

# The Discerner

the voice of... **Religion Analysis Service**

A QUARTERLY EXPOSING  
UNBIBLICAL TEACHING & MOVEMENTS

Volume 40, Number 2

April • May • June 2020

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*"Hereby know we the spirit of truth  
and the spirit of error" 1 John 4:6*

## **The Discerner**

A Christian Apologetics & Counter-  
Cult Ministry

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## WITH THIS ISSUE

Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you as we face the challenges associated with the Coronavirus pandemic. We know that no matter what is happening, we can “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid . . . for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you or forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV).

We note, with much sadness, Cindy Marty’s voluntary resignation from the Board of Religion Analysis Service due to health concerns. Prayer is very much appreciated. She has served our board with great distinction and her love for Jesus has been an inspiration to us all. By the Lord’s grace, she was able to break free from the clutches of the Jehovah’s Witness organization in which she was raised to find freedom in Jesus Christ. With her husband Paul, and their family, she has served as a missionary in Eastern Europe and the area of the former Soviet Union. Indeed, she has also founded the ministry of Tomorrows Club International, reaching countless youth with the love of Jesus Christ.

You can read her amazing testimony entitled “Set Free to Serve Him” on our archive page at [ras.org](http://ras.org) in the January through March 2017 issue of *The Discerner* (Volume 36, Number 1). I know that Cindy would appreciate your prayers for her and her family as she faces health issues. Thank you Cindy for your faithful service to the Lord and Religion Analysis Service.

Our first article is about the so-called “Galileo Affair,” in which the treatment that Galileo received at the hands of the Medieval Christian Church is exaggerated and turned into a paradigm of a Church supposedly at war with Science, which we shall see is far from the truth.

Our second article is by our Canadian friend Bary Gaudrealt. This time he tackles the Christadelphian cult. He confirms that Christadelphians share many of the same false teachings as the Arian heretics of the early church and the Jehovah’s Witnesses of today.

Our final article is an amazingly timely examination and critique of Modernism and Liberalism first published in *The Discerner* in 1957. It was written by the long-time president of Religion Analysis Service, John E. Dahlin.

And as always, please enjoy our Bible Quiz at the end of this issue!

*Steve Lagoon*

President, Religion Analysis Service

# SCIENCE, RELIGION, AND THE MYTH OF THE GALILEO AFFAIR

by Steve Lagoon

There is a certain myth that proclaims ‘Science is incompatible with the Christian Church.’

*The idea is that whereas science is ostensibly a dispassionate and unbiased search for truth, the Church is blinded by a commitment to its beliefs at the expense of rationality.* As such, Science must heroically resist the corrupting influence of the Christian Church, because the Church itself is viewed as always imposing its anti-scientific and mythological views upon a credulous public.

The default example for purveyors of this idea is the so-called historical “Galileo Affair.”

## The Story

You know the story. Galileo turned his new telescope to the heavens and found powerful evidence for the heliocentric nature of the solar system, essentially confirming the theories of Copernicus. When Galileo courageously shared this scientific breakthrough with the world, the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy, which was committed to a Biblical model requiring that the earth be at the center of the universe, severely persecuted Galileo and thereby silenced his scientific voice of truth.

Here is just one version of this story as told by Nicholas P. Leveillee:

Nicholas Copernicus and Galileo Galilei were two scientists who printed books that later became banned. Copernicus faced no persecution when he was alive because he died shortly after publishing his book. Galileo, on the other hand, was tried by the Inquisition after his book was published. Both scientists held the same theory that the Earth revolved around the sun, a theory now known to be true. However, the Church disapproved of this theory because the Holy Scriptures state that the Earth is at the center, not the Sun. As the contents of the Bible were taken literally, the publishing of these books proved, to the Church, that Copernicus and Galileo were sinners; they preached, through their writing, that the Bible was wrong.<sup>1</sup>

1 Nicholas P. Leveillee, Copernicus, Galileo, and the Church: Science in a Religious World, *Inquires Journal*, 2011. <http://www.inquiresjournal.com/articles/1675/copernicus-galileo-and-the-church-science-in-a-religious-world>.

## **But does the Bible actually teach the Earth is at the center of the Solar System?**

Let me begin by noting that I have studied the Bible for the last 40 years, and I have never seen a verse in the Bible that says “the Earth is at the center of the universe (or solar system), not the Sun.” Mr. Leveillee is simply wrong with his assertion that the Bible teaches a geocentric model of the universe.

## **Was Copernicus persecuted for his Heliocentrism?**

Leveillee further suggests that the only reason the Church didn’t persecute Copernicus for his Heliocentrism was that he had the good fortune to die before the church had a chance to go after him. Leveillee is simply wrong about this too.

