

Truth in the Crosshairs

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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Well, there goes my eternal reward. What can you say? That's terrible. I tell you, there's a mutual admiration society going on here and I love this man deeply for many, many reasons. His passion for the truth and for the God of the truth is certainly at the head of the list. But his willingness to humble himself before the truth is a great benediction to me, and we just enjoy being together and I just cherish every moment and every opportunity I have for that.

This particular assignment that I've been given is pretty formidable, to talk about the attacks on the Bible, that is a massive subject. And I'm not scholastic, I'm a pastor and so I will confess to you that I will approach this as a pastor would and I hope it will be a manageable look at the vastness of this attack and at the same time you won't get bogged down in a lot of detail.

Let me start with a quote from Martin Luther. "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God except that point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however, boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point," end quote. This is not a place where we can flinch.

As Patricia and I were driving in tonight, watching all of you flow in here, I said to her, I said, "A common motivation here for all these people is the love of the truth, that's why you're here. You want the truth." The battle for the Bible is the battle for the truth. That's what energizes me every day of my life. And the truth is under relentless and endless assault, as we all know.

And a good place, I think, to begin to look at this, I am a Bible teacher primarily and so I always like to go to the text. Open your Bible to the third chapter of Genesis...the third chapter of Genesis, and I want to talk a little bit about the first assault on the Word, when the war really began. Genesis chapter 3, a very familiar portion of Scripture, I know, to all of us but to just begin at this point is really critical.

"The serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And He said to the woman, 'Indeed, has God said, you shall not eat from any tree of the garden?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but from the fruit of the tree

which is in the middle of the garden, God has said you shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.' And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die, for God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"

This is where Satan established the title that he's given by our Lord in John 8:44, the father of lies. Here is the source of the first lie. And the first lie is that God didn't tell you the truth. Only in lying is Satan consistent. Everything else in him is inconsistent. Everything else in him is deception. And he begins with what sounds like an innocuous and innocent question from a sort of neutral interested observer concerned for Eve's well being. Soon, however, he says that he knows more than God. God is wrong and I am right. God said you'll die, and I'll tell you, you won't.

This is essentially what happens here. God says one thing and Satan says God is a liar and another thing is the truth. Let's follow the strategy a little bit because I think it's very constructive. At least picking it up in the middle of verse 2, he says to the woman, "Indeed, has God said you shall not eat from any tree of the garden?" His beginning is safe enough. He just asks a simple question. Indeed, has God said? He chooses *Elohim* rather than *Yahweh*, the emphasis on sovereign Lord. And here you have the first question in the Bible. This is actually posing the first dilemma in human history. There were no dilemmas until this one. And the question is designed to start Eve on the path of doubting God's Word. And doubting God's Word is the essence of sin. You could actually translate this, So God has said, has He? And for the first time, the most deadly spiritual force was covertly smuggled into the world. What was it? The assumption that what God has said is subject to human judgment.

And then Satan repeated essentially what God said. "You shall not eat from any tree of the garden," but he turns it from a positive to a negative perverting and inverting the emphasis on not eating to press the issue of prohibition. And this is a set up for the main assault that is to come on the Word of God, as we'll see. The implication is a further step. God's Word can be, God's Word should be evaluated, judged, questioned. And he picks the issue of the limitation that God put on Adam and Eve, just that one tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And his point is to get them to believe, beginning with Eve, that God is unnecessarily restrictive, is unnecessarily narrow, limiting. There's something in God's character, he implies, that makes Him want to hold back something from you that you should have. He for some reason restrains your free will and by restraining that, He's withholding some delight from you, some pleasure, some joy, some level of satisfaction, some fulfillment. "Ah, you know God, He wants to take away your choices, wants to crimp your freedom, limits your rights. You know what? Underneath it all He might not really be that loving and caring, and maybe if that's the way He presents Himself, you just can't trust Him."

Satan is, of course, subtly at the same time suggesting to Eve that he's more devoted to her well being than God is because he wants her to have full freedom to do whatever she wants and to make whatever choice she wants to make. He is the one who is concerned about her real rights and her

true happiness.

