

## Haitian Earthquake

### Bible Answers to Evangelicals I

Fred R. Coulter—January 16, 2010

Now we've seen in the news all week quite an earthquake, especially in that area—7.whatever, and those living here in California, we've seen a lot of earthquakes. The last major one that we had caused a lot of trouble, was in 1988, and widespread damage. But in that one, regardless of the widespread damage and everything that took place, only 62 died. However, in Haiti they say that there are between 40 and a 100,000 that have died. We'll have to wait and see if that's the final count.

I want to reflect just a little bit on something that Pat Robertson said. We didn't get much of a clip of it on the television, because it was really quite something. But he said that the Haitians in 1700-whatever made a pact with the devil, and that's why the earthquake is today. It shows this: He doesn't know very much about the Bible.

Let's look at something here in Ezekiel 18. Also it reflects something else, too. Whenever something bad happens we are looking for a simple solution. And in that solution we like to point the finger at what is wrong and what is evil and that's the reason why it happened to them. Can we stand up with full authority and say that that is so? Do we know anything about the people? *No!* We know something about it. Sure we know they have a mixture of voodooism and Catholicism, but is that all there is to it? Yes! We know that they're corrupt population, and a lot of violence occurs a great deal of time, but look at all of the people from America, especially that go do down there, that are dedicated missionaries to help orphans, to bring them medical attention, to bring them food, to bring them clothing, and so forth. Those are all good things that people are doing. That's doesn't mean they understand all the Truth of the Word of God, but let's look at it from this point of view: Pat Robertson could not possibly be right in what he's saying, because here's what the Bible tells us in Ezekiel 18.

Ezekiel 18:1: "The Word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'What do you mean by this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the

children's teeth *are* set on edge"?' .... [In other words, all the problems that the children are going through is because of what the fathers have done. The second commandment says that God does bring the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him. That is true, but here God gives a little modification to it, and He tells us, 'Don't be so fast to judge when we read this.'] ...'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'to you there is no longer any occasion to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls *are* Mine.... [And the soul is all the living beings of human beings.] ...As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, they *are* Mine. The soul that sins, it shall die'" (vs 1-4). So God makes an individual judgment on a person's life and how does He do that? Based upon His laws and commandments and so forth. There's always repentance. You look down there at Haiti and all the things that people have gone through down there makes you wonder. I wonder how many have really been literally scared out of their complacency and wondering about their lives and their sins when something like this happens, that is those who survive.

Here's what God says, v 5: "But a man who is righteous and does that which is lawful and right, And has not eaten on the mountains, nor has lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, nor has defiled his neighbor's wife, nor has come near a menstruating woman, and has not oppressed any man, but has given the debtor's pledge back to him, has robbed none by violence, has given his bread to the hungry and has covered the naked with a garment; He does not lend out as usury, nor has taken any increase, he has withdrawn his hand from iniquity, has executed true justice between man and man'" (vs 5-8). Sounds like a pretty upright person—doesn't it?

There are probably a lot of people out there that fall into that category. Now He narrows it down here, but let's see what happens. Here's something that is important to understand: ***Every human being is given free-moral agency.*** Every human being has to choose between life and death, blessing and cursing.

That doesn't happen in people's lives at the same time, same age. It may happen for some when they're young; it may happen for others when they're old.

Now He says here, v 9: "Has walked in My statutes, and has kept My ordinances to deal truly, he *is* righteous, he shall surely live," says the Lord GOD... [And we also find this in the Bible—don't we—when we read the history of the kings of Israel, there's a righteous king and what happens to his son? He turns out to be a no-good sinner, an idolater. So He's clarifying everything here so that we know. When there is also a son who has come from a wicked father, sees what his father does and doesn't do it, the opposite occurs. So God is going to recognize that.] ...'And if he beget a son *who is* a robber, who sheds blood, and who does the like of any one of these things—And *the father* does not do any of these *himself*—but *his son* has even eaten on the mountains, and has defiled his neighbor's wife; Has oppressed the poor and needy; has committed robbery; has not given back the pledge; and has lifted up his eyes! to the idols; has committed abomination; has loaned out at usury; and has taken increase—shall *the son* then live? He shall not live! He has done all these abominations; he shall surely be put to death; his blood shall be upon him'" (vs 9-13). So God makes individual judgments. We'll talk about how earthquakes fit into that here in just a bit. You cannot make a judgment, like Pat Robertson did, and blame the earthquake today 250-some years after the fact as the reason for the earthquake.

