

sbc family news

• www.spencerportbiblechurch.org • volume 2 • issue 6 • oct 2008 • pastor tom balentine •

Teaching Our Children



As Moses stands in Moab on the edge of the Promise Land giving the sermons that would become the book of Deuteronomy, he tells the Israelites how they should live as followers of God. He points out the need to obey the Lord fully, without deviation, and to love Him fully. He tells them what they and their children would need to do to continue living in the land that the Lord was giving them.

While Deuteronomy is the primary writing that Jews used to define what it means to be a Jew, the book often has an almost New Testament quality about it that they ignored. *Doing* what the Lord says is important, but the continual *commitment* to do what He says is more significant (Deut. 6:25). As Moses points out, it is not because of their righteousness (Deut. 9:5) that the Lord is doing for them what He has chosen to do, but He does expect them to circumcise their hearts and to be stiff-necked no longer (Deut. 10:16).

Spread throughout Deuteronomy, we see passage after passage dealing with the need to teach fully the next generation so that they can follow the Lord fully too. While space prohibits anywhere close to a comprehensive review of all that Moses says on the subject, let's look at some selected passages. These are from the early part of the book:

Totally dedicated

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.
Deut 4:9

Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day ...

Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time.
Deut 4:39-40

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.
Deut 6:6-7

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Missions Corner

Evangelism Seminar October 19

Pete Mothershead, a veteran pastor, will bring us an encouraging message in the morning service and lead a seminar in Balanced Evangelism in the evening. Pete has spent 40 years developing this material and training individuals in Balanced Evangelism. His seminar will teach us how to become a natural effective witness and how to conquer fear in witnessing.

Spaghetti Dinner October 25

Mark your calendars! Plan for a night out at SBC's Italian Ristorante. Enjoy a fabulous meal and help send our teens to Udine, Italy, where they will assist a church-planting team. Visit www.seeteams.com and learn more about how teams share the gospel in Italy.

Bruce and Laurie Return on November 23

The Schwagers will return for commissioning as our missionaries to Papua New Guinea. Continue to keep them in your prayers as they continue their preparations at JAARS in North Carolina.

Pray for your missions committee as we search for an additional, overseas, church-planting missionary to partner with.

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(Children ... continued from page 1)

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.
Deut 11:18-19

From these passages, we see that the first step in teaching our children is to be totally dedicated to following the commands that God has given us. If our hearts are not totally dedicated to the Lord, our children will know it, and that teaching will surpass any formal teaching that we do.

Teaching directly

Of course, we also must teach them directly about the Lord so that children will know why we are so committed to Him. Also, without this direct teaching, children will not know how to worship the Lord properly and might fall into error (i.e. adding or subtracting what the Lord has said, per Deut. 4:2).

Now, let's look at some passages from the latter stages of the book:

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.
Deut 29:29

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life,
Deut 30:19-20

Assemble the people — men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns — so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. Their chil-

dren, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

Deut 31:12-13

He said to them, "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you — they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

Deut 32:46-47

Tomorrow's decisions

While we see confirmation of following the Lord fully and the direct teaching of children, we also see an even greater emphasis on the ramifications.

While we know more about God's plan today than the Israelites did as Moses spoke to them, given that we have Jesus and the Holy Spirit in our lives, we still do not know everything that we might want to know. Yet, as with the Israelites, we must be totally committed to following everything that the Lord has asked us to do. If you are not sure what the Lord wants you to do, a hint for you to consider is to read your Bible.

Likewise, we are called to teach our children too. Certainly others can help, but the primary obligations for teaching children about God and how to serve is still the responsibility of parents. Ultimately each child will have to deal directly with God in choosing life, and the parent cannot control that interaction, but the parent should do what the Bible has commanded in teaching the child so that the child is as prepared as humanly possible.

As has been noted in the Deuteronomy class, there does not appear to be an age limit on parents teaching their children, although teaching adult children obviously poses different challenges than teaching small children. All parents must continue to seek God's way for our lives, to be totally committed to doing what God has told us, and to continue to teach our children.

(Missions Corner ... continued from page 1)

News from the Clarks!

Don and Ronnie are now in Fayetteville and have moved in to their new house. Don says it's a very nice house located in a quiet neighborhood 5 to 10 minutes away from everything. But the interior of the house looks like *Trading Spaces* gone wild! Every room is getting a fresh coat of paint.

