



Australia

Diakrisis

A Ministry of Teaching

*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age...to discern (diakrisis) both good and evil (Heb. 5:14)
Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine?... (Is.28:9)*

Newsletter of TA Ministries Vol.2, No.41

July/August 2006

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TA Ministries is a non-denominational faith ministry, *teaching, informing and equipping* the church.

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This Newsletter is distributed bi-monthly *free* of charge. The cost to this ministry is approximately \$20.00 per subscriber annually. Any donations to help with these expenses is received with gratitude.

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Editors Comment

Polarisation is a term we used in the early nineties when the 'Toronto Blessing' and 'new teaching' on the Holy Spirit separated the church into factions - for and against this 'new thing' that God was supposedly doing.

In my travels around Australia and beyond, I have noticed another polarisation taking place in church history. Increasingly many churches are getting 'younger' or 'older', depending on what philosophy of ministry they have adopted. The so called 'generation gap' is widening within churches. Many, because of their style of music and their willingness to adopt the latest fad, have lost numbers of their older members. On the other hand, churches which have remained 'conservative' have lost many of their young who have left to find more 'exciting' churches. Some have managed a balance, but that which is sometimes quite precarious.

The latest fads in the Church Growth movement include 'Purpose Driven' or consumerist philosophies which mirror the felt needs of the unsaved. Such philosophies increasingly blur the boundaries between the heart beat of the world and the holiness of God's church. Churches that are attempting to remain sound in doctrine, Godly in music and holy in separation, are facing dilemmas with their young people. Many congregations that have resisted the new contemporary music and Church Growth programs have lost young people, as well as the not so young.

Larger Pentecostal/Charismatic churches are becoming 'younger'. The role model for this phenomenon are the likes of 'Hillsong' which is obviously catering for a jet-setting hip young adult age group, providing the 'Christian' rock music and consumerised programs designed to make God a god to be enjoyed, felt and satisfying. Many churches that are resisting this are losing young people in droves.

The spirit of the age is one of diversity with compromise. It is increasingly difficult to 'train up' our young people in the ways of the Lord considering the thinking of the world is gate-crashing their ear-gates and eye-gates with ever increasing intensity. I believe three mediums are the strongest - the media, education and music. The problem is extenuated by the modern church which has taken on board these mediums and the associated philosophies; and then integrated them into their ministries.

How can we, as parents or pastor/elders, remain scriptural and discerning in such an age? The pressure on pastors/elders to give in and go with the flow is strong. But Ezekiel was told to speak the truth to a rebellious Israel *whether they would hear or not hear* (Ezek.2); he warned the undershepherds who had failed to teach God's people the difference between the holy and the profane; the clean and the unclean, (Ez.22).

The Bible warns of increasing apostasy as we come to the end of this age. In love and with patience we must teach, inform and equip our people as to *why* we must resist the philosophies of this age and those of the apostate church. We should be prepared to lose some people. Young people will be lost to the 'awesome' glitter of 'fools gold' elsewhere. The gap may widen...

But God has given us the strength to continue in His grace and His truth.
Terry Arnold

The Da Vinci Code's Top Errors

(By Robert H. Knight, May 11, 2006; adapted from a full version from *Concerned Women for America*)

The film version of the Da Vinci Code is opening in theatres on May 19. Christians should avoid the movie and thus avoid rewarding Hollywood for blaspheming their Lord, but they also should be equipped with answers to the most dangerous misconceptions.

Dan Brown is peddling one of the oldest known and easily discredited heresies - *Gnosticism* - and his claims are refuted by the rich history of Christian writing, beginning with the Gospels themselves.

Of the list of problems with Brown's *Da Vinci Code* book, here is the tip of the iceberg:

CLAIM: Jesus was merely a man, not God. Brown says that the 'pagan' Roman emperor Constantine, for the purpose of consolidating his power, created the 'myth' that Jesus was resurrected after being crucified.

ANSWER: Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea in 325, but only to sort out differences among church leaders, *all of whom believed Jesus was divine*. Early church historians referred routinely to Christ's divinity. [see *Diakrisis (Australia)* May/June/2001]

CLAIM: The Council of Nicaea defined Jesus as God in 'a close vote at that'. Constantine chose all the books for inclusion in the Bible as we know it (231).

ANSWER: The Council of Nicaea took no votes and was convened by Constantine with Christian leaders across the empire mainly to dispense with the theories of Arius, who claimed that Jesus, while divine, was a created being. Only two of 318 clerics at the Council did not sign the Nicene Creed. The early church had already adopted the Four Gospels and most of the rest of the New Testament as authoritative *long before the Council of Nicaea*.

CLAIM: The four New Testament Gospels (the Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) comprise a false account. Numerous ancient writings tell a more truthful story.

