

The Pacific Institute for Religious Studies (PIRS) is the educational ministry of Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Silicon Valley
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An Introduction to Islam *Part 4: Muhammad The Prophet of Islam at Mecca*

By Dr. Arthur L. Mellon

In order to understand Islam and the Quran, one must first have a basic knowledge of the Prophet Muhammad and Arabia in the sixth and seventh centuries. The ruling powers at the time of Muhammad's birth were the Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire in the north, the rival Persian Empire with its Sassanid Dynasty in the east, and the lesser Abyssinian or Ethiopian Empire in the south and west.¹

The people of the land were of two groups; the city dwellers and the desert dwellers. Those who lived in the cities made their living by being merchants, traders, craftsmen, silver and gold smiths, financiers and financial speculators. Where there was a steady supply of water, agriculture abounded. It must be remembered that "Arabia is one of the hottest and driest regions in the world."² The desert dwellers were made up of nomadic tribesmen. Camel breeding provided the main revenue, and so tribes moved from place to place being dependent on the rainy season and the wells for their herds' grazing. As beasts of burden, Camels served as the main source of transportation throughout Arabia. They also provided meat, milk, and hides. Another source of income came from raiding parties against weaker tribes. These raids were opportunities for increasing the tribe's wealth and size. This was done through the capture of men for ransom, boys as slaves, and women as wives, concubines or slaves. The universal law of "an eye for an eye" and the "blood feud" was practiced in pre-Islamic times and is still part of the culture today.

Most historians divide the life of Muhammad into two periods; *first*, his birth and life at Mecca, *second*, his migration to Medina and his life there until his death. This article will give a short overview of Muhammad's birth and life at Mecca.

Muhammad was born in Mecca in 570 A.D. into the clan of Hashim, of the tribe of Quraysh. His father died before he was born and his mother died when Muhammad was six, leaving him an orphan without an inheritance. Muhammad was sent to live with his grandfather, but his grandfather died soon after. Muhammad was placed in the care of his uncle Abu Talib who was the leader of the Quraysh tribe in Mecca and was responsible for the Kaaba (the cube building inside the area that contained 360 idols) plus the care of the pilgrims that came to worship at the Kaaba.

Muhammad worked as a shepherd for his uncle and over time gained a reputation as being a smart and honest young man. When Muhammad was in his twenties, a rich widow woman named Khadija hired him to take her wares to Syria to trade. Muhammad did so well that Khadija proposed marriage to him. In 595 A.D., Khadija, who was forty years old, married Muhammad who was only twenty-five.

During the month of Ramadan, it was Muhammad's custom to make a spiritual retreat to a cave on Mt. Hira on the outskirts of Mecca. While on retreat in 610 A.D., Muhammad believed he had received a revelation from the angel Gabriel who appeared unto him. Martin Lings writes:

"When he was alone in the cave, that there came to him an Angel in the form of a man. The Angel said to him 'Recite' and he said: 'I am not a reciter', whereupon, as he him-

self told it. ‘the Angel took me and whelmed me in his embrace until he had reached the limit of mine endurance — O Muhammad, thou art the Messenger of God, and I am Gabriel.’³

Muhammad was to preach that there was only one god, “Allah” and to warn the people to give up their idolatry or face “Hell Fire.” His mission was to be a “Warner” to his people who were facing great punishment for their polytheism. This was the start of the Quranic verses and Islam. For three years, Muhammad preached secretly, only to his family and close friends. Muhammad’s wife Khadija was his first convert. Ali his cousin was the first male convert.⁴ In 613 A.D., Muhammad started preaching publicly, but was met with great hostility from his own tribe. Preaching against idolatry would destroy a major source of revenue from servicing the pilgrims that came to worship at the Kaaba. His preaching was also against the usury of the financiers in Mecca. It is believed that much of Muhammad’s teachings came from contacts with caravan traders passing through Mecca, where he heard the teachings of Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism. Waraqa, an old man and cousin of Khadija, was a scholar of both Jewish and Christian Scriptures. A close study of Muhammad’s Quran would show that it is a mishmash of these teachings and myths.

If Muhammad had not been under the protection of his uncle Abu Talib, his own tribe would have killed him. The leaders of Mecca offered to make Muhammad a rich man, even a king if he would give up preaching monasticism, but he rejected the offer. In 615 A.D., a number of the converts fled to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) to escape the persecution of the Meccians. For over two years other tribes boycotted the Quraysh tribe because of Muhammad and his teachings. In 619 A.D., Muhammad’s wife Khadija and his uncle Abu Talib died. With the loss of his uncle, Muhammad no longer had protection against greater persecution.

