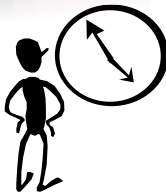


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### Time of Assembly



#### Sunday:

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.  
Worship 5:00 p.m.

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## Discouragement: Satan's Greatest Weapon

By Jon Mitchell

I read a story once that says Satan once held a sale and offered all the tools of his trade to anyone who would pay the price. They were spread out on the table and each one was labeled – hatred, malice, envy, gossip, lust – all the weapons that everyone knows so well. However, off to one side lay a harmless looking instrument labeled **DISCOURAGEMENT**. It was old and worn looking but was priced far above the rest. When Satan was asked why this was, he replied, **“Because I can use this one so much more easily than the others. No one knows that it belongs to me, so with it I can open doors that are bolted tightly against the others. Once I get inside, I can use any tool that suits me best.”**

A few hours earlier when he was on a spiritual high, Peter thought he'd do anything for Jesus. But later when he was at his lowest point due to discouragement and fear, he wouldn't do anything for Jesus.

I wonder what heroic and inspiring accounts were never written because Satan effectively used his tool of discouragement? The Bible records many sad stories of people who lost heart and gave up. When Moses sent the spies into the Promised Land, all but Caleb and Joshua came back with discouraging news. The fearful saw the size and strength of their opponents rather than remembering the signs and strength of their God ([Num. 13-14](#)). Elijah did great things for God which resulted in the conversion of thousands of Israelites ([1 Kings 18:1-40; 19:18](#)); yet, he had become so discouraged when Jezebel threatened his life that he deceived himself into thinking that he was the only servant of God left ([1 Kings 19:1-18](#)). After Peter promised that he'd never leave

Jesus' side, he ran with the rest when the Lord was arrested, and a few minutes later become so afraid that he denied even knowing Christ ([Matt. 26:31-75](#)). He did so because he was discouraged after seeing the apparent lost cause his Lord's ways had become upon his arrest.

We become discouraged when we make the same mistake that these guys made and start paying more attention to the obstacles than the opportunities. We become discouraged when we start believing Satan, *"the father of lies"* ([John 8:44](#)), instead of the Father *"who cannot lie"* ([Tit. 1:2](#)). And what has the God who cannot lie promised us? He has promised us that our work is not meaningless, so be steadfast and immovable ([1 Cor. 15:58](#)). He has promised us that our trials and hardships make us stronger if we allow them ([James 1:2-4](#); [Rom. 5:3-5](#)). He has promised us that the hardships we endure seem painful right now, but they cause us to become more righteous later if we allow ourselves to be trained by them ([Heb. 12:1-11](#)). Do we believe his promises? Do we? Our actions always prove how strong our faith really is ([James 2:14-26](#)).

Do you think Peter would have pictured himself doing this just fifty days ago when he was so discouraged and afraid that he wouldn't even admit to anyone that he knew Jesus?

God can do great things with a heart that is his and a mind that believes it. Joshua and Caleb, the two spies who refused to be discouraged, went on to do great things for God and his people for years afterward. Elijah recovered from his discouragement and went on serving God, and as a result God brought him directly into heaven rather than allowing him to die. Fifty days after a discouraged Peter denied Christ, he converted thousands of people through courageous, strong preaching. All of these men faced what they thought were impossible situations. They had seen no light at the end of the tunnel, no hope whatsoever...but it turns out that they were wrong. Why? Because they forgot that God was with them ([Phil. 4:13](#)). Once they remembered that, look at the heights to which they climbed!

What heights can you reach with the help of God? What can God do with you? Does he have your heart and mind? Or is the devil having his way with you?

***"Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you"*** ([James 4:7](#)). Don't allow Satan to discourage you, friends. ***"Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed"*** ([Heb. 12:12-13](#)).



LEPERS ... I HEAL LEPERS

## What About All Those Mistakes in the Bible?

By Jon Quinn

It is quite amazing to me that a common complaint made about the Bible is that it has so many contradictions and mistakes. It is not surprising that such a charge would be made by some unbelieving scholar who will investigate the Bible's pages and turn logic on its ear in order to force a mistake into it here and there. The surprising part is that so many will use such alleged mistakes as an excuse not to obey its teachings, but when asked for an example simply do not have a single one.

Most want you to think that they have made a careful examination, and only after months of painstaking search have reluctantly come to the conclusion that the Bible is not reliable because of all the mistakes they have found. But when asked to show one, it is quickly apparent that no such examination has taken place, no specific error is in mind, and it is all an excuse. "Oh, I just heard that mistakes are in there..."

But what of the "scholar" who has investigated and does have a list of contradictions? Well, each alleged mistake has to be treated individually. We have to consider whether it has merit, or is just an unfair attack on the Bible by an unbeliever who is either ignorant or malicious.

I have several books in my library that deal with such matters. If it were not so serious a matter, some of these "mistakes" would be funny. For example, a passage which says God dwells in heaven ([Psalm 123:1](#)) and another which says He dwells in Zion (the mount upon which the temple was built in Jerusalem) ([Psalm 9:11](#)). He can't dwell at both places, can He? Contradiction! But only if one ignores the omnipresence of God, a characteristic that is taught throughout the Bible. "*Do I not fill the heaven and earth?' Saith the Lord*" ([Jeremiah 23:24](#)). Yes, God can dwell in both places, and many more.