ANSWER: Brown bases his view on 52 books collectively called the Gnostic Gospels, discovered in 1945 in Nag Hammadi, Egypt. All were written more than a century *after* the Biblical Gospels were written. None of these books has any tie to eyewitnesses in Christ's time, unlike the Gospels themselves.

CLAIM: The Da Vinci Code is based on fact. Here's the actual beginning of the book: '*Fact: The Priory of Scion - a European secret society founded in 1099 - is a real organization. In 1975 Paris's Bibliotheque Nationale discovered parchments known as Les Dossiers Secrets, identifying numerous Members of Sion, including Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Victor Hugo, and Leonardo Da Vinci*'.

ANSWER: Pierre Plantard, a French anti-Semite fraud, created the 'Priory of Sion' in 1956, not 1099, and the documents were found to be *counterfeits*. There is no evidence that the famous men he cites were involved in any 'secret society'.

CLAIM: Jesus did not die on the cross but married Mary Magdalene and fathered children with her. Brown claims the church was led by Mary Magdalene, whose role was covered up by a ruthless Roman Catholic Church.

ANSWER: Jesus' crucifixion and reappearance after the resurrection are perhaps the best-documented theological events in history, with literally hundreds of eyewitnesses.

The Roman pagan historian Flavius Josephus recorded the event: '*He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him*'.

The nonsense about Jesus marrying Mary Magdalene and having children with her came from the *Plantard forgeries* and the *Gnostic gospels* of 'Phillip' and 'Mary Magdala'.

CLAIM: Mary Magdalene is pictured in The Last Supper to the left of Jesus.

ANSWER: If that figure is Mary Magdalene, then Leonardo inexplicably left out the apostle John. The youngest disciple, John was often portrayed in a feminine manner to convey youth, as is seen in the stained glass of European cathedrals. No credible art historian has asserted that the John figure in The Last Supper is Mary Magdalene, nor is there any mention of this in Leonardo's journals.

CLAIM: The Catholic organization *Opus Dei* (The Work of God) has an inner network of zealous members who would do anything to keep people from discovering that Christianity's central claims are false.

ANSWER: *Opus Dei*, which Brown correctly notes was founded in 1928, has no monks, but 'numeraries' of both sexes who pledge celibacy and live in single-sex centres. *Opus Dei* was created to energize lay Catholics into taking their [Roman Catholic] faith more seriously.

CLAIM: The 'sacred feminine' was at the heart of the early church, but was ruthlessly suppressed. '*It was man, not God, who created the concept of 'original sin,' whereby Eve tasted of the fruit and caused the downfall of the human race. Woman, once the sacred giver of life, was now the enemy*' (238).

ANSWER: Throughout the book, Brown calls Scripture a colossal lie. Far from oppressing women, the church has proved to be a liberating force. Women have achieved unprecedented status in nations where Christianity has had an impact. Jesus honoured women among His followers. Mary Magdalene was the first to discover the empty tomb, see the resurrected Christ, and to tell the other believers.

CLAIM: The Bible is an ever-changing living document. The Bible '*has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions. History has never had a definitive version of the book*', Brown writes (231).

ANSWER: No other book has as many manuscripts consistently accurate after 2,000 years. The New Testament, of which 5,000 early copies exist, also has the shortest gap between time of authorship (55-95 A.D.) and the earliest copies (around 200 A.D.). Other ancient books have gaps of 1,000 years or more.

Conclusion: The Da Vinci Code is a clever and dangerous book suffused with lies, distortions, Satanic imagery and historical inaccuracies, all designed to cast doubt in readers' minds about the deity of Jesus Christ. Brown is trying to resurrect the old sex-based pagan fertility cults that Judaism and Christianity replaced while advancing civilization.

The good news is that the truth will overcome lies.

Jesus promised: '*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*', (John 8:32).

How Do You Think?

There is a serious problem in modern Christianity, one we believe is so deceptive that it could well be the seedbed of the greatest deceptions of the last days. This problem has been highlighted to us here in this ministry when corresponding with Christians in recent years. The problem is to do with how Christians *think*.

How do you think on 'difficult' Biblical issues? If you are a Christian reading this, the challenges that this article might present to your thinking could well re-shape how you read, how you interpret Scripture and even how you see the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

There are various thought patterns by which one may 'think': one may think objectively, subjectively, logically, pragmatically, emotionally...and with some combinations thereof. This article explores the various kinds of thinking and then puts the reader to the test to see how he or she really thinks on various Biblical doctrines.

Objective Biblical Thinking:

Objective Biblical thinking designates a mode of reasoning which is based on the reality of the Bible being the God-breathed inspired and inerrant Word to man. The knowledge that comes from this thinking is based on objective evidence - the *facts* of the text.