Muhammad then married Sawda. Very little has been written about Sawda in comparison to Muhammad’s

other wives. Abu Bakr a wealthy convert, who would later become the first Successor after Muhammad’s death, gave his six year old daughter Aisha in marriage to Muhammad.

The “Satanic Verses,” which were written in 619 A.D., present a great problem for Muslims because they believe the Quran is the word of God without error. No one knows how long these verses were in effect before they were removed. Some say it was two months, others say it was two years. The Satanic Verses:

“Have you seen Lat, and Uzza, And another, the third (goddess) Manat?”⁵

These three deities are female gods that were worshiped by the different tribes. The question was; “How could Muhammad preach monasticism and recognize these other deities?” A number of his converts left Islam. Muhammad later retracted these verses saying that Satan had put them into his mind. The Quran:

“Say: Is it some one other than Allah that you order me to worship, O you ignorant ones?

But it has already been revealed to you. – as it was to those before you, - If you were to join (gods with Allah), truly fruitless will be your work (in life), and you will surely be in the ranks of those who lose (all spiritual good).

Nay, but worship Allah, and be of those who give thanks.”⁶

In 620 A.D., Muhammad made his famous “Night Journey” in which he had a vision of going to Jerusalem and ascending into the seven heavens of Paradise from the Temple Mount. There he met with Gabriel and the prophets, Adam, John the Baptist, Jesus, Joseph and Moses.⁷ Today, in the Mosque of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, the “Night Journey” verses from the Quran and Mosaics are written and pictured on the walls and ceiling.

Muhammad traveled to al at-Taif south of Mecca in hopes of finding a new protector and gaining more converts, but was rejected. A group of con-

verts from Yathrib (which was later called Medina and had a collection of hamlets, farms and strongholds scattered over an oasis of fertile land) met with Muhammad at Aqaba with the proposal that Muhammad and his converts migrate to Yathrib. This would be the first of two meetings that would lead to the migration of Muhammad and his followers to Yathrib in 622 A.D.⁸

Ω

¹ W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford), 1961, p. 4.

² Prof. Masudul Hasan, *History of Islam*, (Adam Publishers & Distributors: New Delhi), 2009, Revised Edition Vol.1, p. 20.

³ Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources, Inner Traditions*, (Rochester, VT), 2006, pp. 44-45.

⁴ A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq’s: Sirat Rasul Allah*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford), 2009, p. 114.

⁵ Quran, Sura 53:19-20.

⁶ Ibid., Sura 39:64-66.

⁷ Robert Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad: Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion*, (Regnery Publishing, Inc.: Washington, D.C.) 2001, pp. 84-85.

⁸ W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford), 2006, p. 141.

Progression in the Ministry: *The Study of the New Testament #2*

By Dr. W. R. Downing

1 Timothy 4:14-15 ...give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

In the first installment of these articles, we noted that the words “thy profiting” in 1 Timothy 4:15 are σου ἡ προκοπή, and are to be translated as “your progress.”¹ The emphasis is upon the word “your,” making this a stringent personal issue. Every minister should strive to progress in his God-given ministry, and that progression is necessarily concerned with a practical study of the Greek New Testament. Four reasons were given: first, progression in the gospel ministry is necessarily and inherently tied to the knowledge of the Scriptures. But working with a version

of a translation results in only a second-hand knowledge of the Word of God. Second, the very nature of the Christian ministry necessitates an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures as a manifestation and implementation of verbal, plenary inspiration. Exposition is not exegesis. Third, biblical examples from Moses to the prophets, to our Lord to the inspired Apostles, reveal that the Scriptures must be carefully and faithfully opened, and often minutely exegeted. Fourth, the witness and lasting testimony of several self-taught men, greatly used of God, serve as goads for a disciplined study of the Greek New Testament.

We now continue:

Fifth, two passages reveal the fundamental task of the gospel minister in relation to the Scriptures. 2Timothy 2:15 is both a strong, urgent plea for a disciplined study of the Scriptures and a metaphor which points to both exegesis and interpretation. "Study" is an aorist imperative, a strong, urgent command for a diligent approach to opening the Scriptures. The approval is not simply before men, but before God Himself! The minister is pictured as a skilled craftsman who has no cause to turn away in shame. He is to carefully exegete and interpret the Scripture as the very truth of God.² 2Timothy 3:16-17 reads in the singular, not plural, and so declares, first, that every nuance of Scripture is "God-breathed." This implies the words, the very grammar and syntax of the original. Further the Scriptures are profitable for everything which is necessary for developing the man of God and completely outfitting him for every aspect of his ministry.³

Sixth, and finally, there are historical testimonies of great men who themselves profited beyond measure from the study of their Greek New Testaments: Martin Luther (1483-1546) was the leader of the Protestant Reformation in Germany and beyond, who, by the study of the Scriptures in their original languages, found the grace of God and the freedom from sin that only comes by that grace. His advice to pastors:

Who so is armed with the Text, the same is a right pastor, and my best advice and counsel is, that we draw water out of the one true fountain; that is, diligently to read in the Bible. He is a learned Divine that is well-grounded in the Text; for one text and sentence out of the Bible is of far more esteem and value than many writings and glosses, which neither are strong, sound nor armour of proof.