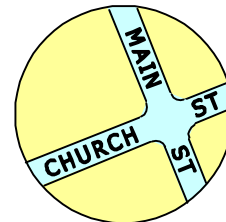
They are very excited about the ministry opportunity they have with *Missions To The Military* at Fort Bragg. Every Friday night they go on base and help the Hammonds put on a dinner, coffeehouse, and bible

study. MTM has raised the needed funds to build a new center just outside the entrance to the base. It will still be a year or two before that's ready for use, but Don looks forward to using the new center to reach out to soldiers.

Pray for on and Ronnie as they look for a new church home, and remember them this winter when it's 20 degrees outside and you're freezing. Then give them a call and ask if you could stop by for a few days – or maybe you could stay until the weather improves, maybe May.

Lessons from Galileo: Science vs. Scripture?

INTERSECTIONS



Dave Peterson

Last time we looked at the fact that Bible “stories” are really history, and can hold their own when put side by side with our secular studies of history. Sometimes there will be apparent conflicts, like that of Darius the Mede, that can’t be resolved with the current state of knowledge; but we can rest on our faith that there *is* a resolution, even if it is never found. In apologetics, we would like to be able to answer every challenge with a conclusive response, but that is not how truth works! No historical source (secular or scriptural) is complete, so there is always room for some missing fact that would resolve the problem. In addition, some apparent contradictions come from misinterpretation either of scripture or of other sources. We need to be ready to change our interpretations when we find a contradiction with *clear* facts from other sources. Often we must recognize several possible ways to take a passage, and hold to one tentatively rather than dogmatically until there is more evidence.

The same thing can happen with science: Since our knowledge is incomplete, we must be humble in our insistence on what we “know” about the world; the Bible, too, makes no claim to tell us everything we’d like to know, and it is easy to misinterpret it based on what we think we “know”. For a case study in how an apparent contradiction with scientific truth can arise and be dissipated, let’s look at the story of Galileo.

Before Copernicus, most of the world believed “scientifically” that the sun goes around the earth. Why? It was obvious – you can see it go around, and you can’t feel the earth moving (except in California). From this common sense idea, early scientists built astronomical theories with which they could predict eclipses, the movement of planets, etc., giving further credence to it. (They had to make their model of the solar system more and more complicated, with circles around circles around circles, in order to accurately predict where a planet would be seen – but it *did* work.)

Living in that culture, readers of the Bible would naturally interpret passages about a moving sun and a stable earth in the obvious way, taking it to mean just what they already believed anyway:

He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved. — Psalm 104:5

It [the sun] rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat. — Psalm 19:6

The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. — Ecclesiastes 1:5

In reading passages like these, Christians of the time would never have reason to consider that there could be alternative interpretations! As we now know, theirs was not the only, or the best, interpretation; but it took new scientific evidence to reveal this. At first (in the 1500’s, the time of Luther and Calvin) the evidence for

the new Copernican theory was slight; in fact, until Kepler’s discovery in 1605 of elliptical orbits, the new theory made *less* accurate predictions than the old theory! But things changed in 1609 when Galileo’s telescope revealed the similarity of other planets to the earth, the phases of Venus (which showed that it went behind the sun), and the moons of Jupiter (showing that orbits around planets were possible). A few scientists became convinced by such arguments that the sun must be at the center. And in response to them, theologians turned verses like those above into proof-texts, declaring that the Bible *teaches* that the sun moves.

Thus the “church” (Catholic, and to some extent Protestant) unwittingly took the side of “old science” against “new science”, putting itself in the midst of a controversy where it didn’t belong, and creating a conflict between scripture and science that never had to exist. Within a century after Galileo, the scientific evidence became so strong that Christians found themselves in the position of insisting the Bible taught something that was *clearly* false. They eventually recognized that the passages supposed to teach geocentrism are not intended to do so, and can be properly interpreted in ways that agree

with modern science. Were they compromising with science, letting science win against scripture and tell us what to believe?

No; they were just doing (belatedly) what we always have to do in interpreting scripture: identify the possible meanings of a passage, compare these with other scriptures and external data, and choose the best interpretation to fit everything we know.

We now recognize that saying the sun rises does not mean that it actually moves; even a modern astronomer can say that, when it is appropriate to use everyday language. And the Bible is not written in modern technical English! If only Christians had realized that sooner.

How can we avoid becoming a source of “anti-apologetics”, providing ammunition for unbelievers to use *against* scripture, instead of supporting our faith?