Marcelo Gleiser has demonstrated that Copernicus suffered no persecution from the Church. Rather, and to the contrary, he was favorably received:

Did he [Copernicus] suffer religious persecution or peer criticism from the ideas [Heliocentrism] advanced in the *Commentariolus*? Evidence points to the contrary: the *Commentariolus* didn’t cause any great stir in the academic circles or harsh reprimands from his ecclesiastic superiors. If anything, Copernicus enjoyed a certain fame . . . In 1532 the personal secretary of Pope Leo X presented a seminar on Copernicus’s work to a small audience in the Vatican gardens. His ideas must have been well received, because three years later Cardinal Schoenberg, who was quite close to the Pope, urged Copernicus to ‘communicate your discoveries to the learned world’ by publishing them. This is hardly the attitude of a Church interested in suppressing new ideas.<sup>2</sup>

## **The Galileo Affair**

Let us now consider the claims that Galileo was silenced by the Christian Church that was at war with Scientific truth. We shall find that the truth is much more complicated and much less sinister. As Marcelo Gleiser explains: “Although Galileo is commonly represented as one of the greatest martyrs in the fight for freedom of expression, and the church as the intolerant villain, the truth is more complex.”<sup>3</sup>

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2 Marcelo Gleiser, *The Dancing Universe: From Creation Myths to the Big Bang*, Hanover New Hampshire (Dartmouth College Press, 1997, 2005), 73.

3 Ibid, 98.

## **The powerful Greek influence suppressing Heliocentrism**

Before we examine the details of Galileo's circumstances, we should consider why the Church resisted heliocentric theories in the first place. It wasn't because the Bible taught that the earth was at the center of the universe (our solar system). The Bible doesn't teach this! Then where did the Church ever get this idea? Simple, it borrowed it from the Greeks; that is, from Aristotle and Ptolemy.

For instance, the atheist and scientist Victor Stenger very fairly explained:

Aristotle's scientific notion was the concept that the sun revolved around Earth . . . The heliocentric view was rejected by most of the greatest minds in ancient Greece as well as by Aristotle . . . Greco-Roman scientists stuck with the idea of Earth-centered cosmology.<sup>4</sup>

The origin of the idea that 'the earth was at the center of the universe (solar system)' was widely accepted by the Greeks and the Romans. Yeager Hudson explained how these Greek and Roman ideas were then adopted by the Christian Church:

We can see this process at work in the Christian tradition during the Middle Ages when the Ptolemaic theories of astronomy were taken over and blended with biblical ideas to generate a Christian cosmology . . . Ptolemy, an astronomer who lived during the second century of the Common Era, depicted the earth as the center of the universe, with the moon, the planets, the sun, and the stars all revolving around the earth. The central place of importance this theory gave to man's habitat made it very attractive to Christian theologians, who incorporated it so fully into their doctrines that they soon forgot they had borrowed it from the secular science of the day. When scientific astronomy developed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a battle in the Christian tradition began between the defenders of the now orthodox doctrine that embraced Ptolemaic astronomy and such astronomers as Copernicus (1473–1543), Kepler (1571–1630), and Galileo (1564–1642), who taught that the earth is not the center of the universe.<sup>5</sup>

We shall soon see that staunch advocates of Aristotelian and Ptolemaic ideas in the academy were the true source of most resistance to Heliocentrism and the ensuing problems that developed

4 Victor J. Stenger, *God and the Folly of Faith: The Incompatibility of Science and Religion*, Amherst NY (Prometheus Books, 2012), 65–66.

5 Yeager Hudson, *The Philosophy of Religion*, Mountain View CA (Mayfield Publishing Company, 1991), 145–146.

with Galileo. Theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking elaborated on this idea:

He [Galileo] wrote about Copernicus's theory in Italian (not the usual academic Latin), and soon his views became widely supported outside the universities. This annoyed the Aristotelian professors, who united against him seeking to persuade the Catholic Church to ban Copernicanism.<sup>6</sup>

So, amazingly, it was academics that were driving the opposition to Galileo's heliocentric ideas—not the Church!

### **Galileo's enemies in the academy**

Timothy Moy provides some important historical context to this question:

Over the past few decades, historians of science have been reexamining the 'Galileo Affair'—Galileo's trial by the Roman Catholic Church in 1633 . . . Almost all historians agree that it was not primarily because Galileo believed in Copernican heliocentrism . . . By this point, many—perhaps most—church officials had already concluded that Copernicus's system was the most accurate.<sup>7</sup>

Peacock expanded upon the true factors that led to Galileo's conflict with the church:

He [Galileo] didn't suffer fools gladly and while he attracted admirers, he also created many enemies and displayed an acerbic nature toward those who opposed him. These were his own university colleagues . . . What of his [Galileo's] opponents? They were initially the university professors, loosely formed into an opposition, the Liga, centered in Florence.<sup>8</sup>

Again, Victor Stenger provides helpful background:

The story of Galileo's conflict with the Catholic Church is widely known and also widely misunderstood. Many authors who agree with me that science and religion are incompatible have used the Galileo affair a prime example. I expect some readers will expect me to take the same approach. However, I must bow to

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6 Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time from the Big Bang to Black Holes*, New York (Bantam Books, 1988), 179.

7 Timothy Moy, *The Galileo Affair*, in *Science and Religion: Are They Compatible?* Paul Kurtz, Editor, Amherst New York (Prometheus Books, 2003), 139.