Few arguments for the importance of biblical languages are clearer than Luther's 1524 treatise, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools." The following is an excerpt from this work:

And let us be sure of this we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out, they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments. If through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall...lose the gospel...⁴

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), a contemporary of Luther, and the leader of the Swiss Reformation, was said to have memorized the entire Greek New Testament. It was his strong conviction that the Scriptures form the sole authority of the Christian's life, and thus emphasized their study in the original languages. The following is from his treatise, *On the Education of Youth*:

Once a young man is instructed in the solid virtue which is formed by faith, it follows that he will regulate himself and richly adorn himself from within: for only he whose whole life is ordered will find it easy to give help and counsel to others.

But a man cannot rightly order his own soul unless he exercises himself day and night in the Word of God. He can do that most readily if he is well versed in such languages as Hebrew and Greek, for a right understanding of the Old Testament is difficult without one, and a right understanding of the New Testament is equally difficult without the other.⁵

John Owen (1616-1683) was one of the greatest of the Puritan thinkers, writers and preachers. He was also Vice Chancellor of Christ's College, Oxford, during the Cromwellian Era. His commendation of the original languages is succinct:

There is in the originals of the Scripture a peculiar emphasis of words and expressions, and in them an especial energy, to intimate and insinuate the sense of the Holy Ghost unto the minds of men, which cannot be traduced into other languages by translations, so as to obtain the same power and efficacy.⁶

C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) was one of the greatest and most widely used preachers ever called and gifted by God. His attainments were largely through self-effort, yet he personally studied the Scriptures in the original languages. He noted:

A man to comment well should be able to read the Bible in the original. Every minister should aim at a tolerable proficiency both in the Hebrew and the Greek. These two languages will give him a library at a small expense, an inexhaustible thesaurus, a mine of spiritual wealth. Really, the effort of acquiring a language is not so prodigious that brethren of moderate abilities should so frequently shrink from the attempt. A minister ought to attain enough of these tongues to be at least able to make out a passage by the aid of a lexicon, so as to be sure he is not misrepresenting the Spirit of God in his discourses, but is, as nearly as he can judge, giving forth what the Lord intended to reveal by the language employed. Such knowledge would prevent his founding doctrines upon expressions in our version when nothing at all analogous is to be found in the inspired original.⁷

George Ricker Berry (1865-1945), Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Colgate University and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, wrote:

Without some knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, you cannot be certain, in a single instance, that in your sermon based on a Scriptural text, you are presenting the correct teaching of that text.

Without some knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, you cannot be an independent student, or a reliable interpreter of the word of God....

Within ten years the average man wastes more time in fruitless reading and indifferent talk, than would be used in acquiring a good working knowledge of Hebrew and Greek that in turn would impart to his teaching that quality of independence and of reliability which so greatly enhances one's power as a teacher.

There is not one minister in ten who might not if he but would find time and opportunity for such study of Hebrew and Greek as would enable him to make a thoroughly practical use of it in his work as a Bible-preacher and Bible-teacher.⁸

These six reasons should furnish ample encouragement and impetus for a disciplined and richly rewarding study of God's truth in the study of the Greek New Testament.

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¹ End note repeated from first installment: The term "profit," is σου ἡ προκοπή, lit: "to beat [cut] forward, to lengthen by hammering" [Thayer]. This term denotes to make progress, "to blaze the way," cut a path. The pos. of σου stresses the pointedness of your progress. The ministry is to be characterized by the spiritual, mental and academic personal progression of the minister.

² "Study," σπούδασον, aor. imp., Give the utmost diligence—an urgent, immediate, determined action. "to shew thyself," σεαυτὸν, "thyself," emp. pos., "approved unto God," δόκιμον παραστήσαι τῷ θεῷ, approved by testing before God. "a workman," ἐργάτην, a skilled craftsman "that needeth not to be ashamed," ἀνεπαίσχυντον, having no need for shame, "rightly dividing," ὀρθοτομοῦντα, cutting straight, handling skillfully "the word of truth," τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, the Word of God which is emphatically and alone the truth, (restrictive attributive). The picture is that of a skilled tentmaker carefully cutting a straight line.

