

The last time we were together we left Esther, who is now been chosen queen by Ahasuerus, and her cousin Mordecai, who exposed a plot to harm the king, and the result of that was the king investigated the charges and found them to be true. As a result two of his inner circle were hanged on the gallows.

And now some time has passed and we pick up in chapter 3.

**Esther 3:1** <sup>NAU</sup> After these events King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and established his authority over all the princes who *were* with him.

So essentially Haman is made the CEO over all the princes and is given a great deal of authority. Therefore, we can assume that the king trusted this guy as he must have proven himself over the years as being a faithful servant to the king.

And as was probably customary at the time this new appointee of the king was paraded out for all the people to see since they didn't have twitter or e-mail in those days and so the next best thing was for the people to actually see the king's choice and honor that choice by acknowledging Haman as the new authority in that area. And here's where the trouble starts.

**Esther 3:2-5** <sup>2</sup> All the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman; for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage. <sup>3</sup> Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?" <sup>4</sup> Now it was when they had spoken daily to him and he would not listen to them, that they told Haman to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew. <sup>5</sup> When Haman saw that Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage to him, Haman was filled with rage.

**The first question is, who are the people at the king's gate in the beginning of verse 2?**

We are told that they are the king's servants. This of course would include all of those who would now come under the authority and rule of Haman from the greatest to the least of all the servants.

**And what is the reason for all of these servants being gathered at the gate according to the beginning of verse 2?**

To pay homage to Haman at the command of the king.

**But notice what was required. There are actually two things these servants were required to do. Can you see them there in the beginning of verse 2?**

To bow down and to pay homage. In most English translations this is the terminology that is employed. The KJV, however is probably closer to the original intent.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Esther 3:2** And all the king's servants, that *were* in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him...

And so, this particular action that was commanded by the king was not simply limited to a bodily posture of bowing but must have also inferred some form of adulation, since the word used for homage can also be translated, worship.

**What would be the purpose of such a show?**

To publicly force the allegiance of these servants to the king's choice of leadership, in this case Haman.

**But who is part of that group of servants according to the end of verse 2?**

Mordecai.

Mordecai is not simply hanging out at the gate with these servants as some sort of drive-by bystander. He is there as part of the servant group.

**But what would have allowed him to become one of the servants of the King, now under the leadership of Haman?**

He was the one who exposed a plot to harm the king and apparently the king rewarded him with the privilege of being part of this servant group.

But notice what Mordecai, presumably a brand new addition to this group does, or maybe we should say, doesn't do.

**Esther 3:2** ... But Mordecai neither bowed down nor paid homage.

Notice again here that there are two specific things that seemed to be required in acknowledging Haman as their leader. A physical posture along with some form of reverence or paying respect be that through some verbal or physical accepted means.

In our country this is accomplished in the military as each person takes an oath to protect and defend the constitution of the United States and by extension to submit themselves to their commander-in-chief, the President.

**So, what has Mordecai essentially done here by neither, bowing or paying homage to Haman?**

He has said that he will not submit to Haman as the type of ruler who is worthy of such reverence.

This doesn't mean that Mordecai would not be willing to submit to Haman as his boss, but because of the way in which he was forced to give religious homage to Haman he was not willing to go that far.

By the way, can you imagine the scene at the front gate as all of the pomp and circumstance that accompanied this event is going on? All are bowed to the ground, and all presumably declaring Haman to be a man worthy of reverence. And in the midst of this event one man is still standing and remaining silent.

Well, you can imagine the response and it's recorded for us in our text.

**Esther 3:3** <sup>3</sup> Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why are you transgressing the king's command?"

These people were amazed that Mordecai would place himself in such a position.

But notice who they feel has been the object of his insolence. It's not Haman, though that would certainly be inferred, but rather the king himself as it was his command that demanded such action by his servants. This is why they say, why are you transgressing the king's command?

**When a king speaks, even if the king is not present, does this change the fact that obedience is still required by those whom the king addresses?**

Now, let's bring this same question over to you and me in the church.

**When our king speaks, even though we may not physically see Him, are we obliged to honor Him with our lives in love and obedience?**

**So, are we allowed to change what the King has said, or to reinterpret what our King has written?**

Unfortunately, this is exactly what has been going on in the church since the beginning which is why the apostles spent so much time warning the church about false teachers. And of course the tradition of questioning the King of kings is alive and well today.

Let me give you one quick example.