Now v 14, here's the converse of it. "But, *if a man* begets a son who sees all his father's sins which he has done, and fears, and does not do like him—" We have a perfect example of that. Just put this in your notes: Manasseh, one of the most evil kings (2-Chron. 33). Fifty-five years and he was the son of Hezekiah. So you have a good king, Hezekiah; then, you have his son, an evil king. Then Manasseh has a son called Josiah (2-Chron. 34-35). He helped lead Israel to one of the greatest periods of repentance in the history of Israel and Judah. But his father was wicked. So it's just like it says here.

""But, *if a man* begets a son who sees all his father's sins which he has done, and fears, and does not do like him—*Who* has not

eaten on the mountains; nor has lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel; has not defiled his neighbor's wife; nor has oppressed any man; has not withheld the pledge; nor has committed robbery by violence; *but* has given his bread to the hungry; and has covered the naked *with* clothes... [That's important. We're going to see why all the relief and everything going into Haiti and for those people is the right thing to do. You need to understand this, it's very important: When people are suffering in circumstances like that, don't come in and be self righteous and point the finger of condemnation at them, because God doesn't like that.] ...has withdrawn his hand from *oppressing* the poor; has not received usury nor increase; has done My ordinances; has walked in My statutes—he shall not die for the iniquity of his father; he shall surely live'" (vs 14-17).

Now this tells you what? When something like an earthquake comes along, don't be so quick to make judgments and blame. We'll see why here in just a little bit. Let's come to the book of Obadiah, very interesting little book, that's right after the book of Amos. Just a one chapter book, so there are just verses in it. It's very instructive. If you study in the Bible, you're going to find out that there was the antagonism between Jacob and Esau. They were twin brothers. Esau, also called Edom, hated Jacob. We won't get into it, but notice what God says concerning judging when you shouldn't judge, rather you should be in there helping. Notice what He says.

Obadiah 10, this is talking about Esau: "Shame shall cover you for the violence against your brother Jacob, and you shall be cut off forever.... [Here's why]: ...On the day of your standing on the other *side*, on the day that the strangers were capturing his force, and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots of Jerusalem, even you *were* like one of them. But you should not have looked on the day of your brother in the day of his disaster... [That is to say, 'Right on, God, he really deserved it.']. ...nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; nor shall you have spoken arrogantly in the day of distress'" (vs 10-12).

So this tells us: When disasters occur, *even if it is God's judgment* like it was against Judah and the Jews in Jerusalem for their sins,

you don't stand there and rejoice in it. So Pat Robertson should've never said what he said. Who is he to judge? He puts himself, unfortunately, in the same category as Esau. Furthermore, what Esau did, they went and enjoined the enemies who were really the correction instruments in God's hands for their sins. When that happens, you don't go join the enemy to help do in your brother.

Verse 13: "You should not have entered into the gate of My people in the day of their calamity; also, you should not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity. Nor should you have laid hands on their treasure in the day of their calamity.... [Now that should also apply to all of the Haitians down there. Don't go rob, don't go loot, don't steal, don't get your machetes and hack people up, so you can get what you want. Help everyone out.] ...nor should you have stood on the crossroads to cut off those of his who escaped; nor should you have delivered up his survivors in the day of distress" (vs 13-14).

Now Jesus says almost the same thing here. Let's come to Luke 13. So anyone who begins to point the finger and say, 'Aha, aha, this came from God, you deserve it.' Even Jeremiah, though he had to bring the message of doom and gloom and destruction and captivity, he said, 'Oh, my heart breaks.' Rather than saying, 'Yeah, you deserve it.' People do this all the time: They like to look for an easy solution. It's the same way in church. I've mentioned a couple times that church is not like a drive-thru fast food place where you get a couple things and everything is cool and you go on. God is calling to eternal life. Now that's a whole different proposition.

