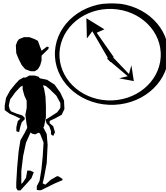


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### Time of Assembly



#### Every other Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.  
Worship 10:00 a.m.

OR

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

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## Purge Me with Hyssop

By Johnny O. Trail

Most scholars believe David wrote the fifty-first Psalm after his transgression with Bathsheba. If this is the case, it is one of the most penitent Psalms in the Old Testament. From the passages recorded in Psalm fifty-one, it appears the writer was heartsick over his sins. [Psalm 51:11-12](#) says, *“Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”* He did not want to lose the relationship that he enjoyed with Jehovah God.

The author of Psalm fifty-one knew that there had to be some sort of response for his violation of God’s laws. This is akin to what was happening in the book of Acts on the Day of Pentecost. [Acts 2:37](#) says, *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”* Just like the Psalmist and those assembled on the Day of Pentecost, our sins should devastate us since it harms our association with God.

In part, the writer of Psalm fifty-one asks that his sins be purged with a plant called hyssop. [Psalm 51:7](#) says, *“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”* This statement brings about the question, “What is hyssop and what roles did it play in purification and its associated rituals?”

Hyssop is mentioned in various pieces of literature. Hyssop is a type of bush that is rather small. It produces purple flowers that grow on long stems,



and it is in the mint family. The plant can be used for medicinal applications and is aromatic enough to be used as a pleasant-smelling aroma. It can also be used for cooking. In scripture, hyssop is mentioned in connection with various ceremonies, cleansing rituals, and religious exercises.

The first mention of hyssop is during the Passover in Egypt ([Exodus 12:22](#)) and, it is also mentioned in connection with Christ's crucifixion ([John 19:29](#)). The import of this happening on both occasions is not missed. Namely, that Christ was the Lamb of God and lambs were sacrificed during the first Passover. [John 1:29](#) says, "*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*"

The sour wine saturated into a sponge was presented to Christ on the stems of a hyssop plant, and this was done just prior to His death. [John 19:29-30](#) "*Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*"

Again, the significance of this in the completion of His atoning sacrifice and the meaning of Passover cannot be missed by the studious reader. Jesus was being offered as the perfect sacrifice for sins. [Hebrews 9:14](#) "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

The Psalmist is believed to have used the term "hyssop" mostly in connection with the purification ritual mention in Numbers nineteen. An entire, unblemished, red heifer that had never been yoked was to be burned as a purification sacrifice. While the heifer was being burned, the priest was to place cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop into the fire ([Numbers 19:6](#)). These items were most likely reminiscent of the color red (scarlet) and were symbolic blood's color in sacrificial applications.

Moreover, cedarwood, scarlet, and hyssop were used in other purification rituals. These items, among other things, were used to purify lepers. [Leviticus 14:4](#) says, "*Then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedarwood, scarlet, and hyssop.*" Perhaps the author of Psalm fifty-one saw his sin as a type of leprosy that needed the most powerful cleansing agent available.

By the same thought, we must seek the most powerful cleaning agent available for our transgressions—the blood of Jesus. His blood is the only thing that can possibly cleanse us from our sins (cf. [Ephesians 2:11-16](#); [I Peter 1:18-19](#); [I John 1:7](#); [Revelation 1:4-6](#)).

Since contact with any dead thing made one unclean, a clean individual was charged with removing the ashes from the camp and storing them in a clean place for purification from sins ([Numbers 19:9](#)). In turn, the person who removed the ashes for

purification became unclean because of touching this deceased animal. One Rabbi alludes to the irony of this arrangement saying, “They purify the defiled and defile the pure.”

In some respects, Christ is an antitype of this sacrificial red heifer. To the extent that Christ was pure and without sin ([I John 3:5](#)), He took upon Himself the sins of the world ([II Corinthians 5:21](#)) so that He might purify all who obey the gospel (cf. [Hebrews 9:22](#); [I Peter 1:22](#)). To summarize, [II Corinthians 5:21](#) says, “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*” Thus, the pure (Christ) becoming impure so that others (Christians) might be purified.

Furthermore, the sacrifice of this red heifer took place outside of the camp ([Numbers 19:3](#)). In the same sort of way, the sacrifice of Christ happened outside the city of Jerusalem. [Hebrews 13:11-13](#) says, “*For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.*”

In consideration of these things, David wanted to be purified from his sins. He wanted his relationship with God to be restored. He wanted a pure, undefiled heart. He realized these things were impossible without God. He says, in [Psalm 51:9-11](#), “*Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*”

We should want purification and cleansing from sins. Like the Psalmist, we should continually want a pure heart that qualifies us for a relationship with God. Through baptism ([Acts 22:16](#)) and faithfulness ([Revelation 2:10](#)), we have an assurance of these things.

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## The Law of Contradiction

By Ken Green

Larry P. Arnn, president of Hillsdale College, delivered a speech on Nov. 17, 2020, which was digested in “Imprimis,” a publication of the school. It is titled, “Orwell’s 1984 and Today.” He says, “I taught a course this fall semester on totalitarian novels. We read four of them: George Orwell’s *1984*, Arthur Koestler’s *Darkness at Noon*, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, and C.S. Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength*.

