

## Comments Promised

by Doug Johnson  
February 18, 2007

On Sunday, September 25, 2005, 9:02 AM I sent the following e-mail:

"Forwarding without comment (comments to follow)"

This was the cover for forwarding Ty's email of that same date but the time was 3:07 AM. Certainly, just a few hours was a timely response.

The comments, however, are some what delayed, about a year and a half.

Ty wrote:

"Hello All,

1. "Is it possible to agree on which version of the Bible we will be referencing? With so many versions, which should be considered standard? This is an interesting debate for another time perhaps? I would like open for discussion Bible verses that relate to what Doug and I were lightly debating a few days ago. This was mostly concerning the Catholic view on religious objects in their church and devotion (is this the right word?) of or to them. I would like to open with Exodus 20:1-6
2. And God spoke all these words, saying, 'You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.'

To begin, I personally do not agree with the argument that this passage is telling me I cannot have pictures, sculptures, and paintings in my home. I do not think this means it is a sin to have a picture of my family. When I take it in context, my opinion is that you should not fashion such things and bow or serve (what is the meaning of

'serve' here?) them. Furthermore, these objects that you should not 'worship' should not represent anything in heaven on earth or in the oceans. (Little heaven as in sky? Or big 'Heaven' where all of us saints are going?). Simply put, do not make things that represent anything that you will bow to. Bow meaning just about any type of adoration and not just the physical act, but also the act of 'bowing' with your inner self as well.

"An interesting side note here, the word 'Ten Commandments' is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible. In this context, the First and Second Commandments are actually one Commandment. The Protestant tradition may be in error. The Catholics and the Jews both teach this as one commandment. There are actually 14 mandates in the Ten Commandments. I found this fascinating.

"Concerning the Catholic argument about the brass snake on a pole that Moses made.

"2 Kings 18:4 He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it.

3. "Hezekiah actually destroys the snake because the people began to see it as a symbol of God and burned incense to it. Is the same exact thing that Catholics do when they approach a statue of Mary or Peter and light candles and say 'prayers' to them? If Moses' stick is the justification for the actions that are carried on even today, shouldn't this verse also be given credence as it directly relates to it? The preceding verse 3 states that these actions were right in the eyes of the Lord.

"2 Kings 18:3 And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord according to all that David his father had done.

4. "Jesus, our prime example, gave us the model of prayer. He taught us to pray to OUR FATHER directly. Did Jesus teach us to pray to his mother or to dead saints? (By dead, I mean physically dead, all of the physically dead saints of God are alive and well in Heaven and are parts of the Church, my Church and hopefully our Church.) If we have the ability to address God Almighty directly, why in the world pray to anyone else? Was the Lord's prayer for all Christians or just certain Christians?

"1 Tim 2:5 - For God is one, and there is one Mediator of God and of men, the Man Christ Jesus,

"If Mary and a few dozen saints are also in a roles of being a mediator then 1 Tim 2:5 is false. 1 Timothy 2:5 makes it clear that there is one God and there is one Mediator. Paul couldn't have been any clearer, in my opinion of the context. The Bible is correct or Catholic doctrine is correct. They cannot both be correct because they contradict each other. The Bible says there is ONE mediator and the Roman Church says there are many. What is correct?

5. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do. The Romans had many statues of deities in their pagan religions before their gradual takeover of the Christian/Catholic Church in the second to third centuries. The central religion was moved to Rome, as it was the capital of the known world. As we all know, Rome is still capital of the Catholic Church. Jesus was Jewish? Why is the capital of Christianity still not in the Holy Land? Who asked the Romans to take over and move it? I guess Constantine could be argued here but you may see my point. Did the Roman brand of Christianity blend in older traditions including the need for statues and greater/lesser deities? It is, after all, now called the Roman Catholic Church.
6. "I appreciate input on these questions. I am not even close to considering myself a Biblical authority. I am willing to discuss these and other issues with as open a mind as possible. I am firm in the faith the Word of God is infallible and that the truth will sort itself out despite my preconceived notions on my brand of religion. My religion may be up for discussion, but my spirituality is not. I am Blood bought and part of the Bride of Christ, the one true Church. I am just trying to decide what part of the Body my family is. What building to go to and what group of believers to join up with? That is my question of the hour.

"This was originally sent to Doug and Carrie. Please forward these to Faith, Peggy and Lisa as I am not sure of the email addresses and if they are interested in being included in these ongoing debates/discussions.

"In Christ, Ty

"-- Ty Wigal" [Sunday, September 25, 2005 3:07 AM]

(My comments, after Ty's e-mail, refer to numbers I put to the left of Ty's e-mail for reference only.)

1. I use the old King James version of the Bible. My reasons are:

A. Any copyrights that may have been put on the translation have long since expired. If you look in the front of any other Bible, they have some copyright restrictions.

B. I have that version on my computer now in WordPerfect format so it easy to search.

C. I have been using the version for may years so I am familiar with words used in a verse so I can search quickly on specific word combinations.

D. My mother read the Catholic Bible in the 50's and or 60's and found no significant differences other than the extra books and extra chapters in a few books.