So Satan has set in her mind the idea that the one prohibition is evidence of some kind of divine character flaw, casting a suspicion on God's goodness and the viability of His word or its trustworthiness. Not right now at this moment is Eve ready to totally cave in, so in verse 2 the woman said to the serpent, "Well, from the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat." There's plenty more, and she in a weak way sets out to somewhat defend God. God has certainly put a limitation but there are plenty of other alternatives. It's not a strong defense of God. She should have strongly defended Him, she knew God, she knew God's goodness. She knew His perfection. She knew His holiness. She knew He had given a crystal-clear unmistakable and unambiguous command and she should have been suspicious of a talking snake. Really she should have made an emphatic denial of this attempt to question God, or to even introduce the right to somebody to question God.

Verse 3, she says, "From the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'"

Ah now, she's starting to feel, maybe God is limiting and she adds a little touch there, didn't she? The word "touch." And so she's moving down that path that God is restrictive and He says if you eat of that tree or touch it...that isn't recorded that God said that. She's starting to buy the restraint here. And as soon as one does not completely and wholeheartedly and unreservedly trust in the Word of God as absolutely true, and the source of our highest joy and greatest good and deepest satisfaction and broadest pleasure and most consummate fulfillment, then mistrust has gained a foothold of sin in the heart and the Fall happened there. It didn't happen when she ate, it happened when she didn't trust. She goes beyond what God said, we can't even touch it, and so she's adding this...Yeah, it is a restrictive thing. Process is at work. God is unnecessarily restricting. That's when the Fall happened, right there, what follows is the evidence of it.

Satan moves in for a full denial. He knows exactly what she's thinking because he can hear what she says and the serpent boldly, blatantly, flatly says to the woman, "You surely shall not die, God told you...what?...a lie. You're not going to die, it's just that God wants to restrain you. He's got this character flaw, He wants to mess with your liberty and impinge on your freedom. You won't die. God didn't tell you the truth. You can't trust His Word as revealed. It doesn't have your best interest in mind, it isn't the path of the truest fulfillment."

She believed ever so slightly that God was flawed, that God was deceptive, that God was needlessly limiting, that God was holding back her joy. And she had actually believed that there was judgment, but God lied, there's no judgment. You can do that even though He said not to do it. You won't die. God doesn't tell you the truth and particularly He doesn't tell you the truth about judgment. It's your life, Eve, live it the way you want. Don't let God put these restraints on you holding some sword over your head as if that in fact were the case. Hey, no boundaries, Ford Motor Company...no rules,

Outback...No limits, no consequences, no judgment...that is the big lie, isn't it? Live any way you want.

Furthermore, a God who would put those kinds of limits on you doesn't really love you, He's all law. I'm all love. Satan says, "Hey, do what you want. I'm all love. I won't put any restraints on you. I'm love, not law. He's law, not love."

Well the question immediately pops in your mind, "Well why would God be like this? Why would He be like this?" Oh, Satan says in verse 5, "Because God knows that in the day you eat from that tree, your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God, knowing good and evil. There's a bizarre twist here. God hates rivals and He knows if you eat of that tree, you're going to be His equal, He's envious, He's jealous. He knows if you do that, you'll be as free as He is because He's free to do anything He wants. So do what you want and be as free as God. You will be God."

So the father of lies, that little sequence brought down the whole human race on the premise that God's Word can't be trusted. He's flawed. Contrast Jesus' perfect trust in the Word of God when Satan came after Him and three times He repeats the scriptures in answer to the enemy. Without taking time to trace the full flow of the satanic assault on the truth that began in the Garden of Eden, I'll leave that to you, that's not my assignment tonight. Scripture reveals in the history of redemption as the Old Testament and the New Testament continue to flow to the book of Revelation, this endless, relentless battle of error to destroy truth. There is in the Bible an almost endless litany of false prophets, false teachers, liars, false apostles, deceivers from Genesis to Revelation. And since the canon was closed and the Word of God once for all delivered to the saints, the battle has not diminished at all. It was this very battle at the Reformation, the battle for *sola scriptura*, wasn't it?