Whatever mode of thought we employ, *when thinking on Biblical doctrine*, it is imperative our thoughts be filtered *objectively* through a mindset of 'Sola Scriptura', the all sufficiency of Scripture (2Tim.3:16-17). This should ensure that we '*rightly divide*' the Word of Truth, (2Tim.2:15). Rightly dividing the word of truth to establish doctrine is similar to Bible translation work or interpretation of scripture. Both are well defined 'sciences' with principles that require objective and exact thinking. There is no room for conjecture, bias or 'free thinking' in these fields.

A departure from objective thinking can be traced through the various eras of culture down through the centuries. The era of 'Modernism' was heralded by the 'Renaissance' period which exalted man and his abilities. The 'Enlightenment' period which began in the 1600's exalted human reasoning. The 'Industrial Revolution' from the 1700's to the 1800's saw great advances in technology and caused man to depend on and esteem his own abilities. This caused him to think inward to self and *away from absolutes*. 'Darwinism' then furthered this 'ability' of man and helped him to explain away his beginnings and thus his destiny. But it is 'Postmodernism' in the late 20th century that has cemented this shift in thinking. To the world truth no longer exists in any absolute sense. Modernism has brought in the thinking that truth can be discerned by reason and logical argumentation...truth is not objective. *It is this thinking that has pervaded the church today in the area of doctrine.*

The problem with much Christian thinking today is the lack of discipline required to think objectively. Subjective and emotional thinking rules the day in many minds. There is nothing wrong with subjective or emotional thinking in and of themselves. But when dealing with doctrine and the work of 'rightly dividing the word of truth', the difference between objective and subjective thinking is so vital that wrong thinking can lead to an outright denial of scriptural truths.

The objective thinking that is necessary to avoid serious

error in doctrine is similar to the diagnostic thinking that might be required of a medical trauma team in the event of a life and death situation; or the thinking required by NASA in the life and death event of equipment failure of a space shuttle full of astronauts - the thinking required in these situations needs to be *objective*, dealing in *facts*; it cannot afford to be mixed with emotive or subjective reasoning.

Experience/Scripture:

Mixed thinking may lead to confusing dichotomies. Examples of these have led the modern church down many paths of error: For example, mixing religious 'experiences' with Scripture to establish a doctrinal reasoning for the 'experience' has led the modern church to new teaching on the Holy Spirit in the Twentieth Century. The 'Toronto Blessing' in the early nineties was a classic example of such mixing of subjective and emotive experiences with selected scriptures to find a (false) 'reality' for the experiences themselves. Yet *objective thinking on only the facts of Scripture* plainly refuted these 'experiences'. There is just no room to think 'outside the box' of God's written word when it comes to the doctrine of God the Holy Spirit!

The Love of God/Wrath of God:

Subjective and emotive thinking can also reject *true* dichotomies. Indicative of this trend is today's emphasis on the 'love of God' whilst at the same time dismissing the truths of His justice, wrath and judgment upon sin. The doctrines of the wrath of God, Hell and Perdition are increasingly today rejected by people logically and emotionally applying the 'love of God' method of 'eisegesis'.

In scripture we have an antinomy; the anger and wrath of God *as well as* the love of God. To some the thinking against an eternal punishment in Hell may well be *logical* and valid. But it nevertheless contradicts the plain *objective facts* of scripture. By rejecting one to believe the other, it somehow makes it more reasonable and acceptable to modern man; but it is nevertheless opposed to scripture and thus the abomination of unbelief to God.

Synergism/Monogism:

One of the most telling signs that shows the way we think is that of the 'Predestination and Election' of the saints. Many Christians use emotion and logic when attempting to understand these doctrines. Important so called 'difficult' passages found in Ephesians 1 and Romans 9 are often ignored or twisted to show a bias toward the unbiblical notion that fallen man is able to 'seek' and 'choose' salvation of his own volition. Many simply cannot bring themselves to believe that a loving God might *will* to choose some and not others. Although election and predestination are objective facts in scripture, it does in some minds defy human, logical, subjective and emotional thinking. But again, the question that should guide our thinking is 'What do the Scriptures objectively say about this?'

This dichotomy of *synergism* (God and man both play a part in salvation) mixed with *monogism* (God only saves) has troubled and divided the modern church. But Synergism is a *recent* system of doctrine prevalent in only the last few hundred years but rampant in the 20th Century (the seed bed is found in the Pelagian heresy of early centuries). It

contains a mixture of thinking to explain away 'difficult texts' and fashions a salvation that is a mixture of both God and man. Most of the great divines (George Whitefield, John Newton, Jonathon Edwards, David Brainerd, John Eliot, John Paton, Tyndale, Carey...Charles Spurgeon, Martyn Lloyd Jones...the list is long and distinguished) were 'monogists' and objective thinkers in doctrine.