³ vs. 16 πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος, sing., not pl. Every word-form in the original, every nuance of the grammar and syntax is God-breathed. "and is profitable" καὶ ὠφέλιμος, useful, advantageous, beneficial "for doctrine" πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, "teaching, instruction, doctrine," "for reproof" πρὸς ἔλεγχον, "testing, reproof." Also transl. as "conviction," "for correction" πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, restored to an upright state, correction, improvement, "for instruction in righteousness" πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, moral training, discipline reflecting the moral character of God. Source of the Eng. "pedagogy." vs. 17 ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος, in order that fully-limbed or symmetrically developed might be the 'of God' man.

"perfect" means properly developed. "of God" emph. pos. πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος, "unto every good work" (sing.) emph. pos. "thoroughly furnished" participular form of vb. "fully-limbed," i.e., "completely out-fitted."

⁴ Quotations taken from W. R. Downing, *Studies in NT Greek*, (PIRS Publications: Morgan Hill, CA) 2011.

⁵ Quoted in part from Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 135-136.

⁶ John Owen, *Works*, Vol. IV, p. 270.

⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries*, pp. 24-25.

⁸ From an article entitled "The Value of Hebrew and Greek to Clergymen," prefaced to his *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*.

No Such Thing as Sinning With Impunity

By M. A. Bailon

The offspring of a 60's rock duo recently underwent a sex change operation. Thanks to the Internet, virtually anyone anywhere in the world can see a picture of this "new man." Sadly, GRS, or Gender Reassignment Surgery, is not new. It has existed for about seventy years. This newly minted man made the news because of the celebrity of the parents. What is interesting is that an honest appraisal of the new look confirms that she makes a better looking man. This is not to say that perhaps God made a mistake in the first place. According to Romans chapter one, this phenomena of manly females and feminine males is a direct consequence of the fall.

The Apostle Paul's analysis of fallen man's sin problem in Romans 1:18 - 30 is tightly reasoned. His thesis is that God's wrath comes down from heaven and rests upon man who is ungodly and unrighteous as he suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. This wrath is revealed to all who have eyes to see. His argumentation for this proposition in verses 18 to 30 always proceeds from the intellect to the behavior. What a man thinks explains how he behaves. Specifically, what a man believes or knows governs his conduct. The apostle's thesis is based on the fact that man knows that there is a God of the Bible. He is confident of this because God Himself has put that knowledge in

the essence of man's being. It is not a saving knowledge, but it is a deep, inconvenient knowledge that men try to ignore. The underlying principle is that God is the Creator and we are his creatures. God has made that known to us. He has not hidden Himself from us. The invisible and immaterial attributes of God are clearly seen from the visible and created material world. That is, God's eternal power and deity. Using the grammatical infinitive of result he adds that sinful man then is without a defense. He has no excuse for being an atheist, whether philosophically or practically. The Creator has made it clear that we are His creatures. This fact is denied dishonestly. Men try to suppress this knowledge but it is known nonetheless.

To substantiate this claim, the apostle Paul correlates two great exchanges that man makes with two consequences which are characterized as being handed over by God to outcomes. These outcomes are necessitated by the moral nature of the universe. Although not argued explicitly, the outcomes of man's erroneous thinking are based on the fact that there is right and wrong, that there is moral and immoral behavior. The first exchange, in verse 23, is the exchange of the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of corruptible man and of animals. Rather than looking up to God in heaven and acknowledging His glorious attributes, man instead constructed images of created things. That man prefers the material and sensual over the immaterial and spiritual worship of the true God is a direct consequence of his choice to not give God the glory due to Him; nor to be thankful to Him for who He is and for all the blessings that come from Him (verse 21). Instead, man's thoughts are vain. They do not get him anywhere. His reasoning's are futile and of no profit, and his whole being has been darkened. Because man refuses to acknowledge God in his thinking, God gives him over to the lusts of his heart which inevitably leads to lewdness in the life. Man does dishonorable things, such as abusing his body with his fellow man (verse 24). The second exchange is that of the truth of God for the lie that God is noth-

ing. Instead, they venerate and render service to creation rather than to the Creator. As a result of side-stepping God, He gives man over to passions that are not honorable. Females exchange their natural use for the unnatural. Likewise, the males desert the natural use of females being inflamed in their lust for each other, as put rather bluntly by the apostle Paul. The apostle continues by stating, literally, that it is “males in males” logically working out their indecency. Consequently, they receive the retribution commensurate with their perverseness with each other.