That defined everything. Jim Boice, whom we all miss, R.C. told me when Jim Boice died, it was God's judgment on America. For ten years we were involved with him in the inerrancy battle, making forays into that particular dimension of Satan's attacks, but it can't be limited to that. The battle roars on so many fronts that it's almost impossible for me to address them all.

Let me see if I can't give you some sense of the nature of the current battle against the Bible. But I will say one thing at the first that will cover the ground. Any attack on the truth from anywhere is an attack on the Bible. Fair enough? I don't care where it comes from. Any attack on the truth is an attack on the Bible. So since we're in the war now, you've got to give me a little space, a little slack, I want to identify the issue as specifically as I can, so I'm going to give you some things that are in print. I'm not going to pick on people in private conversations, but I want you to understand how effective this battle is and how vigilant we have to be.

What shocks me in the battle, the war on the Word, is how often we are hit by friendly fire. Tenth anniversary issue of a wonderful periodical, "Modern Reformation," an article written by a minister in

the PCA. In that article called “The Insufficiency of Scripture,” it suggests that Scripture is not a complete guide to life as most Reformed people think it is. The author argues that the information given to us in Scripture, for example, is not sufficient to tell us how to have successful marriages. He says, and I quote, “Whereas Scripture teaches us that marriage is a lifelong commitment, Scripture is manifestly not sufficient...it’s a quote...to teach people how to attain that end. Oh yes, Scripture contains some broad principles, such as those encountered in Ephesians 5 or in Proverbs 29, but for all the evangelical talk about roles of men and women, such talk has obviously not produced happy or successful marriages,” end quote.

The author says ten years ago he believed in the full sufficiency of Scripture in harmony with the standard reformed position on the matter. Today he suggests that those who drafted the first chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith might have stated the case better if they had changed their language a little. In chapter 1, section 6, the Confession says that the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation and faith and life is either expressly set down in Scripture or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture. We all know that. The writer of this article said, quote: “The entire matter would have been better expressed had the divines articulated a more manifestly covenantal statement indicating that the scriptures are a sufficient guide to the various covenants God has made with various covenant people,” end quote.

In a vague way, he particularly suggests that the expression “faith and life” ought to be interpreted only in the narrowest religious sense. Now here’s the amazing part to me. What made him, this author, back away from the unqualified affirmation that the Bible contains all things necessary for God’s glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, what made him back away? He changed his mind about biblical sufficiency when he saw a survey. Survey says... The survey indicated that the divorce rate among evangelicals is about the same or worse than the divorce rate among unbelievers. Any of you hear about that? Here’s what he writes, this author.

“The large practical matter that has influenced my thinking about the matter of the sufficiency of Scripture has been the publication of findings that the evangelical divorce rate is roughly the same as that of unbelievers. If we ask why evangelicals divorce at the same rate as those who do not necessarily recognize the Bible as a source of authoritative guidance, the answer must be something like this...” and then he goes on to quote what I said, that Scripture is manifestly not sufficient to teach people how to attain that end. Not even arguing that point, which I think we could all argue. Two Spirit-filled people walking in Christ are probably going to get along okay. The writer goes on to suggest that believing in the sufficiency of Scripture probably will work against the success of your marriage.

He writes, and I quote, “I would suggest that part of the reason our unbelieving friends succeed as often in marriage as we do is that they are never hoodwinked by any misunderstanding of the

sufficiency of Scripture,” end quote.

Where did he get this survey? Well it came from the Barna Research Group and it was released in December of '99 with a press release titled, “Christians are more likely to experience divorce than non-Christians.” The press release had the following statistics, “Twenty seven percent of Born-Again Christians have been divorced compared to twenty-four percent of non-Christians who have been divorced.” If I may add a footnote, there was nothing in the survey cause I went back through all of it, through all of their organization to get this information, nothing in the survey, first of all, indicated whether these people had the divorce after or before they became Christians. So the statistic is useless anyway, but let's take it at face value. Twenty-seven percent of born-again Christians have been divorced compared to twenty-four of others. And he...the survey also added that the divorce rate of atheists and agnostics was only twenty-one percent. So they seem to have better ability to stay married than born-again people.

