s sin and here with Peter fishing would be the perfect time for God in His Word to specifically teach the rest of us the sin of nakedness and when and to what degree we need to cover. Two opportunities, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament to show us that our bodies created in His image were now somehow shameful and needed covered. However, we do not find this to be the case...instead we find many examples in scripture that illustrate the commonplace of nakedness, the acceptance of it by our Savior and even

nakedness under the influence of the Holy Spirit and at the command of God.

If you have been following our articles, you probably realize by now that this is mostly review with a slightly different heading. What needs to be noted is the various areas to be considered. Is the word choice by the translators an obvious choice i.e. the Hebrew or Greek word is usually translated the same way? Or would the word chosen be the best available i.e. it is often translated to a different English word. Does the Hebrew or Greek word include information not included in the English word, like the three Greek words for love. Especially with the KJV, has the meaning of the English word changed over the years and does that meaning change need to be considered.

The environment needs to be considered. Water is much more precious in a hot dry area than it is in a wet tropical area where it can be a liability. Temporary dwellings would be needed in an area that could not support year-round residences. Tropical climates would delay the development of clothing. No urgent need for protection from the cold. The social-economic conditions should also be considered. Are the people just able to survive or do they have wealth and free-time for non-economic activities? Is the account/event/parable about the wealthy and the ruling class or about the common worker class. What technology is available. Do they have iron tools or are they still working with brass or stone tools? How do the costs of food, clothing, and shelter compare to their income? What was the status of women in the society, were they property like a slave or did they have a voice in civil affairs?

None of us are likely to take the time to study the whole Bible in detail for all of these areas. You will be confronted by enough conflicts of interpretation in life to keep you studying. You should check what the scholars say about the subject, both those who agree with what you think is right and those who do not and then when you've read the scholars go back to the Bible and ultimately trust it. Do your own study with prayer

for guidance...seek the truth, you may find that you've uncovered a lie from Satan that has been hidden from the "scholars."

The final question to ask yourself in relation to nakedness is...did the body change since God created it, is it now not made in His image, is it now somehow shameful or is Satan the one trying to get people to cover the very image and likeness of God and has he done a great job at deceiving the masses?