8 Roy E. Peacock, *A Brief History of Eternity*, Wheaton IL (Crossway Books, 1990), 140 and 142.



the more expert conclusions of most contemporary historians that the story is more complicated, and that Galileo brought much of his trouble on himself.”<sup>9</sup>

It cannot be overlooked that *the battle for the heliocentric model was being fought by devout Christian believers* (Copernicus, Kepler, et al), who were striving to remove secular Ptolemaic influence from both sound science and sound theology.

### **Was the Church strictly opposed to Heliocentrism?**

We have seen the freedom, and even the support that Copernicus enjoyed from the Church as he advocated for heliocentrism. It is most likely that Galileo would have enjoyed a similar treatment from the Church if not for the opposition from his scientific peers and Galileo’s own “bull in a china shop” treatment of others.

### **The Church’s support for Galileo**

As the controversy over Galileo’s support of Heliocentrism heated up, even then, he had support in high places in the Roman Catholic Church. D’Souza explained:

Having developed a more powerful telescope than others of his day, Galileo made important new observations about the moons of Jupiter, the phases of Venus, and spots on the sun that undermined Ptolemy and were consistent with Copernican theory. Galileo took these observations to the Jesuits, who were among the leading astronomers of the day, and they agreed with him that his sightings had strengthened the case for heliocentrism.<sup>10</sup>

Gleiser added:

Even after Galileo’s support for the Copernican system was made public, he received several letters from high Church officials expressing their admiration for his work, including one from Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, soon to become Pope Urban VIII.<sup>11</sup>

Gleiser shows just how much support Galileo enjoyed at the highest levels of the Roman Catholic Church of his day:

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9 Victor J. Stenger, *God and the Folly of Faith: The Incompatibility of Science and Religion*, Amherst NY (Prometheus Books, 2012), 83.

10 Dinesh D’ Souza, *What’s So Great About Christianity*, Washington DC (Regnery Publishing, Inc, 2007) 106.

11 Marcelo Gleiser, *The Dancing Universe: From Creation Myths to the Big Bang*, Hanover New Hampshire (Dartmouth College Press, 1997, 2005), 105.

In 1623 Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, who seven years earlier had played an important role in smoothing things out for Galileo, became Pope Urban VIII. This was the opportunity Galileo was waiting for to launch a renewed attack on the Earth-centered universe of the Church. He dedicated *Il Saggiatore* to Urban and was received by him for six long audiences during the spring of 1624. The Pope's admiration for Galileo was sincere. In 1620 he had written a poem to Galileo titled "*Adualtio Perniciosa*" . . . During Galileo's visit he gave him a silver and gold medal, a pension for his son, and a glowing letter to the Tuscan court in which he wrote of all the virtues "of this great man, whose fame shines in the heavens, and goes on earth far and wide."<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, Galileo had the Church's support to write his book on Heliocentrism, provided that it was offered as a hypothesis:

In May 1630, Galileo went to Rome to make sure he could proceed with the publication of the manuscript. The Pope received him for a long audience and confirmed that he had no objection to presenting the merits of the Copernican model, as long as it was treated as a hypothesis.<sup>13</sup>

Southgate and others showed how the Church had been open to the new astronomical ideas of both Copernicus and Galileo:

We have seen too that Pope Urban had defended Copernicus' book despite disagreeing with it. Moreover, Cardinal Bellarmine, Chiefly responsible for dealing with Galileo for the Vatican until his death in 1621, was not a bigoted cleric either, but an open and thoughtful one, keenly concerned with astronomy.<sup>14</sup>

### **Galileo his own worst enemy**

Many powerful people in the Church advised Galileo to take a more tactful approach to the controversy. Yet he ignored that advice, choosing a more reckless and confrontational course, to his own detriment:

According to Francesco Niccolini, then Tuscan ambassador in Rome, the Pope was furious with Galileo . . . He felt outwitted, deceived, and betrayed by someone he held very dear.<sup>15</sup>

12 Marcelo Gleiser, *The Dancing Universe: From Creation Myths to the Big Bang*, Hanover New Hampshire (Dartmouth College Press, 1997, 2005), 114.

13 Marcelo Gleiser, *The Dancing Universe: From Creation Myths to the Big Bang*, Hanover New Hampshire (Dartmouth College Press, 1997, 2005), 114.

14 God, Humanity and the Cosmos: A Textbook in Science and Religion, Christopher Southgate and the Contributors, Harrisburg PA (Trinity Press International, 1999), 31.