And, you know, I began to follow this because I was called by a newspaper and asked to respond to it when it came out and I said, “I don't believe it...I don't believe it. I don't believe...I think that's impossible and I've done a little research since that time.” So I went back to find out, how do you determine who's born again, fair enough? And so I got their information off the web site, two questions...question number one, have you ever made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is important in your life? If you answered yes to that, you move to question two. Question two, when I die, I will go to heaven because I have confessed my sins and accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior.

They said yes to the first question and chose that second answer out of several choices. They could check a box off, they were categorized as born again. Obviously in a culture where language about accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior has become cliché, the answer to those two questions certainly don't give sufficient warrant to classify someone as genuinely born again.

In case you wonder about that, forty-five percent of those people who were born again agree that Satan is not a living being, but only a symbol of evil. So they don't believe the Bible. Thirty-four percent of those born again people believe that if a person is good enough, they can earn their place in heaven. Twenty-eight percent agree that while He lived on earth, Jesus committed sins just like everybody else. Fifteen percent of these born-again people in the same study claim that after He was crucified and died, Jesus Christ did not return to life physically. Twenty-six percent stated it doesn't matter what faith you follow because they all teach the same thing.

I can understand the folly of the survey. I can't understand denying the sufficiency of Scripture and rewriting the Westminster Confession off of that. Folks, that's friendly fire, but that's deadly stuff...that's deadly stuff. And I don't care who it is, I don't care if it's Billy Graham, or Robert Schuller, or whoever, when these guys get together and talk about how God has a wider mercy than just the gospel and there are people who have never heard the gospel, have never read the Bible, don't know

the name of Jesus and they're going to heaven. They may call themselves evangelical and well they may be, but that's deadly friendly fire, devastating to the truth of God and literally annihilates discernment.

Now let me just give you some categories of attacks. I better...we've got to watch here. I'm just going to give you a few categories, you can fill in the blanks, okay?

First is the attack from the critics. You know, the old German liberalism, Droff Wellhousen, Higher Criticism, all of that. And I honestly think nobody in the world would know those guys even lived if we just left them dead and we have to resurrect them and they're better off very deep. But you know all of that, Higher Criticism(???) and how it poisoned all the wells of the churches in Europe and in America. You know, even though we won that battle, I think we fought it and fought it and fought it and won and I think ten years of the inerrancy congress did a tremendous amount. You know, it hangs on the body like a plague. The contemporary version of it you saw on ABC with Peter Jennings. "The Search for the Real Jesus." He interviewed a whole lot of people who didn't know who He was or where He was. If you want to find Jesus, you don't ask a whole lot of people who don't know Him.

And then you follow the Jesus Seminar, that's the latest space in the silly religious sections of papers. They are, of course, dead and blind to the truth, but they don't know that. And they make decisions about whether what Jesus said, according to Scripture, He really said. And have a curious polling procedure...by the way, I'm reading a little article, I'm quoting me here, so bear with me...I know that's an odd thing to do, it's like the Baptist preacher, you know, who preached such a great sermon that he autographed his own Bible. But I just want you to..I just go through it quicker if I read what I wrote on this some time back.

Here's the curious polling procedure to determine whether what the Bible says Jesus said, He actually said. Each participant dropped a red bead, they have these little beads different colors, a red bead into the ballot box for saying...sayings that he or she figured were probably authentic. Pink beads meant possibly authentic. Gray beads were used for sayings thought to have been altered by the disciples or early Christians. Black beads were an absolute no vote used for passages that were entirely fabricated and spoken by somebody other than Jesus. The results were only thirty-one of the more than 700 sayings attributed to Jesus and the gospel are certainly true and sixteen of those are duplicates from parallel passages. All total, the panel rejected eighty percent of the words the Scripture attributes to Jesus. Among the ousted passages are Matthew 5:11, "Blessed are you when men cast insults at you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on account of Me." Mark 10:32 to 34 in which Jesus foretold His crucifixion, all the apocalyptic sections and the entire book of John, except verse 44 of chapter 4 which got one pink bead. That one says, "A prophet has no honor in his own country."

