



SUNDAY AM MARCH 22, 2015

Announcements..... Billy Bowles
 Prayer..... Billy Bowles
 Song Leader Rick Harrell
 Communion Jimmy Spivey
 Server Jeff Hale
 Server Eddie Stewart
 Server Chad Smith
 Prayer..... Jonathan Wilson
 Scripture Billy Bowles
 Lesson Matt Stubbs
 Closing Prayer Chad smith
 Nursery..... Brenda Fletcher
 Foyer Monitor Jonathan Wilson
 Greeters

SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE

Song Leader Adam Guthrie
 Prayer..... Chad Smith
 Communion Jimmy Spivey
 Lesson Deland Guthrie
 Closing Prayer Jeff Hale

WEDNESDAY MARCH 25, 2015

Song Leader Chad Smith
 Prayer..... Billy Bowles
 Lesson Matt Stubbs

Gospel Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel
 Romans 1:16 Romans 10:15-17

Believe the Gospel
 Mark 16:15-16

Repent of Your Sins
 Acts 3:19 Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as the Son of God
 Romans 10:9-10

Be Baptized for the Remission of Sins
 Acts 2:38 Galatians 3:27

Live Faithful
 Revelation 2:10

Study the Word
 2 Timothy 2:15

For the Record

Bible study----- 20
 Worship
 Sunday morning----- 41
 Sunday evening----- 32
 Contributions----- \$1680
 Wednesday evening ----- 35

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Family Matters

A Weekly Publication of the St. Augustine Rd. church of Christ

Does God Tempt People?

by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

In his February 12, 2009 debate with Kyle Butt, Dan Barker alleged that he “knows” the God of the Bible cannot exist because “there are mutually incompatible properties/characteristics of the God that’s in this book [the Bible—EL] that rule out the possibility of His existence.” Seven minutes and 54 seconds into his first speech, Barker cited James 1:13 and Genesis 22:1 as proof that the God of the Bible cannot exist. Since James 1:13 says: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man” (KJV), and Genesis 22:1 affirms that “God did tempt Abraham” (KJV) to sacrifice his son, Barker asserted that God is like a married bachelor or a square circle—He cannot logically exist.

If Genesis 22:1 actually taught that God really tempted Abraham to commit evil and sin, then the God of the Bible might be a “square circle,” i.e., a logical contradiction. But, the fact of the matter is, God did not tempt Abraham to commit evil. Barker formulated his argument based upon the King James Version and only one meaning of the Hebrew word (nissâ) found in Genesis 22:1. Although the word can mean “to tempt,” the first two meanings that Brown, Driver, and Briggs give for nissâ in their Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament is “to test, to try” (1993). Likewise, the Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament (1997) defines the word simply “to test” (Jenni and Westermann, 1997, 2:741-742). The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament agrees that nissâ is best translated, whether in secular or theological contexts, as “testing” (Botterweck, et al., 1998, 9:443-455). For this reason, virtually all major translations in recent times, including the NKJV, NASB, ESV, NIV, and RSV, translate Genesis 22:1 using the term “tested,” not tempted.

When David put on the armor of King Saul prior to battling Goliath, the shepherd realized: “I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested (nissâ) them” (1 Samuel 17:39, emp. added). Obviously, this testing had nothing to do with David “tempting” his armor; he simply had not tested or tried on Saul’s armor previously. God led Israel during 40 years of desert wanderings “to humble...and test” them (Deuteronomy 8:2, emp. added), not to tempt them to sin. Notice also the contrast

in Exodus 20:20 between (1) God testing man and (2) trying to cause man to sin. After giving Israel the Ten Commandments, Moses said: “Do not fear; for God has come to test (nissâ) you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin” (Exodus 20:20, emp. added). If one were to use Barker’s reasoning that nissâ must mean “to tempt,” regardless of the context, then he would have to interpret Exodus 20:20 to mean that God tempted Israel to sin, so that they will not sin.

When a person interprets the Bible, or any other book, without recognizing that words have a variety of meanings and can be used in various senses, a rational interpretation is impossible. Many alleged Bible contradictions, including several of those that Dan Barker mentioned in the Butt/Barker Debate, are easily explained simply by acknowledging that words are used in a variety of ways. Is a word to be taken literally or figuratively? Must the term in one place mean the exact same thing when in another context, or may it have different meanings? If English-speaking Americans can intelligibly converse about running to the store in the 21st century by driving a car, or if we can easily communicate about parking on driveways, and driving on parkways, why do some people have such a difficult time understanding the various ways in which words were used in Bible times? Could it be that some Bible critics like Barker are simply predisposed to interpret Scripture unfairly? The evidence reveals that is exactly what is happening.

Rather than contradicting James 1:13, Genesis 22:1 actually corresponds perfectly with what James wrote near the beginning of his epistle: “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (1:2-4, emp. added). By instructing Abraham to sacrifice his promised son (cf. Hebrews 11:17), God gave Abraham another opportunity to prove his loyalty to Him, while Abraham simultaneously used this trial to continue developing a more complete, mature faith.

REFERENCES

Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry (1998), Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).

Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, and Charles B. Briggs (1993), A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Electronic Database: BibleSoft).

Butt, Kyle and Dan Barker (2009), Does the God of the Bible Exist? (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press).

Jenni, Ernst and Claus Westerman (1997), Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson).

Announcements

- ❖ Ladies Bible class Tuesday mornings @ 10 am
- ❖ DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED ~ **6:30 pm** ~ “Struggle Seek Grow” ~ Ladies Bible class

In our Prayers

Dorothy Meeks, Wanda Deweese, Ruth Starling, Johann Sluss, Ray Norvell, Morris Copeland, Marsha Swain, Charles White, Haden Vinsen, Irene Horne, Wanda Hamm, Addison Johnson, Glenda Hyatt, Bob Myers, Beverly Strange, Lisa Owens

Area Meetings

Weekly Bible Verse

Acts 22:16 New King James Version (NKJV)

And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’