15 Marcelo Gleiser, *The Dancing Universe: From Creation Myths to the Big Bang*, Hanover New Hampshire

## **The nature of the Church's punishment on Galileo**

Eventually, Galileo succumbed to Church pressure and recanted. He was sentenced to house arrest for the remainder of his life. Nevertheless, Sean McDowell points out that the “persecution” that Galileo actually endured was relatively benign:

After his trial before the Inquisition, he [Galileo] was placed under the care of the archbishop of Siena, who housed him in his beautiful palace for five months. Galileo was then released to his home in Florence where he received a church pension for the rest of his life.<sup>16</sup>

Gleiser added the interesting historical detail that:

Galileo died in 1642, the year Isaac Newton was born. All but three of his bones rest in the Church of Santa Croce, next to the remains of Michelangelo and Machiavelli. The missing ones, those of the middle finger of his right hand, are displayed under a glass dome in the Museum for the History of Science in Florence.<sup>17</sup>

In the aftermath of the Galileo affair, resistance to Heliocentrism was not so much from the Church as from scientists themselves:

Tycho Brahe, the greatest astronomer of the period, agreed that Galileo's proofs were insufficient and continued to support the geocentric theory. So great was Brahe's reputation that it prevented the conversion of many astronomers to Copernicanism until after his death.<sup>18</sup>

## **Does Christianity hinder good Science?**

It should not be left unsaid that Galileo himself was a strong Christian believer, and that such did not prevent his very fertile scientific career:

Furthermore, Galileo has a strong religious faith and was keen to relate his discoveries about the world to his Christian understanding.<sup>19</sup>

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(Dartmouth College Press, 1997, 2005), 115–116.

16 Sean McDowell Are Christianity and Science at Odds?, Chapter in True Reason: Confronting the Irrationality of the New Atheism, Tom Gilson & Carson Weitnauer, Editors, Grand Rapids MI (Kregel Publications, 2012), 194.

17 Marcelo Gleiser, The Dancing Universe: From Creation Myths to the Big Bang, Hanover New Hampshire (Dartmouth College Press, 1997, 2005), 119.

18 Dinesh D' Souza, What's So Great About Christianity, Washington DC (Regnery Publishing, Inc, 2007) ,106.

19 God, Humanity and the Cosmos: A Textbook in Science and Religion, Christopher Southgate and the Contributors, Harrisburg PA (Trinity Press International, 1999), 30.

Indeed, the controversy expanded to involve the Church, but its roots were far from the simplistic picture often offered that suggest a cleavage between science and faith. Moy adds:

Unfortunately, Galileo's trouble with the Church later became a popular archetype for the historical relationship between science and religion. Nothing could be farther from the truth. For most of the medieval and Renaissance periods, and even stretching into the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the primary supporter of research and teaching in the sciences was the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, one historian of science, John Heilbron, has recently published a book entitled *The Sun in the Church* that documents how the Church, in the aftermath of the Galileo affair, continued to promote research into evidence for heliocentrism, even to the point of turning entire cathedrals into giant pinhole cameras to measure the apparent diameter in the solar disk at various times of the year.<sup>20</sup>

Vern Bullough agreed that the Church has had a positive influence on modern intellectual growth:

The early Christian Church in the West had a strong intellectual tradition. In fact, one of the reasons it appealed to intellectuals is that it incorporated much of classical learning into its theology.<sup>21</sup>

Catholic philosopher Stephen Barr reacted to the argument that the Christian Church has been an enemy of scientific progress:

The fact is that the attitude of the Church has overwhelmingly been one of friendliness to scientific inquiry. Long before Galileo, and continuing to the present day, one can find examples in every century, not merely of church patronage of science, but of important scientific figures who were themselves monks, priests, and even bishops.<sup>22</sup>

We have seen that the idea that the Christian Church fought to prevent the success of Heliocentrism in the case of Galileo is a myth and nothing else. The reality is that the scientists that gave birth to Heliocentrism, and indeed to modern science itself, were devout followers of the faith of Jesus Christ.

20 Timothy Moy, *The Galileo Affair*, 143.

21 Vern Bullough, *Science and Religion in Historical Perspective*, in Timothy Moy, *The Galileo Affair*, in *Science and Religion: Are They Compatible?* Paul Kurtz, Editor, Amherst New York (Prometheus Books, 2003), 131.

22 Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*, Notre Dame IN (University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 8–9. Barr proceeded to provide a very impressive and informative list of accomplished scientists who were also committed Christian believers.

# 18 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WHAT CHRISTADELPHIANS TEACH AND WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

by Bary Gaudrealt

## INTRODUCTION:

In this article we will explore whether the Christadelphian Church (*ecclesia*) is a true Christian denomination or a cult. All documentation is from Christadelphian sources, followed by a Biblical response to determine if the Christadelphian claim is in accordance with Scriptural Truth.

The Christadelphian documents quoted in this article are from (a) *Christadelphian Statement of Faith*<sup>1</sup>, (b) *Doctrines to be Rejected*<sup>2</sup>, (c) *Our Faith and Beliefs*<sup>3</sup>, and (d) *The Christadelphians: What They Believe and Preach*<sup>4</sup>. All Bible quotes are from the New King James Version.

## I. Is there just One Person in the Godhead—God the Father—or is there One God subsisting as Three Persons (The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit)?

**A. Christadelphian: God is not triune in nature.** “We reject the doctrine—that God is three persons.” (DR. See also TCBP, pp. 84–87).

## B. Bible: God is triune in nature (The Trinity).

1. “Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that *there* is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us *there* is one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom *we live*.” (1 Corinthians 8:4–6)

2. “Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I *was* there. And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit Have sent Me.” (Isaiah 48:16)

1 <http://www.christadelphia.org/basf.php>, and abbreviated here as SF.