It was Pelagius who developed the view that unsaved man was capable of obedience and could use 'free will' to be saved. His thinking was humanly *logical* but not based on objective facts from Scripture. In his humanistic thinking he confused the *free will* possessed by Adam and Eve before the fall, with their *enslaved will* after the fall. This thinking led to denying the depravity of man and original sin. Pelagius ultimately taught that man could earn God's grace in salvation by his ability to use his 'free will' and his own merit. Pelagianism was unanimously condemned as heresy by the Council of Carthage in AD418.

It was Cassian who later developed 'Semi-Pelagian' views which taught God assists men with their wills in striving to be saved. Thus the point of initial salvation was synergistic (both man and God) instead of monogistic (God alone). Semi-Pelagian views were also condemned as heresy at the Council of Orange in AD529. The Roman Catholic religion in later years fell on the semi-Pelagian side.

It was James Arminius who later produced five points ('The Remonstrants') which went back again to a synergistic view of salvation. These were again condemned as heresy at the Synod of Dort in AD1619 with five points of *refutation* which some now call 'Calvinism', but which sadly is often confused with 'hyper-calvinism'. (The Reformer, John Calvin, had been dead for 146 years when the Synod of Dort was convened).

The 20th Century has seen the blind acceptance of all these *heresies!* The issue here on the surface is the sovereignty of God mixed with humanism. But behind all of this is a problem in *thinking!* Human thinking naturally does not want to attribute salvation *wholly* to God because such mysteries as election and predestination do not seem fair and cannot be 'understood' by human minds! But Gods sovereignty and mystery in these things are nevertheless still based on *objective facts* of Scripture which cannot be mixed with subjective, logical or emotive reasonings to make them fit our senses.

Whether our reasonings and emotions can or cannot accept what the Scriptures are objectively stating, the *facts* remain the same: God chooses man in salvation. Man does not choose God (Eph.1:4,5; Jn.15:16; Rom.3:11) - yet our subjective *experiential thinking* when we 'came to the Lord' would tell us otherwise. Man is unable to come to God in and of himself for salvation unless the Holy Spirit draws him first (Rom.8:6,7; Rom.3:10-11; Jer.17:9; Is.64:6,7) and only by the drawing of the Holy Spirit will the '*all*' that the Father has given, come, (Jn.6:37) - yet our subjective *logical thinking* would immediately ask: 'why does God not 'draw' all to salvation'? God elects, chooses His people of His own determination (Eph.1:5,9,11; 1Thess.1:4; 1Pet.1:2; Tit.1:1; Rom.8:33; Col.3:12; Jn.6:37;5:21; Rom.9:15-18; Gal.1:15,16) - yet our *humanistic thinking* would ask: 'but man is not just a robot; surely man must have some power within himself to play a part in predestination or election?'

This thinking quickly leads to humanistic logic which can develop into doctrines to explain the difficulty. *When*

dealing with doctrine, any logic must be based on objective facts and must not stray from that. Logic must not attempt to solve seeming contradictions in scripture or questions in our mind; but must constantly be tested by only the objective facts of Scripture.

'Strawman' Thinking:

Erroneous thought processes also lead to extremes in thinking including the use of 'strawmen'. 'Strawmen' argumentation misrepresents the issue or the facts and renders one side weak. Rather than attacking the real objective facts the opponent sets up and knocks down the 'strawman'. This is a favourite method with the cults or those who argue from a subjective or emotive thinking instead of scripture alone.

An example of this is: If (a) 'God elects and predestines a people for himself; (b) *then He must also elect, predestine and damn the rest to Hell; and if so, he unfairly loves only a select group of people*'. This strawman which is a mixture of objective fact (a) with an *addition* of human logic (b), is then attacked using logic, isolated scripture and with a good dash of emotion. The problem with this human logic is that it bypasses and adds to the *original objective facts* of Scripture which state singularly that God does elect a certain people to glory and that He loves them.