**Genesis 1:1-8** <sup>NAU</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. <sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. <sup>6</sup> Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." <sup>7</sup> God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

And then as you move through the rest of the creation week we see that God continued to create plants and trees and animals and ultimately man, all in the span of six days, and then we are told that God ceased from creating by using the language that He rested from His work on the seventh day.

**Let me ask you this. As you read through those passages is there any part of the language that would suggest that a day is not a real day, as we continually read, there was evening and there was morning, a second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth day?**

If you read through the book of Genesis from beginning to end, the book is shown to be an historical account of events that took place from creation through the end of the book which concludes this way.

**Genesis 50:24 -26** <sup>24</sup> Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob." <sup>25</sup> Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here." <sup>26</sup> So Joseph died at the age of one hundred

and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

The entire book is an actual account of the world and man and God's purpose in redeeming a people for Himself as is seen in national Israel coming up out of Egypt to eventually to end up in the Promised land, as the next book Moses writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit makes clear. It's called Exodus. This is a book about history.

So, is it safe to say that because the entire book of Genesis is an historical account of man and what God was going to do with man, starting with a real person named Adam, can we safely say that the first 2 chapters of Genesis is an historical account of the way in which this world was made by God in the span of six literal days?

**By the way, who was the only one there in the beginning who would have been responsible for passing this information along to man?**

God.

**And whose word is this that has been passed on to us in the written form we have today?**

God's word.

**If this is God's word and since God is our King are we obliged to believe what He has written down for us as it pertains to even His creation of the universe and all things contained in it?**

So, who are we to decide that His plain word is not really what He says? And yet, otherwise smart people who claim to be Christians are doing just that. Let me give you a quote.

Tim Keller writes: "I personally take the view that Genesis 1 and 2 relate to each other the way Judges 4 and 5 and Exodus 14 and 15. In each couple one chapter describes a historical event and the other is a song or poem about the theological meaning of the event... I think Genesis 1 has the earmarks of poetry and is therefore a "song" about the wonder and meaning of God's creation. Genesis 2 is an account of how it happened... For the record I think God guided some kind of process of natural selection, and yet I reject the concept of evolution as All-encompassing Theory."

Natural selection cannot be divorced from evolution. And so, for him to say he rejects the concept of evolution as all-encompassing theory is to talk out of both sides of your mouth.

By the way Tim Keller is not alone in this perspective, others would include Dr. Dobson of Focus on the Family, C.S. Lewis, Billy Graham.

"I don't think that there's any conflict at all between science today and the Scriptures. I think that we have misinterpreted the Scriptures many times and we've tried to make the Scriptures say things they weren't meant to say, I think that we have made a mistake by thinking the Bible is a scientific book. The Bible is not a book of science. The Bible is a book of Redemption, and of course I accept the Creation story. I believe that God did create the universe. I believe that God created man, and whether it came by an evolutionary process and at a certain point He took this person or being and made him a living soul or not, does not change the fact that God did create man. ... whichever way God did it makes no difference as to what man is and man's relationship to God."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source Book: *Billy Graham: Personal Thoughts of a Public Man*, 1997. p. 72-74

**The only way that you could question the clear words of Genesis one is to conclude that something else trumps the clear teaching of God's word. Anyone want to take a guess what would trump the written word of God as it relates to how the world began?**

Science.

Keller concludes his article with this advice for lay people: "My conclusion is that Christians who are seeking to correlate Scripture and science must be a 'bigger tent' than either the anti-scientific religionists or the anti-religious scientists. Even though in this paper I argue for the importance of belief in a literal Adam and Eve, I have shown here that there are several ways to hold that and still believe in God using evolutionary biological processes."

Again, he assumes that simply because we take God at His word that we fall into the false category he calls anti-scientific religionists. Any Christian who has even a modicum of intelligence knows that science is an awesome discipline of discovering how God's world works. But when it comes to the supernatural that God controls science is not much help and will actually contradict what God has revealed.

And so, it's not a matter of simply looking at the geologic column and determining that the world must be billions of years old because it would take that long to lay down the sediment in that way. Scientists are not un-biased when it comes to looking at the evidence.

Secular scientists start with the premise that God did not create and therefore they must explain the evidence without God. Christian's who happen to be scientists can take the same evidence from their bias that God did create and show quite convincingly that the geologic column was laid down quickly through a hydrologic process only thousands of years ago.