First, we must be careful to distinguish between scripture itself and our interpretation of it, and be aware of our biases. Like scientists, as humans we tend to interpret according to what we believe, rather than the other way around. This should keep us from making absolute statements about scientific issues, pro or con, that might tie us to an idea that may later be proved worthless, and which the Bible doesn’t really teach in the first place.

Second, we can take both scripture and other data seriously, looking carefully for valid ways to fit it together, yet being careful not to jump at answers that mishandle one or the other. Then we can offer *possible* explanations of apparent discrepancies, or point out ways in which scientific facts (*if* they turn out to be true) will support faith,

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Acquisition and Disposal

LIBRARY



Ginnie Peterson

Getting books ...

From its beginning, the church library has acquired most of its books through donations, or by purchases at library and garage sales. To avoid having to dispose of too many unneeded donated books, we have a donation policy which is posted in the library or available on the library section of the church web site (under "Resource Links"). Also available online are lists of the books the library already owns, if you want to check if we already have something before donating.

... and getting rid of them ...

What is a good way to get rid of unneeded books? One option is Love Packages <www.lovepackages.org>. This ministry collects Christian books, study materials, "Our Daily Bread" booklets, Bibles, and other kinds of Christian literature for shipment overseas. Since English is fairly common in some areas of the world, these materials can be reused by people who may not be able to obtain

them any other way. The Love Packages web site gives details on what kinds of materials are accepted and guidelines for shipping to them, and will accept donations to cover the cost of the overseas shipments.

... and doing both

If you are a fan of used book sales, many public libraries in the area have at least one book sale each year (and accept donations). Keep your eye out for notices in the newspaper or for posters on bulletin boards in the community. (You can also ask me!) One of the biggest sales in the whole country is in Ithaca every May and October, and there's plenty left to choose from even on the last and cheapest days. See their website at:

<www.booksale.org>.

Books are the bees which carry the quickening pollen from one to another mind.

~James Russell Lowell








(Intersections ... continued from page 3)

always remaining humble as we do so. The *correct* interpretation of scripture will never conflict with the *truth* about nature, but we may not know either as well as we think!

Thus the same principles we saw for handling historical conflicts apply also to science:

- **Recognize** the limitations of the data, and be willing to say "we don't know enough yet".
- **Be humble** about our interpretations of both scripture and science, recognizing possible alternatives.
- **Propose** harmonizations tentatively, as a *support* (not *proof*) for faith.
- **Be open** to correction by new data, which may disprove our most cherished assumptions, or suggest ideas we'd never imagined.
- **Focus** on the main points scripture teaches, not the side issues that may not be intended at all.

Our elders and pastoral staff:

Tom Balentine		Pastor
Dennis Burdette		Communication (newsletter supervising editor)
Tom Clement		Adult Christian Education
Larry DeWolfe		Membership
Dave Peterson		Children's Christian Education (newsletter production editor)
Jim Read		Missions and Evangelism
Lee Balentine		Youth Pastor

October 2008

Spencerport Bible Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:30 AM Ladies' Bible Study	2 7:00 PM Smith Body Life Group	3 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:30 PM Read Body Life Group	4 Mother-Daughter Teen Retreat
5 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 5:45 PM Clubs 6:00 PM Praise and Testimonies	6 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	7	8 9:30 AM Ladies' Bible Study	9 7:00 PM Fellowship Committee meeting 7:00 PM Smith Body Life Group	10 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:00 PM Morgigno Body Life Group Boys Brigade Campout	11
12 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 5:45 PM Clubs 6:00 PM Meet the Pastor night	13 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	14 7:00 PM Elder/deacon meeting	15 9:30 AM Ladies' Bible Study 7:00 PM Missions Committee meeting	16 7:00 PM Smith Body Life Group	17 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:30 PM Read Body Life Group	18
19 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 5:45 PM Clubs 6:00 PM Evangelism Seminar	20 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	21	22 9:30 AM Ladies' Bible Study	23 7:00 PM Smith Body Life Group	24 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:00 PM Morgigno Body Life Group	25 ??? PM Missions Dinner
26 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Morning Service 5:45 PM Clubs 6:00 PM Evening Service	27 6:30-8:00 PM Bible Institute	28 7:00 PM Elders meeting	29 9:30 AM Ladies' Bible Study 7:00 PM Heart to Heart	30 7:00 PM Smith Body Life Group	31 7:00-9:00 PM Youth Group 7:30 PM Read Body Life Group	