

Fables in the Church

by

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Not all that passes for truth in the pulpit, religious articles, and in the emails among Christians is truth according to the Bible, but are fables. “What? Fables in the church?” you ask. “Fables in other churches, but certainly not in the church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!”

These fables try not to come to Christ’s church under the label of a fable, but rather as an embellishment on the truth to promote a certain ideology. A familiar aspect of many religions is the use of fables to teach and reinforce moral attitudes and religious principles in forms that are easy to assimilate and remember. Fables are not sound teachings. They are never produced without the accumulation of distorted, crooked, and especially unreasonable interpretation. It neglects and forsakes many clear words of God to establish unsound teachings. Whatever intentions the giver has for presenting such fables, no matter what emotions of the heart they produce, usage of such fables is against the command of God. Our Lord has given the following scriptures as a warning against such usage:

- 1 Tim. 1:4, “*Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.*”
- 1 Tim. 4:7, “*But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.*”
- 1 Tim. 6:20, “*O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.*”
- 2 Tim. 2:16, “*But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.*”
- 2 Tim. 4:4, “*And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*”
- Titus 1:14, “*Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*”

Unbelievers would consider the foundation of our faith a fable, but we know differently. The events of our Lord’s birth, deity, life, death, burial, and resurrection are no fable. 2 Pet. 1:16, “*For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*”

Christians do not need to use cunningly devised fables to enhance their belief in God's plan of salvation; they need only to use God's plain and simple words to accomplish this. For years, the motto of the church of Christ has been, "Speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent." In recent years Satan has crept undetected into the church and turned the minds of many into accepting the usage of such fables.

How does a person fall for fables? It seems to follow our personal inclinations to believe certain things. Some are bored with the plain teachings of the Bible and their ears are "perked" when they hear something they have not heard before; the message suddenly becomes more interesting than it used be. When preachers see the response and interest they get when they use "*cunningly devised fables*", they are encouraged to use them more. The result, however, is that too many Christians who do not investigate what they are being taught accept these fables and other religious nonsense in the church along side of biblical truth.

The cure against fables and other nonsense in the churches is to instruct God's people about the biblical admonitions for using spiritual discernment of His actual words instead of fanciful tales of doubtful origin. Fables are not from the teachings of the apostles, but of Satan. God does not tolerate the use of fiction (fables). Our Lord admonished us with the following words:

- Matt. 4:4, "*...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*"
- Job 28:28, "*And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*"
- Eph. 5:10, "*Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*"
- 1 Thess. 5:21-22, "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.*"
- 1 John 4:1, "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*"
- 2 Tim. 4:1-4, "*I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And*

they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

- Gal. 1:8-9, *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”*

Paul warned Timothy several times to not even go down the path of using an imposter-truth as opposed to using sound truth. However “moral” a story may be, if it is not of God’s word it is irrelevant. Even if using a fable with spreading God’s truth gives the perceived benefit of aiding it, in reality it works the opposite. 2 Tim. 4:3-5, *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”* Fables actually weaken the word of God by drawing men toward the fables. People want new and interesting ways to hear the gospel; but we should not turn to Satan’s message for inspiration. Brothers and sisters, Our Lord says the time will come when that will happen; that time is now.

Reading God’s Holy Word is godly exercise. It takes effort to read the Bible “as is” and to show ourselves “approved” unto God by studying it. Reading fables takes little effort and is one way how Satan makes merchandise of lazy Christians who do not make any effort to prove what is acceptable to the Lord.

The following is some examples that I have received or heard that can be classified as fables. Many of these are distributed via the use of e-mail and the accuracy or truthfulness can be verified with the aid of Snopes.com.

The Lost Day Claim. Supposedly, NASA scientists discovered a “missing day” in time which corresponds to Biblical accounts of the sun’s standing still in the sky as found in Joshua 10:12-13. While Christians believe the Biblical account, the event at NASA never happened.

Gay Jesus Film Claim. A claim was made by some that in the year 2001 a movie was to come out portraying Jesus and His disciples as gay. An e-mail effort went out urging everyone to send a message to the Alabama Attorney General asking that this production be stopped. This office was flooded with letters and e-mails. Somehow the same e-mail message had the office of Illinois Attorney General, and it also was flooded. The Illinois office

had made a plea to the public via the Ann Landers column to stop this false story. Even today this office is receiving approximately 1000 protests every week. Hoaxes die hard. There was however a play entitled “Corpus Christi” which depicted Jesus Christ and His apostles in this light.

God’s Hands Claim. A photo of a cloud formation in the aftermath of Hurricane Charley in 2004 was circulated depicting the hands of God outstretched over the devastation. This same photo was circulated in 2007 with the claim it was taken in Kentucky and also in Texas, then again in 2010 saying it was taken over the earthquake destruction of Haiti. It was used as an inspiration of God’s care for humanity. Snopes proved that the photo was altered to make the clouds look like the hands of God.

Awesome Rock Claim. A picture claimed to be of a rock on a sea in Birmania during perfect calm waters when turned on its side supposedly shows an image when looking at the rock and its reflection in the water of a praying mother and child. The effect was to give tranquility to the viewer. The picture was actually taken from a hand-made drawing.

Jesus in the Clouds Claim. An Air Force pilot took a picture during a dogfight over Korea. It shortly after made its way into the *Daily Independent* newspaper with the caption “Jesus in the Clouds”. The picture supposedly shows the image of Jesus watching over the American pilots. There were quotes in the newspaper from pilots saying the picture uplifted them spiritually. The picture quickly was picked up by newspapers everywhere across the United States as an inspiration for the war effort. When the original photo was found in 1951 it was discovered the image of Jesus was painted on. The photo was a fake.

The Ghostly Rescue Claim. Supposedly in 2000, the ghost of a woman killed in a car crash directs rescuers to the wreck to save her still-living baby who was trapped inside. The end of the story encourages the reader to believe in miracles in their life as well. Snopes says the popular culture is replete with such stories being circulated that are only the imagination of the writer; many having to do with the apparitions of Christ and the Holy Spirit guarding loved ones from danger. The following is one such:

The Alley Oops Claim. Supposedly, a Christian girl who prays for protection while walking home late one night is saved by two angels who keep her safe from rape. Another girl was supposedly raped in the same alley 20 minutes after this girl went through. After this story made the news the “protected” girl came forward and told the police her story; that she could identify the man she saw in the alley. After she identified the rapist in a lineup she asked

him why he let her go through the alley unmolested. He told her, "Because there were two men walking with her." This story gives its reader an inspiration of prayer. However, different accounts of this story have circulated since 2001. No names or location is provided in any account. Snopes says this is typical of fictional stories on the Internet. This incident has not been found in any police report searches.

Brothers & Sisters, there is a lot of religious garbage on the Internet! And readers are encouraged to pass it on to others on their mailing list.

Advice from Snopes.com:

"Anytime you see an e-mail that says forward this on to "10" of your friends, sign this petition, or you'll get bad luck, good luck, or whatever, it almost always has an e-mail tracker program attached that tracks the cookies and e-mails of those folks you forward to."

Col. 2:8, "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*"

I sincerely hope this has been helpful.

In Christian love,

Ellis Forsman