**Anyone remember what hydrologic process that might have been?**

The worldwide flood of Noah's day.

Scientific theory on many different levels has been proven false time and time again and therefore their theories are always changing. The term abiogenesis may not ring a bell for many people but that term simply means spontaneous generation which translates into something simply appearing out of nothing.

I'm guessing that no one here is a scientist. But let me ask you this. Does modern day science teach that living things appear out of nothing?

No. But it wasn't that long ago when the world believed this. In fact, before Louis Pasteur came on to the scene it was largely believed that such occurrences in nature were common place.

Where did mold come from? How do mushrooms appear in your back yard literally over night? Why do maggots strangely appear on road kill after a couple of days? The scientific world didn't have an explanation and so they concluded that some form of spontaneous generation caused such things.

Louis Pasteur in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was able to prove how these things happened. He died in 1895. From the time of his discovery to today is approximately 130 years. My grandfather was born in 1897. I'm two generations from the people who believed that mold came about because of spontaneous generation.

Science doesn't always get it right. And so, to place science as a god that trumps the God of creation is a very scary place to be. So why is this a big deal?

**Why is it a big deal to believe that God created the universe in just six days as His word clearly says?**

Because if what God said in the beginning is only a song or poetry about the world and was never meant to convey the facts as God has revealed them is to undercut every other teaching in the word of God that science doesn't agree on.

In any class of physics in any university around the world today it will be clearly be taught, and rightly so, that the human body without any aid cannot displace water in such a way where you can stand on it, let alone walk on it, without sinking.

**Where is this a problem in the word of God?**

So, science has proven that people cannot naturally walk on water. So, Jesus did not walk on water because that was actually a poetic way of saying that He comes to the aid of His people.

In any medical class in any medical school today you will never hear any teacher worth his salt say to his students if someone is blind take some dirt, spit on it, make a little mud ball and then put it on your patient and tell him to go wash it off and then have your patient expect to receive his sight back.

**John 9:5-7** <sup>5</sup> "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." <sup>6</sup> When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, <sup>7</sup> and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam " (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came *back* seeing.

Is that plain enough? Then you've missed the point The man didn't come back being able to see physically. Jesus said He was the light of the world. Jesus is speaking about spiritual enlightenment. The man by faith washed off the mud and his spirit and heart were touched by the words of Jesus and his spiritual eyes were opened to spiritual truths.

Do you see the problem when you start with the premise that God didn't really speak words that were meant to be taken at face value?

But I've got one more.

Every coroner in the world today has been trained in the art and science of studying death and how to interpret the signs of death. When a body comes in to their mortuary it is laid on a table and is

meticulously studied in ways you and I don't want to know about during an autopsy.

For example when a person comes in who has been shot through the heart and the neck with two separate gun shots they can actually tell you which was the first shot and which shot actually killed the person.

Well, we might conclude it was the shot through the heart. However a bullet can pass through the neck and sever the medulla oblongata.

The medulla oblongata is the lower half of the brainstem. The medulla contains the cardiac, respiratory, vomiting and vasomotor centers and deals with autonomic functions, such as breathing, heart rate and blood pressure.

If you sever that there is automatic death before you hit the ground. And though a second bullet may penetrate the heart after the first shot, coroners can easily determine which bullet hit the patient first.

But one thing every coroner can tell you is that when a person dies and they are laying on the table, they will never see that person raise up from that table. Science has proven this. Oh, wait a minute that raises another problem.

### **Any thoughts?**

If we place the word of God at the mercy of science then we eliminate the possibility of salvation through Christ's life, death and resurrection.

**1 Corinthians 15:16-19** <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; <sup>17</sup> and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup> If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

But Paul defeats any skeptic including modern day scientists by saying this.

**1 Corinthians 15:20-26** <sup>20</sup> But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. <sup>21</sup> For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, <sup>24</sup> then *comes* the end, when He

hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

Does it make a difference if we conclude that science has “proven” that the world could not have been created in six literal days as God clearly says?

When you place doubt on one aspect of God’s word it opens up everything for question.

The King’s word was to be obeyed at all costs. And our King of kings and Lord of lords words must not be taken lightly. But the king that Mordecai defied was part of the system of the prince of the power of the air.

He would not submit to such words or commands. And when you and I have a choice to submit to those who would pervert our Kings words, even if they claim to be Christian, fall on the side of your King. He will never disappoint you.