

Agents for the One True God
Selected Scriptures

Introduction

I received the following from a friend.

Time is like a river. You cannot touch the water twice because the flow that has passed will never pass again. Enjoy every moment of life. As a bagpiper, I play many gigs. Recently I was asked by a funeral director to play at a graveside service for a homeless man. He had no family or friends, so the service was to be at a pauper's cemetery in the Nova Scotia back country.

As I was not familiar with the backwoods, I got lost and, being a typical man, I didn't stop for directions. I finally arrived an hour late and saw the funeral guy had evidently gone and the hearse was nowhere in sight. There were only the diggers and crew left and they were eating lunch. I felt badly and apologized to the men for being late.

I went to the side of the grave and looked down and the vault lid was already in place. I didn't know what else to do, so I started to play.

The workers put down their lunches and began to gather around. I played out my heart and soul for this man with no family and friends. I played like I've never played before for this homeless man. And as I played "Amazing Grace", the workers began to weep. They wept, I wept, we all wept together.

When I finished, I packed up my bagpipes and started for my car. Though my head was hung low, my heart was full. As I opened the door to my car, I heard one of the workers say, "I've never seen anything like that before, and I've been putting in septic tanks for twenty years."

Apparently, I'm still lost . . . it's a man thing.

Well, perhaps it is a man thing to not ask for directions, but it is a human thing to be lost. It would be fair to say that one of the things we do as Christians is try to get people to understand that they are lost so that we can show them the way to God. Our Vacation Bible School sought to do that this year. The program was entitled *International Spy Academy* and was developed by *Answers in Genesis*. Its theme was being agents for the One True God. It was our goal to teach the children both the qualities they would need to be good agents as well as some of the clues that reveal to us the identity of the One True God so that can we tell others about Him.

While Paul did not use the word "agent" or talk about being a "spy" for Jesus, he did talk about the same concept in 2 Corinthians 5:17–21 ¹⁷ *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.* ¹⁸ *Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,* ¹⁹ *namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.* ²⁰ *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.* ²¹ *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

A Christian is a new creation in Jesus Christ. He turns away from his past life of sin and selfishness to embrace a new life of righteousness and serving the Lord. Having been forgiven of his sins and reconciled to God because of faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ who paid the penalty of sin and then rose from the dead, the Christian desires to represent God and bring others to faith in Jesus. The Christian has come to know the truth that sets him free from his sin and so he desires to tell these truths to others.

Beware of Counterfeits

However, telling others the truth is not as easy as it would seem because there are so many counterfeits that confuse people including Christians. There is the real deal, but there are also many fakes. Some are very obvious, but others are very subtle and easy to miss.

We used money as a way to explain this concept to the children. There is real money which has many distinguishing characteristics, but there is also phoney money. Some fake money is obvious and some are very clever counterfeits. They may look very much like the real thing, but they are not, and trying to use them as legal tender can cause you to be put in jail.

The same is true in the spiritual realm. There is the truth and then there is everything else. False religions and philosophies are generally more easily identified because the god, gods or ideas they present are so different from and contrary to the One True God. Paganism and the Eastern Religions have multiple gods. Hinduism has millions and has no problem accepting more as long as there is no exclusion of the other gods they worship. Islam comes closer by having only one god, but Allah is very different from the God described in the Bible. Allah changes his mind so often that they have the doctrine of abrogation in which whatever Allah has declared most recently in time is what is to be believed and obeyed. The true God is immutable. He does not change. Numbers 23:19, *“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”* Hebrews 13:8, *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

Then there are the many cults that claim to be Christian. They may seem closer to the truth because they use the name of Jesus, but they have a different Jesus. The Jesus of the Mormons is the son of Elohim and the brother of Lucifer. The Jesus of the Jehovah Witnesses is a lesser god and not God almighty as declared in Isaiah 9:6 and multiple times in Revelation. You must be able to distinguish between the true God and the many false gods and perverse ideas about the true God. You have to be able to identify the true God.

The Fingerprints of God

We used fingerprints as a way to help the children understand that each of them have characteristics that identify them as unique individuals. Using that as an analogy, we then pointed out some of the attributes and characteristics about God that identify Him as being unique. There is only One True God as declared in the theme verse for Vacation Bible School. Isaiah 45:5–6, ⁵ *“I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; ⁶ That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other*

There are many attributes of God that identify Him as being unique and that there is nothing else like Him including these:

1) God is Eternal - He is infinite in time. Psalm 90:2, *Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

2) God is Omniscient - He is infinite in knowledge and wisdom. Psalm 147:4–5 - ⁴ *He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. ⁵ Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.*

3) God is Omnipresence - He is infinite in space. Psalm 139:7–12 - ⁷ *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. ⁹ If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, ¹⁰ Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. ¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night,” ¹² Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.*

4) God is Omnipotent - He is infinite in power. Jeremiah 32:17 - *'Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You*

5) God is Immutable - He never changes as already mentioned.

