

WHAT JESUS SAID – THEN AND NOW

If You Don't Believe Moses...

TEXT: John 5:46-47

INTRODUCTION: Graduation from High School is a big deal; and graduates, your whole church congratulates you and rejoices with you.

As your pastor, I too congratulate you. But to be honest, I am worried about you. I am not concerned because of something I know about you. (That's a relief, isn't it?) No, I am worried because I know some of what you are about to encounter as young adults as you go to college and/or enter the work force.

I know, almost with a certainty, that you are going to encounter people who seek to destroy your faith in the Lord Jesus. The people that make it their business to undermine the faith of others come in many forms:

- He may be a university professor or a supervisor.
- She may be a fellow student or companion at work.
- The person may be a sidewalk philosopher you encounter at Starbucks.

But the faith wreckers are out there by the thousands, and the devil will do his very best to put one or more in your path.

I am concerned because these faith attacking individuals are being very successful. The reason for their success is not because of the quality of their reasoning or the strength of their arguments. The reason they are successful is the same reason terrorists are successful. **It is much easier to destroy than to build.** A beautiful house takes months to construct, but an arsonist can convert it to ashes with ten minutes of effort.

So also, **faith terrorists can attack faith that has been nurtured for years, and leave it a wretched mess, sometimes in a matter of hours.**

Now mind you, **they cannot rebuild a substitute for that faith.**

- They cannot offer to you a philosophy of life that will lead you into meaningful paths,
- They cannot offer you healthy and enjoyable relationships,
- They cannot provide purpose for your existence,
- And most certainly they cannot give to you any hope that goes beyond the grave.

But you must understand terrorists never try to build. They just destroy. That is what faith terrorists do, and they do destroy the faith of a multitude of young adults. And that is why I am concerned for you.

Therefore this morning, I am bringing you some of the words of Jesus as a warning about these emissaries of evil that Satan will send with the purpose of destroying your faith.

This warning consists of just two verses and is found in John 5:46-47.

John 5:46–47 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Jesus knew the strategy of faith terrorists.

- **Faith terrorists rarely attack Jesus directly.** They will not say He was a bad person or taught bad things. In fact, they will often be complimentary of Jesus as a good man, a bold prophet, a champion of good against the establishment.
- **Faith terrorists do not usually challenge the New Testament.** Often, they know little about what the New Testament says, but their approach is seldom to try to prove it wrong.
- **Faith terrorists most often attack the Old Testament,**
 - with the majority of the blows being aimed at the first five books (The Books of Moses),
 - and the very center of the target being Genesis.

The faith terrorist will say to you

I. MOSES DID NOT EVEN WRITE THE PENTATEUCH (the first five books of the Bible).

- A.** This view began in the 18th century, but became popular in the 19th.
- B.** The year the United States celebrated its one hundredth birthday, the liberal German professor **Julius Welhausen** proposed **The Documentary Hypothesis, 1876**
- C.** Welhausen and the multitude of Bible critics after him have explained the formation of the first five books of the Bible like this:
 - J is a supposed ancient document that used YHWH as the name for God. (Y in English is a J in German.)
 - E is a supposed document that used Elohim as the name for God.
 - J E is a document that merges J and E with some editing.
 - P is a document with strong priestly influence and includes most of Leviticus
 - D is a document containing the law, most of Deuteronomy and the history of Israel from Joshua to the end of Kings.

- Welhausen suggested that these four documents were redacted (that is what the R means, which is another word for edited) and combined to form the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua.

Now, before I even comment on the evidence for or against the Documentary Hypothesis, let me verbalize the question some of you are asking right now, but you are too polite to yell it out from your pew.

D. “What difference does it make whether Moses wrote it or others wrote it?”

Here is the difference. Here is why it is important.

1. Jesus said that Moses wrote the Pentateuch.

Just one of many examples:

Mark 7:10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’

And **where do we find the words Jesus is quoting?**

In Exodus and Deuteronomy!

Who does Jesus denote as the source of these words?

Moses!

**So, if the Documentary Hypothesis is right,
Jesus is wrong.**

**If Moses is not the principle author of Genesis to Deuteronomy,
then Jesus is mistaken.**

And here is the crux of it all:

If Jesus is wrong;

if Jesus is mistaken,

He cannot really be God.

Do you see now what Jesus was saying?

John 5:46–47 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

E. What is the evidence concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch?

1. **The books themselves acknowledge Moses as the author.**
2. **The rest of the Old Testament names Moses as the author.**
3. **Virtually all historical sources prior to the late 1700’s say Moses was the primary author.**
4. And what of those source documents? Do you know how many copies of those ancient documents have been found in whole or in part by archaeologists?
 - Document “J” - 0
 - Document “E” - 0
 - Document “JE” - 0

- Document “P” - 0
- Document “D” – 0

5. Do we have ancient copies of the Old Testament books, written in their ancient Hebrew, but saying the same thing as our modern translations?