Seminar founder, Robert Funk, reckons, “Most mainline scholars will agree with their dumping of John’s gospel because Jesus speaks regularly in adages and aphorisms and parables and witticisms created as a rebuff or retort in the context of dialogue and debate. It is clear He didn’t speak in long monologues of the type found in the gospel of John,” end quote. Really. It’s like, you know, where were you when I created the world?

And, you know, this...the Peter Jennings interviewed all these people from the Jesus Seminar so this decaying flotsam from the shipwreck of Liberalism continues to wash ashore, it just doesn’t go away. Waves just keep bringing it back, you know. (Applause) You keep that up, I will sign my own Bible. (Laughter)

So how do they determine what Jesus said or didn’t say? Well whatever is political correct. The same people who were radical protestors on university campuses in the sixties are now middle managers in the university system. Their ideological creed has become the test of orthodoxy in academic circles. And that’s the bottom line. They’re just absolute, outright, godless skeptics. Egalitarianism, homosexuality as an alternative life style, environmental activism, animal rights, racial quotas, hard-line anti-war doctrine, all of this endless stuff has got to be excised if it...violated by anything in the Bible has got to be excised and so they literally excise Jesus. Passages that call for repentance, affirm Jesus’ deity, particularly passages that talk about judgment, they’re gone. And now they’re not only working on the words of Jesus, now they’re working on the works of Jesus. They’re going to remove the miracles.

Please don’t get the idea that I think the conclusions of the Jesus Seminar should be discarded lightly. On the contrary, I think they should be thrown away with as much force as possible. (Laughter/Applause). I don’t know, Karl Bart may believe there are other faiths that are lesser lights in the constellation of the Kingdom and Paul Tillich may believe there are Christians incognito, and Reiner may call some the anonymous Christians, but these assaults just never seem to end.

When I was on Larry King program with Rabbi Kushner and Deepak Chopra., I was...I was having a good time, I enjoyed it. I don’t know how they were doing, but Larry King and I had some great conversation off camera. And I found him just a winsome guy. But at one point in the conversation I said, with all due respect to Deepak Chopra, you are not the authority and neither is Rabbi Kushner. And Larry King just in a flash looked at me and said, “And you don’t believe you are either, do you?” And I said no, the Bible is. And then he said real quick, “What Bible?” And I said, “The holy Bible.” I mean, that’s fast stuff, you know, it’s like rockets coming at you from all over the place. And I don’t know if you’ve read, you’ve probably read about New Model Evangelicalism, it really kind of got framed up in a brief article in 1990 written by Robert Brow from Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario. And he writes about the New Model Evangelicalism, New Model Evangelicalism prefers to picture God as three persons held together in a relationship of love. “The Father, Son and Holy

Spirit...he writes...made humans in their image with a view to bringing many children to glory. So instead of being dragged trembling into the law court before God, we are breathing in an atmosphere of family love. This is the New Model Evangelicalism.

And the article goes on to blame Augustine for bringing this... this courtroom motif into the Scripture. And then he blames Luther and Calvin for, you know, getting not moving away from the Augustinian view but only sort of complicating things by adding the idea that somehow in this courtroom motif, Christ can step in and offer a substitutionary payment that could be credited to our account on the basis of faith. The article goes on to say the New Model Evangelicalism redefines key words...hell. New Model Evangelicalism says you don't go there because of judicial sentence...faith, not a decision, but a continual looking that continually progressively justifies you...no different than Romanism. God as Judge is replaced with God as Defender. Wrath is not angry punishment, it's not a law court term, but it just expresses bad consequences and God warns because He wants you to have loving encouragement about those bad consequences. And sin is not legal... a legal violation demanding a just punishment, but its bad behavior that needs correction and God's purpose is never to exclude a child from the house just to discipline them. And forgiveness is not dependent on Christ's sacrifice, the cross was not a judicial payment.