6) God is Self-existent - He is without beginning or cause. Exodus 3:14 - *God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'* "

7) God is Self-sufficient - He is without need of anything. John 5:26 - *"For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;*

8) God is Creator - He is the origin of all things. Colossians 1:16-17 - *For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together*

I spent a lot of time emphasizing that God is our creator because our society has many lies that it repeats often that seek to deny or diminish this attribute of God. The term "mother nature" and "father time" are commonly used even among Christians. But nature is not your mother and time is not your father. God is your creator.

Nature cannot be your mother because it cannot produce life for life only comes from life. I already pointed out that God is self-existent and has life in Himself. He alone is the source of life. Nehemiah 9:6 - *"You alone are the Lord. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before You."*

Modern philosophers who claim to be scientists would have you believe that life arose by chance chemical reactions over eons of time. But true science declares the opposite. The many experiments of Dr. Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) proved over and over again that spontaneous generation is a myth, and so far man has still never been able to make inanimate objects alive despite efforts to do so.

Time cannot be your father for three reasons. 1) Time itself cannot produce anything. It only serves as a marker for the periods in which change occurs. 2) Even simple physics and probability demonstrate that there could never be enough time for random chemical reactions to produce life. Life is too complex. 3) Despite the claims, there has not been enough time to produce what is claimed even if chemistry worked according to philosophy instead of physics. The Earth is not very old. According to Biblical Chronology, it is only a little over 6,000 years old. According to numerous Geo-Chronometers which limit the age of the earth due to the properties of physics, the earth must be in the thousands of years, not billions or even millions. The decay of Earth's rotational speed < 500,000. Efflux of Helium into the atmosphere < 175,000. Oil gushers < 11,000. Decay of Earth's magnetic field < 10,000.

Genesis 1 spells out the order of creation very clearly and it cannot be reconciled with any form of evolution.

Day 1 - Creation of the heavens, earth, light and separation of light from darkness. A day is defined as both the period of light and the sequence of dark and light - evening and morning, one day.

Day 2 - Separation of the waters above from the waters below to form the heavens (atmosphere) and the ocean.

Day 3a - Gathering the waters into one place so that dry land appears.

Day 3b - All the plants are created

Day 4 - Creation of the sun, moon and stars. Please note that this is after the creation of light and the creation of the plants

Day 5 - Creation of all the creatures in the sea and the creatures that fly in the sky.

Day 6 - The creation of all the land animals - cattle, creeping things and beasts, and then finally, man. Please note that birds were created before dinosaurs. Chickens came before Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Day 7 - God declared everything to be very good at the end of day 6. He then rested on day 7.

The Message from God

In the Garden of Eden there was peace, harmony and health. There was no disease, death or decay. What happened to that paradise? Why is our world so radically different?

God told Adam & Eve that they could eat from any tree in the garden of Eden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil lest they die. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought corruption to the world. Not only were they and their descendants - us - cursed, but so was the world so that death, disease and decay entered. The animals only ate plants at the beginning, but now some would eat meat. By the way, the type of teeth do not tell you what an animal eats. You must watch its behavior to know that. Even in modern times there are many animals that have very sharp teeth that are omnivorous or eat only fruit or plants.

Death entered the world of mankind. Adam and Eve were forced to leave the garden of Eden. Their son, Cain, murdered his brother, Abel. Though Genesis 5 records that the first nine generations of humans lived an incredible average of 907 years, every single one of them died.

By the time of Noah, man had become so wicked that *“every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Genesis 6:5). Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord so God told him to build an ark in which he and his family and a pair of each kind of air breathing land animal could survive the flood that God was going to use to destroy the world. Noah was obedient and built the ark though it took him many years. The ark was at least 438 feet long, 72 feet wide and 43.8 feet high with 57,553 sq ft of floor space and a volume of 1,400,000 cubic feet and may have been up to 37% larger. It was built to withstand the terrible storms that were about to come.

Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5) and would have warned the people about the judgment to come, but in the end, only Noah and his wife, their three sons and daughter-in-laws entered the ark along with all the animals God had brought to them. They entered seven days before the flood began, then the Lord shut the door. It was now too late for everyone outside the ark. God’s judgment began as it started to rain for the first time. Prior to this the land was watered by springs and mist (Genesis 5:6). The fountains of the deep opened up and water spewed forth in geysers we can hardly even imagine. The waters rose until they were 22 feet above the tallest mountain and it stayed that way for 150 days before beginning to recede. What was outside the ark perished. Genesis 7:23 records *“Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.”* Those inside the ark were sheltered from the flood and provided with food and water.