Paul concludes that since man did not approve of having God in any of his knowledge at all, he is given over to a reprobate mind so that he does the things that are not proper. To put it without the negative, to do the things that are abominable. In this third and last handing over the apostle uses a play on words. Basically, man did not approve of God so God gave him over to a disapproved mind.

Thus, we conclude, with Paul, that intellectual rebellion directly results in moral perversion. But what does any of this have to do with the GRS issue? It is true that Paul does not touch upon the transgender issue directly. He has made his point without addressing extra perversions. But the Bible does speak to transvestites in Deuteronomy 5:22. There, more than three millennia ago, God condemns cross-dressing as an abomination in His sight. Arguing from the lesser to the greater it should be clear that if God condemns the outward dress he must also condemn the mutilation of the body which is done for the same purpose. Both cross-dressing and undergoing GRS are the outward manifestations of an inward perversion. But only in modern times has technology made the ultimate step in the transgender change possible.

However, the contemporary GRS modified individual says that the change is merely to put the body in harmony with the mind. This is, interestingly enough, consistent with Paul's argument in Romans. Inward thought produces outward action. But why is it that there are some born with gender confu-

sion. It is simply God's judgment. It is part of His wrath revealed from heaven. And it apparently reaches into our innermost physical being. We have all seen the feminine men and masculine women. According to Romans 1, this is a conspicuous manifestation of an angry God.

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Baptist Connections: *Episode Four*

By M. A. Carling

In this episode: C. J. Elford, James McCullough and their connection with the Baptist James Petigru Boyce.

Charles James Elford (1820-1867)

Charles James Elford was born May 11, 1820 in Charleston, S. C. He was the son of Captain James Maud Elford and his second wife, Ann Louisa Marsh. His father's trade in overseas commerce came to a halt when President Jefferson's Embargo Act prohibited trade between the United States and England. He took this opportunity in downtime to establish himself in Charleston as a navigation instructor. In addition, he invented a system of communication between vessels at sea and received a patent. A book came soon after in 1823 entitled *Elford's Universal Signal Book*.

Although both parents died when Charles was a boy, he managed to persevere in his studies and later passed the Bar Examination. He settled in Greenville, S. C., as a lawyer. For about twenty years he was Superintendent of the Sunday School of the First Baptist Church. He started a church paper called “Kind Words,” was editor or publisher of the Greenville Mountaineer and was probably on the committee which was in charge of erecting the First Baptist Church. He was also Mayor of Greenville in 1860 and 1861 and was otherwise prominent in the civic and religious life of Greenville.

During the early part of the Fall of 1861, having obtained authority from the Governor of South Carolina to raise and organize a regiment for State service, he proceeded with the organization of what was to become the 16th South Carolina Regiment. Upon the regiment being mustered into service, he served as its Colonel from early in 1861 until April 28, 1862. After the close of the Civil War, Col. Elford was one of a committee of four or five sent to the White House to assure President Johnson that South Carolina would cooperate in the rebuilding of the nation.¹

James McCullough (1824-1892)

James McCullough was born in 1824 on the family farm, twenty-five miles south of Greenville, S.C. His father was a major landowner, slave owner, farmer and horse-breeder. His father died in 1853 and James inherited the farm.

In the fall of 1861, C. J. Elford was granted authority from the Governor of S.C. to raise a regiment for state service, and James McCullough did his part by organizing one company. The regiment would eventually be labeled the 16th South Carolina Volunteers and James McCullough was elected Lieutenant Colonel under Col. Elford. In early 1862, the regiment was sent to Adams Run on the Charleston Savannah Railroad where they participated in the small battles of Pocotaligo and Johns Island. In April, the regiment was changed from state to Confederate States service, and James McCullough was elected Colonel of the regiment.

In March of 1863 the regiment journeyed to Wilmington, N.C., but soon returned to the Charleston area. Then, on May 4, 1863, the regiment was ordered west to join General Joseph E. Johnston's army attempting to relieve Vicksburg. Now part of States Rights Gist's brigade, the 16th missed the battle of Chickamauga while on detached duty. However, they returned in time to take up a position on Missionary Ridge for the defeat at Chattanooga. From then on the regiment stayed with the army through all of the battles in the Atlanta campaign.