The thinking that God 'elects, predestines and damns people to Hell' and 'unfairly' loves the elect is simply not found in Scripture but is a creation of *extra Biblical thinking*. It is based on subjective and emotional humanistic logic which cannot be proved one way or the other! It is a 'strawman' because it cannot be argued against with objective Scriptural facts - they are simply not in Scripture, which alone must be our only yardstick (2Tim.3:16)! This 'strawman' misrepresents and adds to the doctrines of Grace and is thus extra biblical. Most of the great evangelists and teachers argued strongly and effectively against these Arminian 'strawmen' that were raised in their day against the Doctrines of Grace. Spurgeon, in a sermon '*Exposition of the Doctrines of Grace*' (11th April, 1861) wrote: '*...to this day, there are many of our opponents, who, when they run short of matter, invent and make for themselves a man of straw...shoot at it or burn it as you will, and, if it suit your convenience, still oppose doctrines which were never taught, and rail at fictions which, save in your own brain, were never in existence...If they can disprove our doctrines, let them state them fairly and then overthrow them, but why should they first caricature our opinions and then afterwards attempt to put them down.*'

Current emotive and logical thought processes have driven Christian exegetical understanding well outside the boundaries of scripture. One of the best examples in recent times of objective thinking verses subjective thinking is the book '*Debating Calvinism - Two Views*' by Dave Hunt and James White (see *Diakrisis Australia* article May/June/2004). Here we have two authors debating their views of synergism (Dave Hunt) and monogism (James White). Many believe Dave Hunt won the debate; others are just as sure that James White won the day. Yet a close look at the *thinking* of the two authors reveals *diametrically different modes of thought*. And the reaction of the readers depends too on their own mode of thinking!

Dave Hunt for the most part of the book presents emotive and subjective arguments with a shotgun spray of scriptures.

James White on the other hand is known for his clinical objectivity and exactness of approach to the passage under discussion. James' meticulous exegesis and Greek rendering bumps up against Dave's strawmen arguments and emotional appeals to the 'love' of God. Dave repeats over and over his mantra of what he believes is James White's God: '*a God who...predestines to eternal doom...to the lake of fire...who could save if he wanted to but chooses to...damn billions to eternal torment*' and '*is pleased to do so*'. Yet All these emotional appeals are simply 'strawmen' and just *not* in James White's arguments and certainly not to be found in Scripture!

The readers responses were invariably polarised. Many applauded Dave Hunt. Yet, to do so would have entailed agreement with arguments that were *highly subjective, including emotive extra-biblical 'strawmen'*! In a court of law Hunt's statements and charges would have been thrown out as inadmissible, being sheer conjecture!

To show further the folly of 'strawman' thinking, consider Hunt's logic but *in reverse*. If God is unfair in such matters of election and predestination, then would He have been unjust in allowing *all* peoples after the fall of Adam and Eve, to go to Hell? By the same logic the answer has to be 'yes' - God would have been unjust in allowing such a punishment. Yet objectively it would have been deserved. Is Hell fair? - again, 'yes'. The same reasoning for God being unjust in election and predestination must also be applied here! This counter logic shows the need for an objective and absolute standard based on facts from God's Word.

Subjective thinking in regards to doctrine is fraught with dangers. For example, I may think something is 'beautiful' but the next person may disagree. Such is the nature of the word 'subjective'. Such thinking may well be 'subject' to the persons preconceived ideas, mindset or experiences. But if scripture says something is 'beautiful' then this is *God* who is saying it is 'beautiful'; and because He is the sinless creator of all that is 'beautiful', He is speaking objective fact and truth that has 'no shadow of turning'. The 'beautiful' becomes an objective fact not to be added to or humanised with explanations that explain why it is (or is not) beautiful to us. Similarly, if God predestines and elects some and not others and if not one person can be saved without being 'drawn', then no matter how this might defy our sense of love, justice and mercy, the truth of the doctrines remain *to be believed*.

God has already anticipated this difficulty in our minds and strongly warns us: '*What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy...Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of*

mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory', (Rom.9:14-23).

This verse is not just about the sovereignty of God. It is about believing the objective facts of Scripture, even though our human minds might '*reply against God*' by questioning the reasons behind the actions of God!

Are we employing logic or emotion when studying scripture? Or are we rightfully and objectively viewing and believing what is actually written? Again, there is nothing wrong with thinking in a logical or emotional manner. However, when dealing with Biblical 'doctrine' it is imperative that our thought processes firstly be *objective* to allow the facts of the text to be properly understood; and that we not allow subjective or emotive reasonings to be added to that truth.

Babies and Heaven:

A test we have used when teaching students in Colleges is to ask questions that test the emotional and logical content of their thinking. For example, we ask: '*Do all infants that die go to be with the Lord*'? Answers usually vary: 'Yes, scripture implies...'; 'It would only be fair if they did...an injustice would be done if not'; 'They must, because God is love'. Then we enquire of them: '*What does the Bible actually say on this subject*'? '*What are the explicit objective facts from scripture alone*'?. It soon dawns on most of them that scripture is arguably silent on the matter. Most cannot find definitive or explicit scriptures that speak of all babies going to heaven. The great 'prince of preachers', Charles Spurgeon, admitted that although he reasoned that babies should go to heaven, when thinking only objectively, he could not find from scripture a belief that all babies went to heaven at death and thus was not prepared to base a *doctrine* on it. Interestingly, although Spurgeon's evangelistic preaching was often subjective and emotional in pleading for souls, when it came to *doctrine* he was objectively 'Sola Scriptura' in his thinking.