The waters receded until the mountain tops became visible on the 224th day. Noah sent out a raven and then a dove on three occasions before opening the ark on the 314th day, but it is still another 68 days before they can leave the ark. After a year and 17 days, the animals depart. Noah offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. The world that then was had perished, but Noah and his family and a pair of each animal had been saved to repopulate the Earth. God gave the rainbow as a sign that He would never destroy the earth by a flood again.

What happened after the flood? It did not take long for man to return to his evil ways. God commanded Noah and his sons to *“be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth”* (Genesis 9:1), but their descendants did not do that. Instead they settled on a plain in the land of Shinar and began to build a city and a tower whose top was to reach heaven. God forced them to scatter over the earth by confusing their languages. You cannot work in harmony when you cannot understand one another. Genesis 10 records where the descendants of the sons of Noah moved.

Japheth’s descendants went north into what is now Turkey and Russia and then west throughout Europe. They also went east into India and Asia, then south into Indonesia, Australia and across the Pacific. They also had continued east from China into North America and then down to South America.

Ham's descendants went west into Canaan and south throughout Africa. Some also went east along the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. Shem's descendants spread into the areas of what is now Syria, Iraq, Iran and the Arabian peninsula, and also east into western India and west into the western Turkey.

This scattering of people into isolated populations according to language also explains the diversity we now see in humans in both outward appearance and culture. Adam and Eve had all the genetic information that has been passed down to mankind. Noah's three sons and their wives would have had a different mixture and therefore more limited amount of information to pass down their descendants. This would be true of each isolated population. It is the diversity of genetic information that allows for the diversity in physical expression - what people look like. For example, skin color is determined by a number of genes that depending on the particular mixture can result in skin tones ranging from very light to very dark. No one is actually white or black. Everyone is just some shade of brown. In an isolated population, the mixture of genes becomes limited to the point of being rare or non-existent. An individual family can show surprising diversity at times, but some things become impossible. For example, Diane and I both have blue eyes. It was impossible for us to have children with brown eyes because neither of us has the genetic information for dark eyes.

The isolated populations also explain the development of the various cultures and religions. As people became more distant in both time and space from the events of the past, history would degenerate into stories and myths. There are similar creation stories and myths of a world-wide flood around the world, but they are distortions of the truth. The knowledge of the true God, what He had done and what He commanded was distorted or forgotten often on purpose by those that did not want to submit to the true God. Romans 1:18 tells us that people purposely suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Some changed the idea of God and what he required into something they could handle. Others found that religion could be a way to control people and get them to do what they wanted. Still others made up stories to explain what they did not understand. This still occurs today as evidence by so many particular religions and philosophies created in the last few hundred years such as Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology, The Unification Church (Moonies), The Word-Faith movement (Health, Wealth & Prosperity preachers), the new Atheism, and secular humanism which has its roots in the philosophy of biological evolution.

Populations were isolated and scattered, but the truth was not lost. God has always had a remnant who have followed Him. Adam was given a promise that there would be a future redeemer who would "crush the serpent's head." This truth and hope of a future Messiah was passed down through Seth to Enoch to Noah to Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob. It was finally fulfilled in Jesus Christ who is God in human flesh, born of the virgin Mary, who lived a sinless life, then willingly died as the substitute sacrifice for man's sin which provided the judicial basis for God to remain holy and still offer to forgive those who place their faith in Jesus. Jesus then rose from the dead proving His deity and promise of eternal life to those who believe in Him is true. He is now ascended to heaven where He intercedes for His disciples. One day in the future He will return to bring His followers to heaven where He has prepared a place for them to be with Him for eternity.

The return of Jesus is the hope of the Christian, but it is condemnation of the unbeliever, for when Jesus returns it will also to bring God's judgment upon all those who do not know God or obey His gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Just as the world at that time was destroyed by the flood, so the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men (2 Peter 3:5-7). And just as those in the ark were brought safely through the flood, so those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ will be secure in His hands and brought safely to heaven. Those who reject the gospel through disbelief or continuing to try to somehow earn the favor of God by their own efforts of self-righteousness will be judged according to their works and condemned to the eternal lake of fire (Revelation 20).

The Responsibility Entrusted to Us

As I pointed out from 2 Corinthians 5:17–21 at the beginning of this sermon, God has given a responsibility to those who are in Christ to be His ambassadors. We are to go out and proclaim the gospel begging people to be reconciled to God through Jesus who though sinless took on the full penalty of their sin so that they can be forgiven through Him. Our Vacation Bible School was one effort in this endeavor, but it is a responsibility that belongs to every believer.