Luke 13:1: "Now at the same time, *there* were present some who were telling Him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices... [People were standing around saying, 'I wonder why that happened? I wonder why these people had their blood mixed in with their sacrifices. They must have been evil people.'] ...And Jesus answered *and* said to them, 'Do you suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all Galileans, because they suffered such things? No, I tell you; but if you do not repent, you shall all likewise perish'" (vs 1-3)—because you're judging the wrong thing.

Then He makes another point. Innocent standbys, just like the earthquake down here in Haiti. There were a lot standing by a building and they're dead. Down there in that tropical area those dead bodies rot and blow up and explode and death and pestilence, and everything comes real quickly to the survivors, not only those who died. So here's an accident that happened, v 4: "Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, do you suppose that these were debtors above all men who dwelt in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but if you do not repent, you shall all likewise perish" (vs 4-5).

The comment was made: Down in the tropics—I'll show a little later—that when there's war or calamity like that, quickly follows pestilence, sickness, disease and death. It happens quickly, because if you're out of food and water, four, five, six, eight, ten days, you're going to get desperate. And if they can't bury all those bodies, as they said on the report, the stench just hangs in the air of those dead bodies. So something has to be done. And we ought to be very thankful that the American people are the leaders in this and always have been when these disasters come, because they are a people who at least have love and compassion and understanding for those that find themselves in disasters.

Look what happened with the tsunami in Indonesia. When we sent the Navy down there and rescued all of these people, guess what happened? A lot of the Jihadist Muslims gave up trying to poison the people's minds as how bad America is. Because what could they say when they're there, they're helping—medicine, food, clothing, shelter. They had troops on the ground, but they didn't kill and plunder. They didn't try and conquer. So you know, we need to look at that.

Let's come here to Mark 13. Let's talk about earthquakes. Earthquakes are going to come. Earthquakes are going to happen. Here in California, we've done a lot more to prepare for them than many others states, because we have a lot of earthquakes. Down in Hollister we live two miles from the San Andreas fault line. The building code is you build so if there is an earthquake, you're not going to have a lot of damage. So when we built our house in 1977-78, that's how we built it. We have survived all

the earthquakes with not even cracking the stucco on the outside of the house.

So when you live in areas like that, you've got to prepare so if the disaster comes it will be mitigated because you don't build a bunch of weak buildings, and things like that. To answer the questions, when these things at the end are going to occur:

Mark 13:5 "And Jesus *in* answering them began to say, 'Be on guard lest anyone deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, "I am *the Christ*"; and they shall deceive many.... [When you see the word *many*, that means the majority of people, which gets down to the thing: the majority are rarely right.] ...But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for it is necessary for *these things* to come to pass, but the end *is* not yet'" (vs 5-7). Sounds just like our evening news—right? You could take Matt. 24, Mark 13, Luke 21 and put them side beside as you watch the evening news and, 'Well, that's happening just as Jesus said.' It's also interesting, you go back in time, say go back a 150 years ago, you wouldn't know these things were taking place until months or years after. Remember when Krakatau blew in 1804? No one knew, no one knew why they didn't have a summer; no one knew why the winters were so cold; because all of that from the volcano was up there. They didn't understand it until later.

So when you look at these things and put it in the light of the way we receive news today—does this tell us that it's in the time when we can see all of these things transpiring at the same time? If you lived up in Yosemite Valley back in 1849 and you're up there looking for gold, you wouldn't know that there was war in Mexico; you wouldn't know that there was war in Europe. There's no way you could hear about it. You pack up all your supplies and you run out back and you stay there for six months to a year, and then you come in, and then you pick up on a little bit of news. But today we have it all right in front of us—don't we?

Now v 8: "For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in different places... [Very interesting—right?] ...and there shall be famines and disasters. These things *are* the beginning of sorrows." So you can say, 'Okay, this happens because people are sinners.'

Tell me where on earth people are not sinners. *No place!* Can you then make a judgment? *No!* Do these things happen? *Yes!* What caused the earthquake? Shifting of the plates underneath. Now could God have prevented it? *Yes!* Did He? *No!* So we can't come along and judge them and say they're evil and say we're righteous, because you may end up like God's condemnation against Esau and He's going to judge you.