2 <http://www.christadelphia.org/reject.php>, and abbreviated here as DR.

3 <http://www.christadelphia.org/belief.php>, and abbreviated here as FB.

4 Harry Tennant, *What They Believe and Preach*, (The Christadelphian, 1986), and abbreviated here as WTBP.

3. “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:16–17)

4. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

## **II. Is God the Father present everywhere by His “underived energy” or force—or is He Himself Omnipresent?**

A. Christadelphian: God is not omnipresent. “The ONE FATHER, dwelling in unapproachable light, yet everywhere present by His Spirit, which is a unity with His person in heaven. He hath, out of His own underived energy, created heaven and earth, and all that in them is.” (SF )

### **B. Bible: God the Father is in Himself omnipresent.**

1. But who is able to build Him a temple, since the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who *am* I then, that I should build Him a temple, except to burn sacrifice before Him? (2 Chronicles 2:6)

2. “Am I a God near at hand,” says the LORD, “And not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?” says the LORD; “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” says the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:23–24)

## **III. Is God the Source of Evil?**

A. Christadelphian: God is the source of evil. “God stands alone and unrivaled in the universe, the source of all good and evil.” (<http://www.christadelphia.org/belief.php>)

### **B. Bible: God is not the source of evil.**

1. God is completely Holy: “And one [angel/seraphim] cried to another and said; “Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts; The whole earth *is* full of His glory!” (Isaiah 6:3)

2. who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen. (1 Timothy 6:16)

3. This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)

#### **IV. Did Jesus coeternally exist with the Father?**

**A. Christadelphian: Christ did not eternally exist with the Father.** “We reject the doctrine—that the Son of God was co-eternal with the Father.” (DR. See also TCBP, pp. 85–86)

#### **B. Bible: Christ coeternally existed with the Father.**

1. Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What *is* His name, and what *is* His Son’s name, If you know? (Proverbs 30:4)

2. But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting.” (Micah 5:2)

3. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. (John 17:5)

#### **V. Was Jesus Christ Immaculate?**

**A. Christadelphian: Christ was not immaculate.** “We reject the doctrine—that Christ’s nature was immaculate.” (DR)

#### **B. Bible: Christ was *and Is* Immaculate.**

1. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who* is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; (Hebrews 7:26)

2. “Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth;” (1 Peter 2:22)

#### **VI. Was Jesus Christ a mere man or was He 100% God and 100% Man?**

**A. Christadelphian: We believe that Jesus is a Man, not God!** “We believe that Jesus is a Man, not God! We believe that the Bible is quite clear in its presentation that Christ is a man. The Son of God, but certainly not God Himself. The bulk of mainstream Christianity has staked its life on the assertion that Jesus is God. However, this is to be rejected for the following inescapable reasons, and many more...” (FB)

**B. Bible: Jesus as both God in nature and Man in nature, yet One Person.**

1. For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

2. of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen. (Romans 9:5)

3. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;” (Colossians 2:9)

**C. Bible: Jesus was, and always will be, God—fully possessing His divine attributes.**

1. *Eternal God.*

a. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

b. of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen. (Romans 9:5)

2. *Immutable.*

a. *Like a cloak you will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, and your years will not fail.* (Hebrews 1:12)

b. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

3. *Omnipresent.*

a. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:20)

b. teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:20)

4. *Omniscient.*

a. But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?” (Matthew 9:4)



b. He said to him the third time, “Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, you know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to Him, “Feed My sheep.” (John 21:17)

#### 5. *Omnipotent.*

a. “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8)

b. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:3)

c. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. (Colossians 1:16)

### VII. Did Jesus as a man have a sin nature?

**A. Christadelphian: Jesus shares man’s sin nature.** “Therefore we conclude that it is not only that Jesus was called a sinner at his trial by his enemies, or that he was “numbered with the transgressors” when he was crucified between two thieves, but more particularly that he shared the very nature which had made a sinner out of every other man who was born in it. It is for this reason that the nature we bare is called “sinful flesh” or more briefly, “sin.” (TCBP, p. 74)

#### **B. Bible: Jesus nature was completely flawless.**

1. *He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit:* Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows; After His mother was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18)

2. *He is called Holy One:* And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

3. *He is referred to as knowing no sin:* For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

## **VIII. Did Jesus die as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the world?**

**A. Christadelphian: No, He did not die a substitutionary death.** “We reject as unbiblical the idea that Christ could die as a replacement sacrifice for us, thus covering all our sins forever with that one act. Certainly it is through his sacrifice that we may be forgiven, but only if we walk the path of self-denial that he marked out for us.” (FB)

### **B. Bible: Yes, Christ died a substitutionary death on behalf of the sinner.**

1. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16.)
2. But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)
3. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit...” (1 Peter 3:18)

## **IX. Is the Holy Spirit God’s divine energy or is He One of the Three Persons in the triune Godhead?**

**A. Christadelphian: The Holy Spirit is God’s divine energy.** “God fills all creation. All of its activity is because of His wise and sustaining Spirit, the divine energy working out His gracious purpose.” (TCBP, p.115)

### **B. Bible: The Holy Spirit is One of the Three Persons in the Godhead (Trinity)**

1. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (John 14:26 )
2. But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. (John 15:26)
3. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:2)

4. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (Jude 20, 21)

## **X. Does man have an immortal soul in him?**

### **A. Christadelphian: Man does not have an immortal soul within him.**

“We reject the doctrine—that man has an immortal soul.” (DR. See also TCBP, p. 17.)