Sometime after the battle of Nashville, the depleted 16th Regiment was combined with another regiment. With no real command left, Col. McCullough resigned his commission and returned home. He lived on until 1892 and was very involved in veteran's affairs.²

James Petigru Boyce
(1827-1888)

James Petigru Boyce was born of Scotch-Irish parents at Charleston, S.C., Jan. 11, 1827. According to *Cathcart's Encyclopedia*,

After spending two years at Charleston College, he entered Brown University, where he graduated in 1847. He was baptized by Rev. Richard Fuller, D.D., and united with the First Baptist Church at Charleston in 1840. He was licensed to preach in 1847, and for six months of the following year he edited the *Southern Baptist*. In 1849 he entered Princeton Theological Seminary, where he remained two years. In 1851 he was ordained pastor of the Baptist church in Columbia, S.C., where he preached until 1855, when he accepted a professorship of Theology in Furman University...

In 1858 and 1859, Dr. Boyce was elected professor in this institution, with the privilege of selecting his chair, and was also made chairman of its faculty...

He was elected to a seat in the South Carolina Legislature in 1862, and re-elected in 1864...

His principal publications are, "A Brief Catechism on Bible Doctrines;" "The Doctrine and Uses of the Sanctuary," a sermon at the dedication of Columbia Baptist Church; "Death and Life the Christian's Portion," occasioned by the death of Rev. B. Manly, Sr., D.D.; and "The Suffering Christ," published in the Baptist Quarterly of October, 1870. He has a great intellect, tireless energy, and extraordinary executive ability. and to him, more than to all others, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary owes its existence. His private library comprises over 13,000 volumes.³

According to the *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*,

Regarded as the founding father of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary although the idea of a central seminary did not originate with him, Boyce was the

strongest advocate of theological education from 1856 on. When the seminary was established in Greenville, S. C., in 1859, he became the first chairman of the faculty, which included John Albert Broadus, Basil Manly, Jr., and William Williams...

Boyce served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1872 to 1879 and again in 1888.

During his last seventeen years occasional attacks of gout made Boyce irritable. In 1888 he went to Europe for a rest and died in southern France on Dec. 28. His epitaph fittingly reads, 'First President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; to him, under God, the Seminary owes its existence.'⁴

The Connection

In the autumn of 1861, when the Civil War was some six months old, a regiment of volunteers was formed in the district of Greenville, S. C., by C. J. Elford, a prominent lawyer. He was very close friends with J. P. Boyce. At the urging of Elford and others, Boyce became the chaplain of the regiment (his brother-in-law, H. A. Tupper, was chaplain of the Ninth Georgia).⁵ Boyce understood that the regiment was to be used locally for special service in South Carolina. Since he had to manage his father's estate as well as his private affairs, and both would require his attention in the near future, he sought to get a furlough the following April. If he failed in achieving this (which he did) he would resign as chaplain.

In the first few months of 1862, Boyce went down to the South Carolina coast with the 16th South Carolina Regiment. James McCullough, who succeeded Elford as colonel of the regiment, wrote the following concerning the service of Boyce to the regiment,

Dr. Boyce served with us as chaplain while in this State, on the coast, in the winter of 1861-1862, at Charleston, Adams Run, Johns Island⁶ and elsewhere. He was always found at his post of duty, and was highly esteemed and much loved by the entire regiment. They all had absolute confidence in his Christian integrity and manhood. He used to preach us some very able and feeling sermons. My mind recurs to one especially, where he had almost the entire regi-

ment in tears... I loved Dr. Boyce very much, and so did my men; and I believe the influence of his godly life was felt by more than one.⁷



¹ John S. Taylor, *16th South Carolina Regiment, CSA*, 1964.

² Taken from a blog of an ancestor at: <http://whatcolorisbutternut.blogspot.com/2011/05/col-james-mccullough.html> An image of McCullough can be found at the above link.

³ William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 121.

⁴ *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, Vol. 1, (Broadman Press, Nashville: TN), 1958, p. 184.

⁵ *Faith in the Fight: Civil War Chaplains*, Edited by John W. Brinsfield, William C. Davis, Benedict Maryniak, James I. Robertson, Jr., (Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg: PA), 2003, p. 251.

⁶ On June 16, 1862, the 16th Regiment South Carolina was part of the small Battle of Johns Island (also known as the Battle of Secessionville). In this battle the Confederates defeated the only Union attempt to capture Charleston, S. C., by land during the Civil War. J. P. Boyce had resigned his chaplaincy in May and so was not present during this battle.

⁷ John A. Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce, D.D., LL.D.* (A. C. Armstrong and Son, New York: NY), 1893, pp. 188-189.