- **YES! Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, dated in the 2nd century B.C., are all or parts of every OT book except Esther.**
- **In 1979, two silver scrolls containing portions of the Book of Numbers, were found in Jerusalem, dating to around 600 B.C., while the first temple was still standing!**

Folks, the evidence against this longstanding documentary hypothesis is so strong that modern liberal seminary education is in disarray as to how the Old Testament was written. Unwilling to accept the obvious and yield to the evidence of the superintending power of the Holy Spirit, these scholars so-called are in great discord concerning what theory of man to turn to next.

But that is not the only way the faith terrorists assault Moses to undermine Jesus. **They also say that**

II. THE EARLY CHAPTERS OF GENESIS ARE MYTHOLOGICAL.

- A. They do not always say it this clearly. What they say is
- B. Evolution is a fact.**
- C. Folks the truth is that the theory of evolution changes more often than a well fed baby, nevertheless its tired premise remains the same:

It goes from an indescribably tiny singularity to an explosion causing super inflation of all matter and energy across 13.7 billion years to form into the observed order and complexity of our universe, uncontrolled except by the self defining laws of physics and chance, including the development of the biological diversity found on this planet and hoped to be found elsewhere in the universe.

- D. Folks, you know I have spent whole series of sermons critiquing this vain imagination of the mind of man, and certainly time will not allow me to enter into that again this morning. But for our purpose let me point out three things that I could hope would be obvious, but sadly I find are often overlooked.
 - 1. The theory of evolution is not compatible with the** account of origins given by Moses in the **Book of Genesis**. Even ignoring the issue of time, which ought not be ignored because it is an important difference, but the order of beginnings is different. For instance, in Genesis plants cover the earth before the sun shines in the heavens. Light from a source other than the sun sustains them until the sun is made. This is not a slightly different version of evolution; this is a whole different explanation.
 - 2. If evolution is true, the Bible is not.**
If the Bible is true, evolution is not.
 3. As God promised in Romans 1, God has not only given us the truth in His Word, but He has shown the evidence of that truth to all men everywhere. This is most especially true in our day, even to the most humanly brilliant of men and women in the world. God has allowed us to glimpse the wonder of the design of DNA. In the nucleus of every cell in our

body is a tiny molecule so small that it would take 10,000 of them to equal the width of a human hair. Yet when this tiny molecule unwinds, it can reach a length that would stretch from here to Burger King at Hwy 98 and Lindsay Ave.

In this tiny molecule in each of our bodies is the blue print and instruction manual stored in a chemical code which we are only beginning to be able to understand. The data contained in this code is the equivalent of about 1 million pages of small print text. This genetic code not only tells the cells how to replicate, what kind of cells to produce, but provides a manual of operation telling each cell of our body how to function, every single minute of every day.

Does anyone really believe that such a code encased in such a tiny cell can exist by mere chance.

Yet the faith terrorists try to convince us that Gen. 1:1 is wrong. In the beginning, they say, it was not God that created the heavens and the earth.

And finally these faith terrorists will tell you that

III. THE MIRACLES IN THE BOOKS OF MOSES HAVE NATURALISTIC EXPLANATIONS.

- A. For this I could offer hundreds of examples, but I will mention only one of the most famous of these.

Those that would undermine your confidence in the Word of God will tell you that after departing from Egypt, the Israelites crossed the Reed Marsh rather than the Red Sea. They say that low tide moved the water out, and a breeze finished the job of making the marsh passable. They usually do not include an explanation of how Pharaoh and his army were later drowned in this shallow marsh as the six inches of tidal water returned when Israel was safely on the other side.

- B. But again the point is that such an explanation is contrary to what Moses said, what the Holy Spirit, Who Inspired Moses said, and consequently what the Bible says. The Bible says that Israel crossed the Red Sea and that God rolled back the waters forming a wall of water on their right and a wall of water on their left.

- C. Again I ask, **“What difference does it make whether you believe the miraculous explanation given in Scripture or the naturalistic one?”**

It matters because the most important things that happened in the Bible were miracles, including Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

- D. If the faith terrorists can get you accustomed to denying the miraculous, they make it very difficult to believe that Jesus really rose on the third day. And as Paul says to the Corinthians

1 Corinthians 15:14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

CONCLUSION: Dear graduates, all students, Christian brother or sister of whatever age, understand that you are the target of a massive conspiracy, not by people, but by the invisible powers of evil led by Satan. Paul warned us of this.

Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, beginning with the belt of truth that you may be able to stand against the attacks of the evil one.