Romans 8:29 - How Do You Read It?

Let us come now to some specific examples of subtle traps in thinking. One such example is found in Romans 8:28-30: '*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified*'.

Verse 29 says: '*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son*'. The '*foreknow*' is today commonly interpreted that 'God foreknows *who will accept or reject him in the future*' and thus his 'predestination' is based on that ability or 'free will' within man. But an exegesis of the text shows no such interpretation is possible. As previously mentioned, this thinking is actually rooted in the early heresies of Pelagian and Cassian.

In Scripture, something foreknown is presented as that which God gave prior decree to by His own will and pleasure. Hence, this term 'foreknow' is used for matters which God deliberately chose and predestinated. In 1Peter 1:19,20 Christ is the Lamb of God '*foreknown from the foundation*

of the world'. God had planned and determined to provide His Son as a sacrifice for His people. God's foreknowledge is not given here as the cause for His Son's sacrifice - but rather, His plan and decree for that event.

The word '*also*' in Romans 8:29 (*'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate'*) links foreknowledge to predestination. Thus neither one is based or conditional on the other.

The thinking from Romans 8:29 that God's predestination is based on God foreknowing 'who will accept or reject him' results in God's predestination being based on a work or an ability within man. This thinking is not only *unfounded in the text* in question but utterly defies many other Scriptures that objectively state unsaved man does not seek God and cannot come to God of his own will or ability: '*...there is none that seeketh after God*', (Rom.3:11); '*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*', (Jn.1:11-13). Rom.8:7: '*The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*' Jn.6:44 '*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...*'

2Timothy 1:9 sums up the error of any extra thinking in Romans 8:29 to put extra conditions or thinking on God's Predestination: '*Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*'.

In summary, God does not predestine only because he foreknows 'who would choose' - *there is absolutely nothing about unsaved man choosing salvation in this text or any other Biblical text*. And every action in Romans 8:29,30 is by God and taken *before the foundation of the world!*

Because it is not possible nor wise for us to question God's secret counsel, it is not for us to apply subjective or humanistic reasoning as to who the predestined or elect are. If subjective thinking needs to be applied here, then let it be applied to the saint meditating on the glories of Redemption, Sanctification and Glorification! Let the saint ask '*why me, Lord? I don't deserve this salvation*'! This subjective and emotional application from the objective facts of Scripture may well be good for the humbling of the soul and was a feature of the great saints of old.

John 3:16 - How Do You Read It?:

Another more difficult example of how we 'think' can be found in John 3:16. Unfortunately, in recent centuries the word '*whosoever*' has derived a meaning of 'anyone who chooses' or 'anyone who decides'. But this is neither the original English meaning, nor the meaning in Greek, nor what the early church and the great divines taught and nor is it in the text itself! Such thinking certainly contradicts the bulk of Scripture. Unsaved man does not choose God for salvation. God chooses man, (Jn.15:16; Eph.1:4,5; Jn.1:11-13; Rom.3:11).

What does John 3:16 actually say?: '*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*'. Objectively, the text states: 1. God loved the world (his creation) 2. He gave His only son 3. Those that truly believe in him would not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16 says nothing about 'choosing' by man or God. Neither does it say anything about any process that

caused the 'whosoever' to believe. It simply says *those that believe will be saved!*

The 'whosoever' is being grossly misread today because of preconceived thinking developed mostly in the Twentieth Century. The English verse says nothing about free will, free choice, or man choosing the Lord...or predestination.

If the reader is not convinced then let us view what the original Greek literally says: '*For so loved the God the world that the His son the unique [only begotten] He gave that all the believing ones in [on] Him no perish but have life eternal.*' Sadly, the original English for '*whosoever believeth*' (literally '*all the believing ones*') has been somewhat corrupted in the minds of modern Christians to something that now has man deciding with his own 'free will' to choose God. But this is not what the original English meaning conveyed, nor what it was in the mind of the original translators.

The literal translation for the Greek '*pas*' ('whosoever') is '*all*' or '*everyone*'. '*Pas*' is translated over 1,000 times in the New Testament and is mostly translated '*all*'; '*every*'; '*every one*'. The Greek here has '*all the believing ones*' with the definite article '*the*' ('*pas o pisteuon*'). *The definite article ('o' - 'the') here refers to a definite number, quantity or entity*. The common misconception is that '*whosoever*' is an indefinite phrase, but the definite article '*the*' ('*o*') modifies a particular object - the object here is the '*believing ones*'. This is a definite group of people who will believe, not an indiscriminate or indefinite group! The verse is not about 'anyone' but literally about '*the believing ones*'.