So we'll see what God wants us to do in these cases. Let's come back here to Psalm 44. Here's what we need to understand: how does God look at people? God tells us in the New Testament we are not to judge lest we are judged we are judged with the same judgment—correct? Now we can help people out who have problems and difficulties, to help them overcome their sins, but don't judge unto condemnation, because they can repent. Anytime there's repentance before God, the slate is wiped clean. So be careful how you judge, as Jesus said, you don't know their hearts.

Psalm 44:21: "Shall not God search this out?.... [That is anyone who's going against God. The answer is, yes, He will.] ...For He knows the secrets of the heart." Now let's just stop and think about this. Remember the account of Abraham coming to God when God was sending the angels down to Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham said, 'Lord, will you destroy it if there are fifty righteous?' '*No, I won't destroy it.*' 'How about forty-five?' '*No, I won't.*' 'I'll speak again, how about thirty?' '*No, I won't.*' 'Let me ask, just the last time, how about if there are ten?' He said, 'No, I won't.' See, so God is merciful and Sodom and Gomorrah were just the cesspool of sex in that area and God was going to execute His judgment upon it.

But notice, God did it based upon the hearts of the people. And what did He do? He sent angels there to carry out the judgment and to examine whether the cry rising up before the throne of God was as bad as it was. It turned out it was worse, because there was only Lot, his two daughters, and his wife that got out of there. And his wife didn't get out all the way. God searches out the secrets of the hearts. This is why in the New Testament God is called the

*heart-knowing* God, because He looks upon the heart.

What should we do? Let's come to Matthew 5. This is what God wants us to do. That's why what is being done with all the relief, with all the help, and everything going in there, and maybe, just maybe, with all the disasters that have happened down there and things that they have gone through, maybe they might want to change their behavior and not be so corrupt as they were before the incident happened. Who knows, we don't know. So here's what God tells us.

Matthew 5: 42: "Give to the one who asks of you... [or the one who's in need. You can go back to James 2 where it says 'if you see your brother and sister naked and destitute and in need of food,' and so forth, and he comes to you, you don't say to him, 'Be warmed and filled,' and go on. You provide his needs—right?] ...and do not turn away from the one who wishes to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you" (vs 42-44).

So regardless of the people down in Haiti, we should help them—should we not? *Yes, indeed!* The American government is doing a lot. They're sending an awful lot of money down there, the U.N. will send money down there, other nations will send down there. But it's interesting the Arabs haven't sent a penny yet. I hope that they would, they have hundreds of billions that they could send, billions of dollars that they could help them out with, so let's hope that they would. So even if they're our enemies, we should help them.

But notice v 45, here's why. "So that you yourselves may be *the* children of your Father Who *is* in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *on the* good, and sends rain on *the* just and *on the* unjust." So we're not to get all up in the air as to what great knowledge we have, and we know that this happened because they made a pact with the devil 250-years ago—really? That's not the way that it should be done.

Let's come here to Romans 12 and see how Paul carried the same thing out here, said the same thing. Remember what happened after we conquered the Germans and their allies and the Japanese and their allies. What did we do? We made them get in and work and clean up things and we helped them—didn't we?—after all the evil and problems that they caused—right? That was a Godly thing to do.

Romans 12:19, here's how we are to do it. "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves; rather, leave *this* to *God's* wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine! I will recompense," says *the* Lord. 'Therefore, if your enemy... [Remember what He said? Love your enemy. That's hard to do.] ...if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in doing this you will be heaping coals of fire on his head'" (vs 19-20). If he still remains your enemy. Who knows? Maybe that will turn things around so that he's not your enemy any longer. So far that has worked with the Germans and the Japanese. Will it last into the succeeding generations ahead? We don't know. But that happened. The Japanese were stunned when Americans would be so gracious as to give them what would amount to be forgiveness for WWII, and the way that they occupied Japan and rehabilitated the people, and brought them a different kind of government. Amazing!

So we shouldn't be judging. We shouldn't be saying, 'Oh, these people were sinners above all.' We should help them. We should provide for them. Now, anyone who wants to give—and I would think the best place to give is not gov.org, but give it to the Salvation Army. If you know anything about the Salvation Army, 95% of what they receive goes into helping people. They do a good work in helping people. They do a lot of rehabilitation here in America with those who are trying to overcome drug addiction. They're there for every disaster, every flood, every hurricane, every tornado that comes—right? They are there in Haiti. The American military is there with medicine, with food, with water, with equipment. They have an aircraft carrier that has 250 helicopters there to take supplies, because you can't go on the roads they're impassible, to take supplies and drop them off wherever they can find the people to drop them off. That's good! God would expect it.