“The totalitarian novel is a relatively new genre. In fact, the word “totalitarian” did not exist before the 20th century. The older word for the worst possible form of government is “tyranny”—a word Aristotle defined as the rule of one person, or of a small

group of people, in their own interests and according to their will. Totalitarianism was unknown to Aristotle because it is a form of government that only became possible after the emergence of modern science and technology.”

Arnn goes on to explain why he says this and to illustrate with the imagined setting of Orwell’s novel along with the reality of the preponderance of cameras and other modern technologies in Marxist nations like China as well as more democratic countries like our own.

Orwell’s novel introduced the term, “doublethink.” Arnn says, “As the first essential step of his education, Winston (the protagonist of the novel, kg) has to learn doublethink — a way of thinking that defies the law of contradiction. In Aristotle, the law of contradiction is the basis of all reasoning, the means of making sense of the world. It is the law that says that X and Y cannot be true at the same time if they’re mutually exclusive. For instance, if A is taller than B and B is taller than C, C cannot be taller than A. The law of contradiction means things like that.”

The law of contradiction (aka the law of noncontradiction) did not begin with Aristotle. It is basically common sense. We may be sure that Adam at the very beginning knew that it was impossible to exist and not exist at the same time. But as we often hear, common sense isn’t common anymore. And when a culture reaches this point it is in dire straits indeed.

The dictionary defines the law of contradiction as “a principle in logic: a thing cannot at the same time both be and not be of a specified kind (as a table and not a table) or in a specified manner (as red or not red). It is the law that “a proposition cannot be both true and false or that a thing cannot both have and not have a given property.”

Phillip R. Johnson says it is the law that “two antithetical propositions cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense . . . and nothing that is true can be self-contradictory or inconsistent with any other truth. All logic depends on this simple principle. Rational thought and meaningful discourse demand it. To deny it is to deny all truth in one fell swoop.”

It is common sense folks!

The law of contradiction is clearly reflected in the Scriptures. [I John 2:21](#) is explicit: “No lie is of the truth.” [II Timothy 2:13](#) states that “[God] cannot deny himself.” Johnson comments, “Lots of well-meaning Christians, however, seem to operate with the misconception that biblical revelation is somehow exempt from the law of contradiction. They suggest that God’s truth can contravene logic if God is so pleased . . . But [Titus 1:2](#) tells us that “God . . . cannot lie.” Therefore even God’s Word must be in harmony with the law of contradiction. One clear, unresolvable contradiction would be enough to destroy the trustworthiness of the whole. That’s why the enemies of truth are so eager to try to prove that God’s Word contradicts itself.”

Some have argued that the “paradoxical statements” of Christ are contradictions:

such statements as “the first shall be last,” and “you must lose your life in order to save it.” Such a charge is an egregious misunderstanding of paradox. These are not contradictions, but figurative expressions. They are plays on words. G. K. Chesterton who himself was a master of paradox, said, “Paradox is truth standing on its head to get attention.” The Christian faith has many paradoxes, but no contradictions.

Some have used the Trinity as an example of contradiction. The Trinity is a difficult doctrine. In fact, it is impossible for the finite human mind to fully fathom it. It remains a mystery that has not been fully revealed. But it is not contradictory. The fact is that we do not believe God is three in the same sense that He is one.

Theologian R.C. Sproul has said, “In college classes across the world, young people are taught that there is “no truth.” Ironically, this statement itself makes a claim as to what is true. And if it is true that there is no truth then the statement is false.

Understanding this basic chain of reasoning is the starting point of understanding logic and logic is how the discerning mind comes to know what is true.

Dr. Arnn further stated in his speech, “In our time, the law of contradiction would mean that a governor, say, could not simultaneously hold that the COVID pandemic renders church services too dangerous to allow, and also that massive protest marches are fine. It would preclude a man from declaring himself a woman, or a woman declaring herself a man as if one’s sex is simply a matter of what one wills it to be — and it would preclude others from viewing such claims as anything other than preposterous.

“The law of contradiction also means that we can’t change the past. What we can know of the truth all resides in the past, because the present is fleeting and confusing and tomorrow has yet to come. The past, on the other hand, is complete.

“Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas go so far as to say that changing the past — making what has been not to have been — is denied even to God. Because if something both happened and didn’t happen, no human understanding is possible. And God created us with the capacity for understanding. That’s the law of contradiction, which the art of doublethink denies and violates.

“Doublethink is manifest in the fact that the state ministry in which Winston is tortured is called the Ministry of Love. It is manifest in the three slogans displayed on the state’s Ministry of Truth: “War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength.” And as we have seen, the regime in 1984 exists precisely to repeal the past. If the past can be changed, anything can be changed—man can surpass even the power of God. But still, to what end?”

The prophet Isaiah said: “*Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter*” ([Isaiah 5:20](#)).