But the point to be made here concerns the *thinking*. Objectively, this is what John 3:16 says: God loves His creation; He gave His only son; that the 'whosoever' ('the believing ones'), will surely believe in Him and not perish but have everlasting life. *Anything beyond that is extra Biblical* and opens the gates for other forms of thinking.

Conclusion:

It is the written Word of God that divides between soulish and spiritual thinking, (Heb.4:12). God's thoughts are far above ours and it is beyond us to comprehend such a gulf. In an effort to interpret the texts, we so often go astray when we apply our fallen emotive and subjective thoughts to God's thoughts and to verses that may even seemingly contradict our view of God.

Without the objective and absolute standard of Scripture alone, we would be able to frame our own understandings of various doctrines and that would be confusing to say the least. But that is exactly what is happening in Christian minds today!

We as 'sola Scriptura' Christians have an objective yardstick by which to measure all our spiritual beliefs and practices. Subjectivism can win many arguments in the emotions but it can often be based on lies, or worse, mixtures of truth and error.

When it comes to doctrine, subjective thinking is a possible fuel for humanism. A Bible believing Christian must have all thoughts ultimately *objectively* filtered through a conscience that is captivated by facts within the written word of God.

How do you *think*?

Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editors)

'Dear Terry, when we pray to God to test the spirits, can Satan answer our prayers? After all, he is listening too isn't he? How do we know for sure that the snake is not answering our prayers when testing the spirits? Please quote bible verses as well. Thanks'

Our reply: We are to test the 'spirits' by running all things said and done through the sieve of scripture. The Scriptures are our guide as to what is from God and not from God. We don't 'pray' for God to 'test' the spirits. We use the Word of God to discern what is behind those things we perceive as reality. If they speak and act not according to this Word - they are not of God! 1John 4:1 'Beloved, [YOU must] believe not every spirit, but [you] try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world'.

Can Satan answer our prayers? How could anything we ask for from our Father be given by Satan? 'Ask in my name' says Jesus and it will be given to you (Matthew

7:9-11); 'Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent [snake]? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?' You have God's promise that He will not give you a snake! How can Satan possibly answer a prayer to the Father in Heaven when it has been brought to the Father through the *intercession* of Jesus Christ? What is the 'intercession' of Christ for?

We must not attribute powers to Satan that he does not possess. There is nothing in Scripture that speaks of Satan hearing our prayers and having the power to answer prayers to God through Jesus Christ. Logically and emotively we may be able to deduce this but it will be the stuff of extra-biblical revelation...

...hope this helps.

Terry Arnold & Mike Claydon

God and Sport

As God's elect, are we to believe, and state, that He answers prayer to bring success in 'sport'? According to Aaron Baddeley, Darren Beadman and others, we should. On the US golf tour there has long been a strong 'religious' culture. Among the 'humbly devout', there have been many who espoused the un-Christian belief that 'God is my 15th club' and who go as far as to claim their faith gives them a competitive advantage over the heathens in the bar at the 19th hole.

So, if there was a groan when Baddeley gave praise for his recent US win, it was a response to the image of the cynical American-Christian sportsman who does not always practise what he so zealously preaches. It is difficult to embrace Baddeley's conviction, since he won his maiden US Tour event on Easter Sunday, and talked of how he had knocked that last putt in 'for Jesus'.

Religion has always held a curious place in Australian sport. Under Don Bradman, a Freemason, the Australian cricket team was said to be divided between Catholics and Protestants. The AFL resists pressure to schedule matches on Good Friday. The racing industry holds a Mass before the Melbourne Cup. Yet, other than the cries of 'Jesus Christ!' picked up by on-field microphones, athletes who invoke the Lord's name are usually met with cynicism. On American and Australian playing fields, wide receivers

cross themselves after making touchdowns. Sprinters fall to one knee when they cross the line. Basketballers claim their hot hands were touched by God. Occasionally, these same athletes are also found to be part of American sport's even more overt cultures of drug-taking and crime.

To portray a God who wins sport for His followers is often lauded by Church leaders, and in the case of Darren Beadman's track successes, proudly promoted by the Houston's of Hillsong and others.

One has to ask though, is this really the God of the Bible? Did He die an agonising death to pardon the sins of His people; or to improve their prowess in a particular field of sport?