If you are intimidated to witness or just are not sure what to do, we have periodic evangelism classes to teach you, and we go out weekly so we can show you how to communicate new life in Christ to others. Talk with myself, Dominic or anyone on our Outreach Committee.

Sermon Notes: Agents for the One True God - VBS 2014
July 20, 2014 - Selected Scriptures

Introduction

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 _____

Beware of Counterfeits

Learn to discern truth from fakes _____

False Religions: _____

Cults: _____

The Fingerprints of God

Isaiah 45:5-6 _____

- 1) God is Eternal - He is infinite in _____. Psalm 90:2
- 2) God is Omniscient - He is infinite in _____ and wisdom. Psalm 147:4-5
- 3) God is Omnipresence - He is infinite in _____. Psalm 139:7-12
- 4) God is Omnipotent - He is infinite in _____. Jeremiah 32:17
- 5) God is immutable - He does not _____. Numbers 23:19; Hebrews 13:8
- 6) God is self-existent - He is without _____ or cause. Exodus 3:14
- 7) God is Self-sufficient - He is without _____ of anything. John 5:26
- 8) God is Creator - He is the _____ of all things. Colossians 1:16-17

Nature cannot be your mother for God alone is the _____ of life - Nehemiah 9:6

Dr. Louis Pasteur proved Spontaneous Generation to be _____ in the 1800's

Time is not your father for it _____ anything but only mark periods of change
_____ & probability show there could never be enough time for random chemical reactions to produce life

There has not been _____ time even if chemistry worked according to philosophy instead of physics

The earth is about 6,000 years by Biblical Chronology and cannot be more than _____ by physics

Day 1 - Creation of the heavens, earth, _____ and separation of light from darkness.

Day 2 - _____ of the waters above from the waters above to form the heavens (atmosphere) & ocean

Day 3 - Gathered water into the seas allowing dry land to appear, created all the _____

Day 4 - Creation of the _____, moon and stars

Day 5 - Creation of all _____ creatures and animals that _____ in the sky

Day 6 - Creation of _____ animals and man - it was very good

Day 7 - God rested

The sin of Adam & Eve brought _____ to themselves and the world

Men lived to be over 900 years old, but they still _____ (Genesis 5)

Man became so evil that God sent a _____ to destroy the world - but He told Noah to build an ark

Noah, a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5), _____ the people, but only he and his family got in the ark
The sources of water for the flood were the _____ of the deep and the floodgates of the sky
Every mountain was covered by at least _____ and prevailed for 150 days
All air breathing land animals outside the ark _____ - Genesis 7:23
They left the ark after 1 year, 17 days - and Noah offered _____
The _____ is the sign of God's promise not to destroy the world by a flood again
The people did not obey God, so He confused their _____ and forced them to scatter
Japhethites went north, west and east; Shemites went southeast, Hamites went southwest
Different people groups and cultures are a result of the spreading of isolated populations
No one is actually white or black, only various shades of brown
The memory of the truth _____ into stories and myth
Truth and _____ given to Adam was passed down to Abraham, Isaac & Jacob and fulfilled in Jesus Christ
You can be _____ by God because Jesus has paid the price of your sin
Jesus will save His followers and return to take them to heaven
Those who do not know God or obey His gospel will be condemned (2 Thess. 1:8)
Christians are ambassadors of Jesus Christ - to become a good one, learn to evangelize

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up. 2) Count how many times God is mentioned. Talk with your parents about what identifies the God of the Bible as being the only true God.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What does it mean that those who are in Christ are new creations (2 Cor. 5:17)? How can you identify real money from counterfeit money? What counterfeit religions have you been exposed to? How did you know they were false? What do each of these attributes of God mean and how does each identify God as being unique? Eternal, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Immutable, Self-existent, Self-sufficient, Creator. Why is nature NOT your mother? Why is time NOT your father? Outline the sequence of events during the days of creation in Genesis 1. Which came first: sunflowers or the sun? Explain. Which came first: chickens or Tyrannosaurus Rex? Explain. What was it like in the garden of Eden? What did the various animals eat? What happened to change life from that paradise? Why did God send a flood to destroy the world? Noah found grace in God's eyes - what did God tell him to do? Why didn't more people and animals get in the ark with Noah and his family? What happened to the air breathing land animals that were outside the ark? How extensive was the flood in depth and time? How did God force people to obey His command to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth? Where did the descendants of each of Noah's children move? How does the scattering of Noah's descendants explain so many different people groups and cultures? Why is it sinful to be prejudiced against people who have different physical characteristics than yourself? How can you determine which cultures have the truth and which have forgotten it? How can sinful man be reconciled with God? What must man believe / do? What will happen to those that do not know God or obey His gospel? What is a Christian's responsibility concerning the gospel and other people?