### **B. Bible: Man does have an immortal soul within him.**

1. Why are you cast down, O my soul? And *why* are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him *For* the help of His countenance. (Psalm 42:5)

2. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

3. For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

## **XI. The Gospel: Is it not the death, burial and resurrection of Our Lord—or is there more to it?**

**A. Christadelphian: The gospel is not merely the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.** “We reject the doctrine—that the Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ merely.” Christadelphian Statement of Faith (DR)

### **B. Bible: The Gospel is no more and no less than the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

1. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For you will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; In your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:9–11)

2. Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—

unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. (1 Corinthians 15:1–5)

## **XII. Is salvation achieved by believing in the Gospel message alone or by keeping the Commandments along with good works?**

**A. Christadelphian: Man is saved by the gospel plus by keeping the commandments of Christ.** “We reject the doctrine—that the Gospel alone will save, without obedience to Christ’s commandments.” Christadelphian Statement of Faith (DR)

### **B. Bible: Man is saved by faith alone apart from works.**

1. But we are all like an unclean *thing*, And all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags; We all fade like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away. (Isaiah 64:6)

2. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. (Roman 3:28)

3. not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)

## **XIII. Salvation: By Baptism or by the Gospel?**

**A. Christadelphian: Baptism is necessary for salvation.** “We reject the doctrine—that baptism is not necessary to salvation.” Christadelphian Statement of Faith (DR. See also CWBP, pp. 71, 72, 207–210)

### **B. Bible: Salvation is by Gospel message alone.**

1. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. (1 Corinthians 1:17)

2. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. (Romans 1:16)

#### **XIV. Where is the only True Church?**

**A. Christadelphian: “But why should we the Christadelphians deserve any more attention than any other groups of “believers,”** many claiming to be based on the Bible? The brief answer is this: their understanding of the teaching of the Bible is quite different from that of other denominations. The difference arose from the conviction of one, John Thomas, that the teachings he was encountering in ‘Christendom’ 150 years ago did not truly represent the faith of Christ and his apostles. Persuaded that the truth must be sought only in the Bible, he embarking upon a conscious study of the Scriptures. He made no claim to any vision or personal revelation. He eventually came to an understanding of “the gospel of the kingdom of God and in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12) which was different in a number of important points from that of other churches and other religious sects. His labours attracted the support of others who were convinced of the validity of his conclusions. The understanding of Bible truths has been rigorously tested by free enquiry for 150 years. The distinctive views of the Christadelphians today are a result of this process.” Fred Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians?* (Tract, p. 3)

#### **Bible: The true Church of Christ is characterized and recognized by:**

1. *Christ is its founder.* “... looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

2. *Christ is its head.*

a. And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church” (Ephesians 1:22)

b. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Colossians 1:18)

3. *It consists of Spirit-baptized believers in Christ* (born again).

a. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

b. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” (John 3:6–7)

4. *Believers form the Spiritual temple of God indwelt by the Holy Spirit.* ...in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:21–22)

5. *It is unified by the triune Godhead.* There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

6. *The church believed in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers.* And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Acts 2:42)

7. *Meeting on Sunday, the first day of the week.*

a. Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. (Acts 20:7)

b. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first *day* of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. (1 Corinthians 16:1–2)

## **XV. Does man continue to consciously exist after death?**

**A. Christadelphian: The soul ceases to exist at the time of death.** “We reject the doctrine—that man consciously exists in death.” (DR. See also TCBP, p. 17.)

**B. Bible: The Bible clearly teaches that when one dies his soul departs from the body.**

1. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8)

2. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. (Philippians 1:23–24)

3. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (Luke 16:22–23)

## **XVI. Do the dead rise in an immortal state?**

**A. Christadelphian: “We reject the doctrine—that the dead rise in an immortal state.” (DR)**

**B. Bible: Christians believe their mortal body, whether dead or alive, will rise and be changed into an immortal state.**

1. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” (1 Corinthians 15:51–54)

2. who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. (Philippians 3:21)

## **XVII. Does the believer go to heaven at the time of death?**

**A. Christadelphian: No, believers do not go to heaven when they die.** “We reject the doctrine—that the righteous will ascend to the kingdoms beyond the skies when they die?” (DR)

**B. Bible: Yes, the believer does go to heaven at the time of death.**

1. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8)

2. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. (Philippians 1:23–24)

## **XVIII. Satan (The Devil): Is he a literal supernatural being?**

**A. Christadelphian: Satan is not a literal supernatural being.** “We reject the doctrine—that the devil is a supernatural being.” Christadelphian Statement of Faith (DR)

**B. Bible: The Devil is a real literal being who desires to oppose the Will of God and deceive saints as well as unbelievers.**