Essential Texts for a Biblical Approach to Apologetics (11) Hebrews 11:3

By P. S. Nelson

Hebrews 11:3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

The structure of Heb. 11:3 is easily divided into two parts; 1) *How We Understand*, and 2) *What We Understand*. In the previous article we addressed the first part regarding *how* we understand.¹ In this article we will consider *what* we understand.

What We Understand

The author of Hebrews states, "by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." The Grk term for "the worlds" (τοὺς αἰῶνας) literally means "the ages." It not only

has reference to time² but also depicts a spatial concept.³ In the context, it refers comprehensively to the realm of space and time, i.e., the cosmos in its full extent of time. In other words, the universe and all that has its being in it. The text articulates three realities we understand by faith: (1) the order, (2) the cause and (3) the material of the universe. It is a statement that takes us back to Genesis 1 and presupposes the absolute authority of Scripture.

The Order of the Universe

First, we consider the order of the universe. Our text asserts that the worlds “were framed” in perfect order. The Grk verb used for “framed” (κατηρτίσθαι) means to put together, or to be fitted together. It denotes perfect and complete ordering. The passive voice of the verb indicates that the universe was acted upon by something external and completely independent; it assumes a transcendent Creator. The perfect tense of the verb indicates the universe was not only created in perfect order, but continues in an undiminished state of perfect order. The universe⁴ was created as an intricately ordered and harmonious whole. It exists in perfect uniformity. It was the sovereign act of God that initially ordered the universe, and continues to govern and maintain that order. Such exquisite order reveals a Creator who fashioned this world in infinite wisdom, knowledge and power. As the Psalmist says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork” (Ps. 19:1). Yet, unregenerate man in his bias against God suppresses this reality in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

When the evolutionist⁵ denies the Creator and his created order, he is faced with a metaphysical quagmire because the whole philosophy of naturalism⁶ hinges on the uniformity of nature. There can be no science without uniformity and the laws of nature. But how is it that the laws of nature even exist? Where did they come from? When did they come into existence? The evolutionist, because he denies the existence of the Creator, is forced to ascribe an inherent deity to nature in

order to account for its uniformity. Nature and its laws are given divine status, and ascribed the attributes of God. The evolutionist creates a new reality in his vain reasoning, adopting a worldview that worships and serves creation rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25). Make no mistake about it; evolution is a pantheistic philosophy in which nature and god are one. It exchanges the truth of God the Creator for a lie. God is not the Creator; he is nature itself.

To the evolutionist, the universe is presupposed to be a closed system, i.e., it is an independent and self-contained being (like God) having its own powers and laws. Its absolute independence and self-containment are divine attributes held to by faith. Being self-contained, the universe functions according to the laws intrinsic within itself. These laws are referred to as the laws of nature. The evolutionist believes that natural law is absolute, and ascribes to it the divine attributes of (1) sovereignty, (2) immutability, (3) eternity and (4) self-determination. They are presuppositions held to by faith.

1. Naturalism presupposes that nature is governed entirely by natural law. The laws of nature are *sovereign*; they cannot be broken and they cannot be violated. Every part of existence, every aspect of the universe is considered to be obedient to the laws of nature. Miracles do not and cannot occur because the laws of nature cannot be infringed. Anything supernatural is an absurdity because the sovereignty of natural law is absolute. Hence, the inspiration of the Bible, and any account of a miracle therein, is an absolute falsehood.

2. Naturalism ascribes the divine attribute of *immutability* to natural law. If the laws of nature could change, then phenomena would be unpredictable and the enterprise of science unattainable. Without a religious commitment to the immutability of natural law, there could be no science. Secular naturalism absolutely depends upon the immutable god of natural law to make sense out of anything.

3. Naturalism ascribes the divine attribute of *eternity* to natural law. The laws of nature had no beginning. They were not created but existed from eternity. This is a metaphysical reality they hold to by faith.

4. Naturalism ascribes the divine attribute of *self-determination* to natural law. To the Christian, only the triune God of Scripture is self-determinant; the universe derives its order from the determinant purpose and will of God. To the naturalist, the sovereign, immutable, eternal, self-deterministic god of natural law is the cause of the intricate order and design of nature. Evolutionists make nature to be some kind of person. They personify the determinism of natural law with the term “mother-nature,” who is an intelligent person making choices, liking this or that, getting mad, etc. They speak of nature as a composer, a poet, or a playwright. In evolution, the very term “natural selection” assumes a personality that selects. Evolution doesn’t get rid of teleological and intelligent design, but simply re-introduces it in a metaphorical way. Nature is the designer rather than God. Thus by personifying nature they can impose deterministic qualities to natural law.