Concerning the execution of Christ, John records the words of Jesus' enemies. In one passage, they say, "*We have a law, and by our law he ought to die*" ([John 19:7](#)). But just a bit earlier, they are recorded as saying, "*It is not lawful for us to put any man to death*" ([John 18:31](#)). Another contradiction! How could the same people say both things? They could easily do so if they were talking about two different laws, which they were. The first law they are referring to is the law of Moses. They considered Jesus a blasphemer which was a sin for which the Law of Moses prescribed death. However, Judah was not an independent nation at the time Jesus was crucified. By Roman law, the Chief Priests did not have the authority to execute those they deemed as criminals. For this reason, they had to secure the Roman governor's permission, which they did. Once Pilate granted permission, the roadblock of civil law was overcome and Jesus was crucified.

(Continued on page 4)

There are others, but you get the picture. Rather flimsy, weren't they? How sad that so many have heard that there are some "discrepancies" in the Bible, and use that as an excuse not to believe, but never take the time to investigate the charge. One must not let Satan win the victory so easily. Examine the Scriptures daily! ([Acts 17:11](#))

## Forgiveness and Consequence

By Doy Moyer

One of the fallouts of what is being called "cancel culture" is a marked lack of mercy and forgiveness. If you've ever said or done something that culture considers anathema, then you are done. Canceled. From this point on, you will have zero credibility with little to zero chance of redeeming yourself. Some offenses are seen as virtually unforgivable, no matter what you say or do subsequently. You will never be able to say or do enough to appease the anger. Repentance has little effect and often seen as conveniently suspicious.

Let's be clear. There are things that people have said and done that are egregiously offensive and evil, and for which repentance is necessary. There is no defense for these things. What people say, particularly in public, has consequences, and Christians, of all people, should know this (cf. [Matthew 12:33-37](#)). I bear guilt, too.

Unfortunately, it seems to be the human tendency to twist the knife hard and make someone pay dearly for their offenses. Mercy is seen as a weakness, an excuse, a way of justifying the evil that has been done. We cannot forgive lest others think that we are excusing the evil. Sadly, this view of forgiveness and mercy will leave us reeling, caught in the despair of knowing we are all guilty of sin with little hope of restoration.

God shows a much different and needed perspective. While human beings are often merciless toward each other, God provides mercy and forgiveness. That forgiveness is offered to any and all, no matter the offense, no matter the depth of evil said or done, no matter the past. God will forgive. The depth of His love and the extent of His offer of grace is on full display in the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. To think that there are some sins God cannot by means of this sacrifice forgive is to minimize the bloodshed along with the power and will of the God who offered Himself up. This is not redemption through silver and gold, but with something eternally valuable.

One of the misunderstandings I believe to be prevalent is the notion that forgiveness necessarily entails the removal of all consequences for sin. This is simply not the case, and if there is any doubt about that, just note that when God forgave David of his horrific sin involving Bathsheba, there were still consequences David had to face: "*David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' And Nathan said to David, 'The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child who is born to you shall die' "* ([II Sam-](#)

[uel 12:13-14](#)).

Forgiveness does not automatically cancel out all temporal consequences, but it does remove the consequence of eternal separation from God. Granted, some sins result in more severe earthly consequences, and forgiveness will not always change that (e.g., a murderer can be forgiven by those most affected but still be required to face temporal justice). Keep in mind, though, that some of these consequences come as a direct result of the sins involved. We need not manufacture additional consequences or penance requirements out of some sense of vengeance or because we want to see someone suffer. This is not the Spirit of Christ.

We are not God, and only He has an eternal perspective. When we seek to break another human being over something said or done, we ought to be careful that we aren't sawing off the limb on which we sit. If I am merciless, I should expect no mercy (cf. [James 2:13](#)). If I am going to give no room for forgiveness and compassion, I should expect none for myself. "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy*" ([Matthew 5:7](#)). I need to know that the measure by which I am measuring others will also be used on me ([Matthew 7:2](#)), which is one reason this section of Jesus' teaching includes, "*So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them...*" ([Matthew 7:12](#)).

We ought especially to be concerned with both justice and mercy. We want to see justice done, but we also want to be people who can be merciful, knowing that we all are (I am) in the position of needing mercy. To be sure, problems will come from the cascading consequences of our evil, stupidity, and lack of wisdom. Yet the one thing we don't ever want to become are people who offer no hope of redemption, no mercy or pardon, or no sense of restoration. To become this is to lose sight of our humanity and, more importantly, to lose sight of the God in whom is found hope, mercy, and restoration—the God in whose image we are made and who serves as our pattern: "*Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful*" ([Luke 6:36](#)).

Let us, then, be careful that we do not become a blood-thirsty people who know little of mercy. Instead, seek repentance and reconciliation. Above all, seek restoration with God first, knowing well that "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" ([Romans 3:23](#)).