1. *He was a created spirit being (a cherub).* You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. (Ezekiel 28:15)

2. *The Lake of Fire was created for Satan and his angels.* Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' (Matthew 25:41)

3. *He is deceptively called an angel of light.* And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14)

4. *He is called the Christians adversary.* Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1Peter 5:8)

5. *He is referred to as being a murderer.* You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. (John 8:44)

6. *He is referred to as being the prince of the power of the air and as a spirit.* ... in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience... (Ephesians 2:2)



## **LIBERALISM: ITS OVER-ALL POSITION: WHAT IT IS**

by John E. Dahlin, former President of RAS

Many people have only a vague idea of the difference between liberals and evangelicals. It will be my purpose in this article to define as sharply as possible the major areas of distinctions between the two groups. This is best achieved, I believe, by pointing out the standard concepts of the liberals. Let me begin by being as generous as possible to those who bear the label: liberals.

First of all, those who are theologically identified as liberals generally display a high regard for the Bible. They do not burn the Scriptures; neither do they ridicule the Word of God. But the Bible, so far as they are concerned, is not completely authoritative in all matters. Liberals are disinclined to accept the Bible literally; hence their acceptance of it must be regarded as only relative or conditional. Almost without an exception the liberalists accept only the portions of the Scriptures which may be reconciled to man's intellect. In other words, they rationalize the Bible, and it is not regarded as the inerrant, infallible revelation of the eternal God. It might be said also, they agree that the Bible contains the word of God, yet without an exception the verbal inspiration, or the plenary view of inspiration, is rejected. Let us select an example or two to illustrate it: The creation account in Genesis is not accepted literally. In other words, the Biblical account is not an authoritative presentation of the literal origin of life. An outstanding professor, who is widely known in America, stated to me a few years ago, that not a single professor of his own denominational seminary accepted the creation account in Genesis literally. So far as my knowledge extends, all liberals accept the biological theory of evolution in some form, although some of them may accept the principle of theistic evolution. By that they imply that God introduced the original process, or law, and it has been ongoing throughout the innumerable millenniums since that starting point was initiated by Him.

Usually liberals have great praise for the person of Jesus Christ. The historicity of the Lord is not denied. In fact, they talk freely about His teachings, and as they do so, often a great devotion to Him is manifested. The Christ of the liberalist, however, is another Jesus, and He is not the Lord Jesus Christ of the evangelicals. Their Christ is simply the great example, the ideal man, the peerless teacher, and the flower of the human race. His blood-atonement is rejected, and a vicarious death is not regarded as necessary for the salvation of

man. If the liberals are pinned down for a definite explanation, they will acknowledge Christ as the Son of God, in a sense in which all of us are the sons of God, with the exception, of course, that He had achieved a much greater understanding of the Heavenly Father than the rest of us.

Again, it might well be said the liberals masquerade in a kind of superior scholarship. They feel sorry for those of us who still adhere to a strict, conservative position. In their writings they seldom, if ever, cite or quote any conservative author. I would like to turn then to the Pauline admonition, "Let no man think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but let him think soberly. . ." Genuine humility seems to be lacking when they discuss the Biblical doctrines. Harry Emerson Fosdick, the high priest of liberalism, states that the modern mind cannot accept the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

Moreover, the liberals reject miracles, especially Old Testament accounts which have a supernatural setting. Regarding the miracles in conjunction with Christ's ministry, liberals believe the Gospel narrators in their complete devotion to their great master simply wanted to give additional effect to the ministry of our Lord which they depicted. Such reasoning is not only illogical, but rather stupid. One can never aid a leader whom one loves and admires by telling untruths about him. Other liberals might say, Christ, who was a gentleman, did not wish to openly take issue with current opinions and accepted ideas of His generation. This reasoning is equally fallacious since Christ frequently collided with opinions of men in His own day. Liberals always seek to explain away the miracles of the Bible for their subjective thinking does not allow the supernatural elements in the Word of God.

The most serious deviation of the liberals is on the subject of Christ's atonement. What does the death of Jesus Christ mean to the liberal? If you can persuade the liberal to emerge from his low visibility, where he hides himself in his rhetoric, he will state the death of Jesus was the great example of perfect obedience and love for others, and that it has a very great effect upon all who contemplate it, also that it tends to draw men to God through this sacrificial love of Jesus. In other words, the liberal would have you believe that Christ's death simply created a desire, or a willingness on the part of man to do right and go God's way. This explanation may sound both refined as well as plausible, but it ignores the Scriptural teaching regarding the cross. Paul's theology contradicts the liberals altogether, as e.g., "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, . . ." I Cor. 15:3. "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." Rom. 5:9.

Not only do the liberals explain away the significance of Christ's death, but they also reject the teachings of Christ's bodily resurrection from the dead. They will confess, of course, that they believe in the triumph of the spirit, and the perseverance of the spirit after death. But they do not believe that Christ, who was dead and buried in Joseph's tomb, rose bodily from the dead. Again, they are contradicted by Paul, who places the resurrection as the cornerstone itself upon which New Testament Christianity rests. His masterful arguments as recorded in I Cor. 15, somehow do not convince the liberals that the bodily resurrection of Christ took place literally as presented in the Gospels. At no point are the liberals at a greater variance with the evangelicals than on the doctrine of the resurrection.

