



lectual challenges to this charge we can expose the prospect to the deeper issue of recognizing his own inability to adequately guide his own steps. If God is our Creator, then **“He knows our frame”** (Psa. 103:14) and knows what is truly best for us. Hu-

man desire falls short when it comes to properly guiding man through the dangers of this life, and can offer us no insight into what is necessary to secure us beyond this life. When we were children, there were many things that we thought were best, but now as adults we can understand that there is a better way than we even imagined as children. To shatter the pretense that “the Bible is outdated” we may need to help people realize the childlike deficiency of our own knowledge. This immature deficiency can only be overcome by the mature insight offered by **“the Father of spirits”** (Heb. 12:9). Our friends and neighbors may not need a full helping of intellectual therapy, only a good dose of humility in order to recognize the real problem.



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BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

December 16
2012



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

“The Bible is Outdated”

By Kyle Pope

When critics of faith argue that the Bible is outdated, they offer what strikes me as an odd assertion. Do they mean by this that it is no longer applicable? Jesus said that His words will judge men on **“the last day”** (John 12:47-48). As the only reliable inspired account of Jesus’ words, the Bible offers the standard by which we will be judged on **“the last day.”** That means that it remains applicable until that day. If the atheist poses this argument, he creates a paradox for himself. If there is no God today, there could have been no God in the past. Scripture then would not have *become outdated* it never would have been what it claims to be—**“given by the inspiration of God”** (2 Tim. 3:16). Critics might try to say that the belief in God itself, reflected in Scripture, served a purpose in the past, to explain the world of ancient man, but that purpose is no longer necessary. Now, so they might say, as was heard in the 1960s, “God is dead.” But the Bible offers a more enduring picture of Deity, teaching us plainly, **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever”** (Heb.

13:8). His word, we are promised, **“will by no means pass away”** (Matt. 24:34).

Perhaps critics mean that the modern world has changed so much that the problems and challenges that face us are different from those that faced the ancient world. In the religious world, this very argument is sometimes used to argue that the church needs to change and adapt to each genera-



Olsen Park church of Christ

tion. The church hierarchy (so they say) or a personal and subjective revelation of the Holy Spirit (others argue) is necessary to address this every-changing world. Is the world really so different? The world of Bible times knew war (2 Sam. 11:1), corruption (Jer. 5:26-27), immorality (Gen. 19:4-5), famine (Acts 11:28), selfishness (1 Sam. 2:12-14), changing moral standards (Jer. 6:15), murder (Gen. 4:8), rape (2 Sam. 13:14), greed (John 12:4-6), and political and religious chaos (2 Chron. 13:4-12). What's so different? Yes, the technology they possessed was limited and their scientific understanding of the physical world was different than ours, but we must not confuse the accumulation of knowledge and technology with some imagined evolution of human society. In the church, Paul told Timothy that New Testament writing was offered **“that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God”** (1 Tim. 3:15). This was a standard taught **“everywhere in every church”** (1 Cor. 4:17) as it should be today. Human beings were the same in Bible times as they are today. They faced the same questions, struggles, and challenges we do today. To them, as to us, the Bible was given as a divine guide to allow man to be **“thoroughly equipped for every good work”** (2 Tim. 3:16-17), granting to us **“all things that pertain to life and godliness”** (2 Pet. 1:2-4).

I'm afraid that the charge that the Bible is outdated really betrays something much more basic and far less cerebral within the hearts and minds of many. You see, if the Bible is outdated I don't need to study its teachings, follow its guid-

ance, and hold myself to its principles. It's a relic of the past! It has no more power over me than the laws inscribed on the tombs of the Pharaohs or the edicts of Roman emperors. On the other hand, if the Bible is not outdated, then it presents standards of behavior, attitude, and lifestyle that must shape my choices, restrict my actions, and curb my desires in ways that many of us just don't want to accept. That's the real issue!

When we are challenged with this claim by folks we are trying to influence, we can certainly call them to recognize the enduring relevance of Scripture. We must teach them that the Bible offers the standard by which we will be judged—many do not realize this. We must teach them that God is eternal and ever lives as our Creator, Judge, and potential Redeemer—many do not realize that. We must also help them take off the veil of mystery that cloaks the ancient world to help them see a place not so different from our own, in order to lead them to see that the eternal God offered guidance to ancient men and women who wrestled with things **“common to man”** (1 Cor. 10:13)—many do not realize these things as well. Yet, when all is said and done, our biggest challenge may lie more in helping our friends and neighbors understand that **“the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps”** (Jer. 10:23). The way to life, rests not in following our own preferences. Jesus

said, **“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me”** (Matt. 16:24). Often, the charge that the Bible is outdated may be just a more rational sounding excuse than saying “I don't like what it says, so I'm not going to do it!”

Now then, if we presume to know this underlying motive, when our friends use the excuse that “the Bible is outdated” we run the risk of assuming that we know what is deep in someone else's mind. God alone **“searches the hearts”** (Rom. 8:27). We don't want to insult people or act as if we know what we do not. However, much of the power of God's word rests in its ability to penetrate **“the thoughts and intents of the heart”** (Heb. 4:12). Perhaps there are ways as we answer the intel-