And then the latest in evangelicalism is the openness of God. We've been reading a lot about that, haven't we? But where do you go? This is just mind boggling to me. These guys that write this, I don't want to get into it, but these guys that write this openness of God material, Sanders, Boyd, Pinnock, they defend themselves against the charge of Socinianism by pointing out that the classic Socinians denied the deity of Christ and so far no modern open-theist has gone quite that far.

May I make a suggestion to you? They've gone father because they have denied the deity of God. So if Christ is the incarnation of their god, then He's not who claimed to be. Any attack on the God of the Bible, or the Christ of the Bible is an attack on the Bible. Any attack on the truth of Scripture is an attack on Scripture. I mean...

Well, there's a second area, the first one was attacks from the critics, then attacks from the cultists, the Mormons, the J.Ws, the Christian Science, Theosophy, Unitarianism, you go all the way from the death cults, you know, the People's Temple cult of Jim Jones, the Branch Davidian cult of David Koresh, the bizarre Heaven's Gate cult of Marshall Applewhite who thought they were going to be taken to heaven in a hailbot comet. You know, the writings are filled with twisted Scripture and pseudo-Christian imagery. Cults have extra revelation by some inspired personality, Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy Patterson Glover Frye, she had a lot of husbands, Annie Besant, Judge Rutherford, Madam Blavatsky, and on it goes. Singular, authoritative interpretation by the cult leader, they just relentlessly attack the truth of Scripture.

And then I have to be real honest, the attacks from the Charismatics. What do you mean by that? I mean any time you say that there is continuing revelation, you have assaulted the scriptures. This...(applause) if you haven't read the current articles in the latest Table Talk, you need to read it carefully. It's really very, very well done, very helpful...very helpful. I've written a lot of things through the years on this Movement, look...I'm not saying that those people aren't Christians. People say to me, "Do you think that Charismatics will go to heaven?" I say, "I do, I think some of them will just go flying on by, but I think there are many of them that are going to go there and stop when they arrive, you know."

But when you have...when you have your own private vision, revelation, word of knowledge, word of wisdom from God, this is serious stuff. And when the Lord tells you this and the Lord tells you that and Jesus showed you what that verse meant, when you take your own private trip to heaven and then you get to take a trip to hell and hear voices from heaven, mystical hyper subjectivity...I'll tell you what, I don't like to put words in people's mouths, least of all God's. And then I'll be honest, I tune in to TBN, if Tetzels were alive today, he would be a paragon of integrity. Some of you don't get that, don't worry about it, it doesn't matter. For those of you who did, enjoy.

Fourth is the attacks from the culture. Am I doing what you wanted me to do, R.C.? Okay, because I've been in to this a long time. Attacks from the culture. You know, a hundred years ago the Bible was being beset by Modernism, and now it's being beset by...what?...post-Modernism. Christianity and Modernism were fundamentally antagonistic, Modernism is the world's view that only science can explain reality and nothing supernatural is reality. Obviously, in great opposition to the supernatural truth of Scripture.

But you know what is amazing? In the midst of Modernism's heyday, the Christian church rolled over and bought into it. It destroyed seminaries...still is. Colleges, denominations, biblical Christianity survived the twentieth century assault of Modernism. Now it's trying to survive the assault of post-Modernism, that's the world view that insists there is no such thing as universal truth. It either doesn't exist or it can't be known. So you have your truth, I have my truth. And the only thing that rules is tolerance. Tolerance matters. This is absolutely diametrically opposed to the Bible which is fundamentally intolerant...intolerant. Yet it just seeped into the church through a huge tear in the fabric of the evangelical mind. Christians have become inclusive and pragmatism has greased the slide.