In the foregoing paragraphs I have endeavored to contrast the position of the liberals over against the stand of the evangelicals. In all fairness to the liberals, however, it must be admitted they have a positive program of their own which they earnestly seek to promote. First of all, they are completely dedicated to promote humanitarianism. Along that whole front, they are seeking to advance the cause of human welfare, that is, alleviating the suffering of the down-trodden and the underprivileged. Indeed, they do seek to erase many of the existing inequalities and injustices extant. It is their conviction the church should take a lead in correcting the social and economic evils of the age. This is to be achieved through education, dissemination of literature and propaganda. It is a very comprehensive program, indeed, for it involves slum clearance, betterment of race relationships, purging of politics, and ending the exploitation of the poor and weak. Their whole program is dedicated to a betterment of conditions here, with the ultimate goal of achieving the universal brotherhood of man. This is a pet slogan of liberals, along with the companion phrase, the universal Fatherhood of God.

No sensible evangelical is opposed to humanitarian efforts, but the church does not have the time, nevertheless, to carry out such a diversified social program. Primarily, the church has been commissioned to be His witnesses. There just is not room for a proper emphasis of all the humanitarian programs and do justice to the preaching of the Gospel which has been committed as a trust. Neither Christ nor Paul devoted much time in attempting to change-over the Roman empire politically. They did not even launch crusades against slavery. They knew when the Gospel is declared it will do more to improve conditions among men than all other remedies put together. Obviously, evangelicals will champion or support the right where-ever it is possible to assert an influence, but the major efforts cannot be given over to humanitarianism.

If you have followed me carefully through these paragraphs, I am sure, you are aware of a very great cleavage between the liberals and the evangelicals on fundamental matters. Actually, the position of the liberals is diametrically opposed to that which is recognized as evangelicalism. Let me summarize the matter further in a final statement. Liberalism has presented a limited Christ, in fact, a damaged Christ, one who was not supernaturally born, who worked no miracles, whose death had no atoning merit, and whose bodily resurrection never occurred. Moreover, liberals seek to salvage all that seems good in the Bible, using their subjective thinking in selecting what to preserve and the parts to be discarded. If Science and the Bible seem to be in contradiction, then Science must be given priority. For all practical purposes liberalism reduces Christianity to a religion only somewhat better than other religious systems developed throughout the course of human history. Perhaps the most tragic thing after all is that liberalism undermines the very authority of the Holy Scriptures. Since they have chosen to take such a path, it is logical that they also rationalize the doctrines of sin and salvation, heaven and hell. We who are evangelical cannot be neutral in this ongoing conflict. The situation is too serious for us to sit on the sidelines, or to remain as spectators gaping at the struggle within the domain of Christendom. This is truly the time to recite our creed and our beliefs. More than that, we need to commit ourselves unreservedly to the position we know to be right. Liberalism may after all turn out to be more dangerous than the combined efforts put forth by the numerous cults or isms which are flourishing in our generation.

*This was previously published in the 1st Quarter 1957 Discerner.*

## QUIZ: BIBLICAL TRIVIA

1. How many books in the New Testament of a Protestant Bible?
  - a. 13
  - b. 14
  - c. 27
  - d. 46
2. How many books in the Old Testament of the Protestant Bible?
  - a. 22
  - b. 24
  - c. 26
  - d. 39
3. Who had the longest recorded age in the Bible?
  - a. Adam
  - b. Methuselah
  - c. Job
  - d. Noah
4. After Judas betrayed Jesus and committed suicide, which disciple replaced him?
  - a. Malthus
  - b. Joseph called Barsabbas
  - c. Justus
  - d. Matthias
5. What is the longest book in the Bible (has the most verses)?
  - a. Isaiah
  - b. Jeremiah
  - c. Genesis
  - d. Psalms

6. Which person was not a part of the apostle Paul's missionary team?
- a. Stephen the Martyr
  - b. Luke
  - c. Timothy
  - d. Silas
7. Who succeeded Elijah as prophet in Israel?
- a. Elijah's son Elkanah
  - b. Elisha
  - c. Enoch
  - d. Samuel
8. Which is not true of the biblical Joseph
- a. He married the Jewess Judith
  - b. He was sold into slavery by his brothers
  - c. He was falsely accused assaulting Potiphar's wife
  - d. He interpreted dreams by divine power
9. Which is not true of Moses
- a. He murdered a man and fled Egypt when it was discovered.
  - b. He floated in a basket on the Nile River as an infant
  - c. He revealed the 10 commandments at the base of the Pyramids in Egypt.
  - d. He led the Israelites through the Red Sea on dry land.
10. What is the shortest verse in the King James Version of the Bible?

Answers:

1. c; 2. d; 3. B; 4. d; 5. d; 6. a; 7. b; 8. A; 9. c; 10. „Jesus wept“ John 11:35

**Personal Notes on the Articles:**

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