It is a deceitful attempt to cover up the incongruities of their theory. Blind forces of nature do not select anything. According to naturalism, the universe functions only by cause and effect in subordination to the laws of nature. If the only processes and mechanisms that exist are natural laws, then the deterministic worldview of the evolutionist is one in which the universe is no more than a chain of events following one after another according to the law of cause and effect.⁷ Everything is a brute fact, a product of chance and not design. But this contradicts their presupposition of the self determination of natural law which is wholly indeterminate; it is impersonal, non-intelligent and non-teleological. To assign personal attributes to nature is to violate their own worldview.

Further, the great contradiction of evolution is their doctrine of chance, which is one of the main pillars of this

philosophy. They say the universe is a universe of chance. Everything evolved and came into being by randomness. But randomness is the very antithesis of order. And the preeminent presupposition of naturalism is the order of the universe, its uniformity and natural law. This is what defines the self-contained system they call the universe. Hence chance can only operate within the confines of absolute order; chance is built upon irrefutable order. An ordered chance is no chance at all. It is an oxymoron and an irrational absurdity!

Summary

Creation is beyond human comprehension. We understand it by the revealed Word of God. Heb. 11:3 asserts that the universe was created in perfect order. It is an absolute reality that the believer understands by faith. However, unregenerate man suppresses this reality, and ascribes divine attributes to nature in order to account for its uniformity. In particular, the evolutionist tries to account for the order of the universe through natural law, ascribing to it the divine attributes of (1) sovereignty, (2) immutability, (3) eternity, and (4) self-determination. It betrays a pantheistic belief system with its own set of religious presuppositions.

In our next article we will continue with “what we understand” by faith, considering the *cause* and the *material* of the universe.

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¹ Nelson, P. S., PIRSpective, 3:2, p. 1.

² TDNT 1:197. When used in the singular, αἰών can refer to a long period of time. In the plural τοὺς αἰώνας can mean eternity as in Mt. 6:13; Lk. 1:33; Rev. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 2Cor. 11:31; Heb. 13:8. The context must determine the meaning.

³ BDAG, p. 33.

⁴ The English word “universe” derives from the Latin *universum*, which means “combined into one.” It expresses a congruent whole.

⁵ By the use of the terms “evolutionist” and “evolution” is meant atheistic evolution, which is the primary sense of the word used in modern day science. Theistic evolution is not addressed in this article.

⁶ *Naturalism* is a metaphysical philosophy that presupposes the universe to be a closed system, and that only natural laws

and forces operate in the universe. All phenomena can only be explained mechanistically in terms of natural causes and laws. *Evolution* is a form of naturalism that centers on the origin of species.
⁷ Wikipedia, *Causality*.

Exegetical Notes

By W. R. Downing

“The Sinner’s Prayer”

Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

There are three textual issues in this verse upon which the entire Parable of the Pharisee and Publican hang, and yet they are either omitted or vaguely rendered in our English Bible. The first is the definite article before “sinner” [τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ]. The Publican did not merely see himself before God as “a sinner,” but emphatically “*the* sinner.” He saw himself as the very epitome — the embodiment — of sinfulness before God! It is this articular or arthrous use which stands in such stark contrast to all of the self-righteousness and self-deception of the Pharisee.

The second is the use of the imperfect tense for “smote” which is followed by the present participle “saying,” strongly emphasizing a repetitive action [ἔτυπεν τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ λέγων]. He evidently repeatedly smote his breast, constantly crying out to God until he had peace. What a vivid commentary on “The Sinner’s Prayer”!

The third issue are the words “O God, be merciful to me” [ὦ θεός, ἰλάσθητί μοι]. The words “be merciful” refer to being propitiated or appeased. Before the two men had entered the Court of Israel in Herod’s Temple, they had each given a blood sacrifice to the priest, and by faith on the part of one and mere presumption on the part of the other, approached God in prayer as the priest, unseen by them in the Court of the Priests, offered the blood. The

Publican by faith pleaded blood atonement for reconciliation to a righteous, just and holy God. Our Lord declared that this man went down to his house justified.

“The Sinner’s Prayer” is something to consider. It must be spontaneous, not something rehearsed or stated in a mechanical way. It may be repeated in soul-agony filled with an awful consciousness of overpowering sin until peace is spoken to the heart and soul. Who said that “The Sinner’s Prayer” is a one-time statement? It is a cry of faith which has its foundation in the atoning blood and culminates in finding peace with God.

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Images from Church History



J. P. Boyce*
(1827-1888)

First President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; to him, under God, the Seminary owes its existence.

*http://archives.sbts.edu/partner/Article_Display_Page/0,,PTID325566%7CCHID717900%7CCIID1978880,00.html