Let me just give you a principle. And Marvin Olasky hitting on this in the recent issue of World Magazine that I read. If you are going to engage an unconverted person, in a genuine presentation of gospel truth, where there can be hope that in the grace of God they can be regenerated, if you're going to engage a person in that regard, it is precisely at the point at which they do not believe the Bible that the engagement has to take place. You know what he's saying. You can't go around the issue that offends. If you're going to talk to a Jewish person about the gospel and they're offended

over the deity of Christ, they will be damned unless they embrace that.

If you're going to talk to a Muslim and they are offended about the deity of Christ, or the Trinity, they will never be saved until they believe that. It is at that very point at which they must submit. If you're going to talk to a Roman Catholic and *sola fide*, or *sola gratia* offends them, you have to attack at that point because it is only when they cease believing lies and believe the truth that they can be redeemed.

So what is all this waltzing around avoiding everything in the name of tolerance accomplishing? Nothing...nothing. People say, "If I can just find somebody's felt need...one book says...if I can find a person's felt need, I can lead anybody to Christ. First of all, I can't lead anybody to Christ on any circumstance. But apart from that, a better way to say it would be if I can find where it is that a person will not submit to the Scripture, it's at that point that I must engage the battle.

And then the new...one of our professors in the Master's Seminary gave me an article on the new hermeneutics called The Hermeneutics of Humility, and in this post-modern tolerant environment, the hermeneutics of humility, it's actually... there's books on it, here's how it works. "Oh, who am I to ever suggest that my view of Scripture is the right one?" You know. "I would never...I'm too humble, I would never..."

Then there's the attack from the capricious...the capricious. People who don't study, you know. Ignorance, lack of study, lack of hermeneutics, the worst one I hate is the Bible codes. If you've got any books on that, get rid of them. Talk about putting words in God's mouth. When Michael Drosnin(?) wrote that Bible codes book, so many people jumped on the bandwagon, there's been a series of books written by the TBN people on that and saying that, you know, the hidden message of the Bible is in these little computer-generated squares of letters with lines going all over like you do on the airplane when you're flying, you do those little puzzles. That's the real message.

That's frightening...that is frightening stuff because again the end of the book of Revelation says if you add anything to what is written in this book, shall be added to you...what? The plagues that are in here. Am I going to say this is the secret message, the Bible is full of secret codes and nobody could ever know them until the computers came along?

There is a certain document, I was looking over it two days ago, there's a certain document that using codes predicted in cryptic acrostic codes, the assassination specific day or month and the means by which the following people were assassinated, written long ago. Mahatma Gandhi, present Miuawad(?), Lebanese who was bombed in his car, Leon Trotsky, executed with an ice pick on August 20, 1940, Martin Luther King, shot with a gun, R.F. Kennedy and Sirhan Sirhan, specifically spelled out their names, I've seen them in that little scheme, John F. Kennedy shot in the head with a rifle from a concealed place, and all of that is in the lines, you have to jump a little and make turns,

but you can get there. The assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and the assassination of Itzhak Rabin. And then the last one, and there's a whole little deal on that, the death of Princess Diana. And where is all of that unbelievable prophecy hidden? In Moby Dick. (Laughter) If you don't think so, go to the public domain text of Moby Dick on your computer.

I'm thinking of just one more, the attacks from carnal wisdom...the attacks from carnal wisdom. What do I mean by this? I mean, "Oh, I can't believe in creation, I can't believe in Genesis, it just doesn't make sense with science." So, really, science trumps God. "I can't believe in the doctrine of election, it's not reasonable. I can't believe in a doctrine of eternal punishment, that's not fair." Just keep following that, you'll be an inclusive, Arminian evolutionary universalist. (Laughter) And you will never come back to this conference. Enough is enough.

So Luther said, "Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved. And to be steady on all the battlefields besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point." You going to join us in the battle? That's why you're here, I'm sure.

Father, thank You for the words of our Lord Jesus, sanctify that by Thy truth, Thy Word is truth. We believe it and we want to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Help us to be equipped to contend in these wonderful days together, in our Savior's name. Amen.

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