E. The KJV has been widely accepted throughout the Protestant community since first translated.

F. No other version is as widely accepted.

G. I have found no significant difference in meaning in any other translation.

H. The reader is encouraged to read quoted passages in their favorite translation and should any differences be detected, they have a valid point for discussion.

2. Concerning Idols - Ty makes a very good and valid point in noting that the Commandment refers to worship of images. Clearly the making of the Brass Snake by Moses did not violate that Commandment. But that same Brass Snake did become a violation of that Commandment years later in Hezekiah's time.

Ty accepts the concept of having family pictures. If you look at a picture and talk to it, you clearly verbalizing what you would say to the individual should that person be present.

In the same way, if you pray in front of a picture of Jesus, you are praying to Jesus and not to the picture of Jesus.

Prayers to Mary or to a Saint are actually requests for

intercession as described below in comment 4.

3. "What Catholics do" indicates a concept that ALL Catholics do the same thing and ONLY what the Catholic Church instructs them to do. Some Catholics rob banks and murder people just the same as some Baptists do. Using that generality is about as useful as saying to your spouse, "You always...." You cannot go from what some do to what official policy is.

4. There is a difference between a Mediator as discussed in 1 Tim 2:5 and Intercessor as discussed in Col 1:9, 1 Thes 5:25, 2 Thes 3:1, Heb 13,18, 1 John 5:16, and 1 Tim 2:1. As Ty quotes 1 Tim 2:5, let us look at the fuller passage:

"1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. 8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." [1 Tim:1-8]

If you look at words prayed in the Rosary, the phrase "forgive us our sins" is directed towards God and "pray for us" is directed to Mary. Jesus is the sole "mediator" and Mary, all of the saints, and the rest of us who pray for others are "intercessors" as described in the passages listed above.

5. Hiding things in plain sight are often the most effective method of hiding things. It is natural to not see what we "see" every day.

The first Epistle of Paul is titled "Romans". It was written to the Christians at Rome, as it says:

"7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I

make mention of you always in my prayers; 10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." [Rom 1:7-12]

The Roman Church did not start with Paul but started on the day of Pentecost as described in Acts 2 with specific mention of individuals from Rome in Acts 2:10.

The book of Acts ends with Paul in Rome. History teaches that Peter also went there and both Peter and Paul were martyred there.

History also teaches that there were large Christian communities in the Mideast which were mostly wiped out by the Moslems in about 600AD.

But most Protestants, including myself, had no teaching nor knowledge of the period between the end of Acts and the time of Martin Luther and again between then and now. When I went to church, it was the same as when I was a child so I naturally assumed it was always that way.

6 Authority is really the key to Christianity. We all acknowledge that our Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the Christian Church but who is next in command - that is the question.

I use to think it was me. After all, the infallible Bible said I had the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit would lead me into all truth.

No one else, however, considered me to be in command after Jesus. They all thought it was themselves or someone they looked up to.

Now I never thought it was my pastor nor my church. I did not know much church history but I knew that my current denomination was not the only one that was "ok" and there was nothing special to make my pastor anything special.

Try and follow this logic. I always thought that I had the correct position on each topic because if I thought I had the wrong position, I would simply change my position so I would have the correct position again.

This, of course, presupposed that I had the information to come up with the correct decision. The concept of "The Bible is the sole source of Authority" made my logic possible.

Follow this through to a conclusion. You have the Bible as the only authority. You have the Holy Spirit to guide you. Whenever you read the Bible, you first evoke, through prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit to help you. Then you will also come up with the same position. If you do this and I do this but we come up with different conclusions, what does that prove?

For me, in the past, it was very simple, I was right and you were wrong. Simple but not very helpful.

It took me quite a while but I finally figured out that the problem wasn't that everyone else was wrong. Nor was it that one other was right and every other person including me were wrong. There were not just two sides to various issues but very many sides to many issues. Different people differed on different issues. The problem was with the procedure.

Jesus first said what to do and then Acts 15 gives us the case study on how that procedure is actually implemented.

The first step we all were doing is correct. Pray and study the Bible and then decide. This works for most issues that we all agree on.

Step two is when there is a disagreement. You first try to work it out through one-on-one discussions.

Step three is when you can't seem to work it out. That step is to take it to the Church and have the Church decide.

When Jesus was on earth, he made the decisions. His last decision was to put the Apostles in charge.

The first decision the Apostles made was to establish Apostolic Succession. This is described in Acts 1.

The next decision the Apostles made was the establishment of Holy Orders. This is described in Acts 6.

The next decision the Apostles made was the ruling that one should not teach what was not authorized and that Gentile Christians should not be instructed to follow the laws of Moses as the Jewish Christians did. This is described in Acts 15.

Other decisions made by the Apostles and their successors include the Trinity and what Books were to be considered to be in the Bible.

But what Jesus said about taking disputes to the Church presupposes that there is only one Church and that the Church has a decision making body that gets authority through the apostolic succession established in Acts 1.

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Further comments and or questions are solicited.