To 'honour' God for a 'hole in one' is not, [as those who do it appear to believe it is], preaching the true Gospel - it drastically waters down the theology of redemption. Sports people such as Baddeley seem to miss the Divine Plan of God in the salvation of men. It's the same error seen in the 'Health/Wealth' and 'Emergent' Churches today - that God is there to provide us with greatly improved lifestyles, for us to fully achieve our 'potential' - and to excel in our chosen path in life. Nothing could be further from the Gospel of Jesus Christ than that - and it is downright embarrassing to watch and listen as He is thanked for an imaginary involvement in the 'religion' that sport has become in our day.

Mike Claydon

Chronology of Christianity

by R.C.Wetzel 'A *Chronology Of Biblical Christianity*'

[Continued from past editions of *Diakrisis*. To be continued]

BC.2318 Noah vacated the ark after 1 year and 10 days.

2267 The city of Tyre was built.

2250 Babylon was ruled for 55 years by Hammurabi I.

2208 The Confusion of Tongues at the Tower of Babel.

1969 Noah died at age 950.

1967 Abram was born to Terah.

1957 Sarah was born to Terah.

1900 'Job', the oldest book of the Bible, was written. Jewish tradition attributes it to Moses. Some believe it was written much later, 595-588 B.C.

1892 Terah died aged 205. Abram left Haran, entered Canaan.

1891 Abram dwelt in Egypt.

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editors)

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Dear Bro.Terry, My name is...I pastor a small Bible church in the Philippines...We are strong in the doctrines of Grace. I want to say a big thank you for 'Diakrisis' magazine. I've been a regular subscriber since two years ago. Yes, I enjoyed reading and studying it. As a pastor I have found your ministry of teaching very helpful and accurate. Keep up the good work. We are upholding you in prayers. The Lord be with you! We are hoping and praying that someday God willing you may visit us here and meet the pastors and ministers here for a seminar and teaching sessions. Thanks.

(E.N., Philippines)

Dear Terry, thanks for the article on 'Calvin & Servetus - The Facts' in March/April 06 'Diakrisis'. For years now I've read about what a dreadful thing Calvin did to Servetus, so it was good to finally hear the truth on this matter.

(C.B., Qld)

Dear Brother Terry, I am writing to thank you for sending me your excellent 'Diakrisis' publication, which you have continued to send me for some years now, with no contributions from me...

I think you do an excellent job of handling many contentious issues in the difficult, and for many, 'controversial field', that you have been ministering in. I have found your publication very informative and helpful as you have shared some of your not too popular findings and convictions with many believers in this Laodicean, Ecumenical Christian age of the 21st Century.

I thank God that your ministry has enabled many poor deceived and blinded believers to be released from Charismatic, Ecumenical and Cultish bondage...

I would say that even though I may not always agree with you on everything, (we will all agree on every shade of doctrine, when we 'come face to face and shall know as we are known' of Him), I do agree with you on most things and trust that you will continue your excellent ministry for many years to come.

(Pastor L.P., Sydney)

Dear Mike, Help! My church will be running the Alpha Course soon and I know I will be asked why I don't want to attend it...I know there have been several items about it in your 'Apostasy Alert' but unfortunately I can't find them in my archives. Is there a discernment website or somewhere I can look that will provide me with information about the course's errors. My minister loves the Lord sincerely and preaches great sermons, but does seem to lack discernment. For example, he couldn't see much wrong with Mel Gibson's 'Passion' even though I pointed out where Gibson had got his inspiration.

Any help you can give me would be greatly appreciated. May God bless you abundantly in your work. So many godly people these days seem to be blinded to the truth. It's wonderful to read your reports and be able to point out to my Christian friends the errors that you expose.

(Name withheld at editors discretion)

Sub Editors Comment: Concerning the 'Alpha Course' - we wrote on this in 'Diakrisis' Nov/Dec/2003 P.2.

You can also get another article 'The Character of Alpha's Jesus' from myself (Mike Claydon) by e-mail only, at: mbc@nobbys.net.au:

Here are some other sites also:

<http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/alpha.html>

http://www.despatch.cth.com.au/Books_D/alpha_expose.htm

http://newsletters.cephasministry.com/alpha_fatal_attraction.html

<http://www.zyworld.com/Discernment/JulyAug2002.htm>

Dear Terry, many are the candidates but few are the elected. We are living in the last days and the emerging churches gallop in a very confusing movement of an ecumenical embrace. The Gospel is distorted and many follow the doctrines of the Devil, but by the power of His Word I stand on solid ground.

Thanks for your 'Diakrisis' news. I'm walking with the Gospel since I have left the Roman Catholic religion years ago. By the power of His Spirit He has released me into a mighty spiritual freedom and Biblical knowledge. Regards.

(G.A., NSW)

Dear Terry, I really enjoyed your article on the seeker sensitive movement in you last issue. I took the liberty to photocopy some and hand them out at church.

(Baptist Pastor, Victoria)

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