So whenever something like this happens, let's not get all uppity-uppity and say, 'They deserve it. It's God's judgment upon them. It goes back 250-years and that's why this earthquake occurred,' or whatever the disaster is. No! Help them out. So whatever you feel moved to do, that would be fine. You go ahead and do that. Let's God's Spirit move you to do it.

So that's how we should view the situation there in Haiti and hope that they can recover themselves and get on their feet and perhaps live better lives in the future.

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Ezekiel 18:1-17
- 2) Obadiah 10-14
- 3) Luke 13:1-5
- 4) Mark 13:5-8
- 5) Psalm 44:21
- 6) Matthew 5:42-45
- 7) Romans 12:19-20

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2-Chronicles 33-35
- Matthew 24
- Luke 21
- James 2

(go to the next track)

With more people looking for the Truth and trying to come out of some of the Protestant denominations—as a matter of fact, there are a lot of them leaving. So we end up with quite a few questions, so we'll cover some of those questions here in just a little bit. But first of all I want to read to you some excerpts out of the book entitled, *Quitting Church: Why The Faithful Are Fleeing And What to Do About It*, by Julia Duin. I won't give you the page number, because I've just underlined just certain thing and so I'll read what I've underlined. This is in the first chapter: *The Flood Outward*

I think you're going to be surprised, because this will help you understand why then Church at Home becomes very important, because that's where a lot of these people are now, in their homes.

The problem seems to be the church itself. Survey after survey says many Americans continue their private religious practices, such as reading the Bible, praying to God, and even sharing their faith in Jesus Christ. But they have given up on the institution

So they're looking for non-denominational things now. This is from New Zealand and here's a quote:

Going to church, finding the lack of God is what gets to them, even in the most spirit-filled churches.

Amazing!

It's not just us in America which confirmed to me that this issue...[Julia is writing] ...is much larger than many of us have realized. I don't think a lot of Christian leaders have any clue how many believers are simply opting out of organized religion today.

She gives some of the reasons. But even though writing this 180-page book, she still can't tell the difference between the church and un-church vs the converted and the unconverted. There is a vast difference. Just being in a church does not make you Christian. Or it could also be said the church is dysfunctional, and does not know it's true role in the lives of believers. And also, too many of them make those who attend dependent upon the ministry for everything. God doesn't want that because that puts a person between the individual and God. God wants you dependent upon Him and faith in Him.

Instead we are seeking a departure from the Christian subculture that has developed over the last twenty years.... [And here's what they want:] ...a return to the faith that is authentic, relevant and applicable.

In other words, people want the real thing. How many in the worldly Christian churches does this affect?

Furthermore, no army can fight if huge numbers of its members have gone AWOL. Hattaway and Morrow estimated as much as 78-million Protestants belong to this camp of no-shows.

Now that's a lot of people. Why? I'll tell you exactly why, *because of Sunday, communion, and the holidays*. Those are counterfeits of the Sabbath, the Christian Passover and the Holy Days. That's why. They don't know, because they're never told when they go to church.

So it's official, evangelicals... [And we're going to talk about some of the evangelical beliefs here in just a minute.] ...and their beliefs in the dissecting of the New Testament and their misinterpretation of the Word of God is causing people to leave.

Because they're not told the full story of faith. That's why!

Evangelicals, for various reasons, are heading out of church, not all of them, and not everywhere, but the trend is undeniable. Sunday morning at church has become too banal, boring, or painful. Large groups of Christians are opting out of church because they find it impossible to stay. So Varna who does a lot of surveys has found these nine things that are the problem.

What we will see is this: it's all because they're not teaching the Word of God on how to have a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, because that is the heart and core of true Christianity.

- It is not a church building.
- It is not the number of people.
- It is not the jobs that you give to this one and that one to do

—because they found they get into these jobs and what happens? *Then there's a lot of competition and politics* and things like this, and then people own them, rather than something to serve.

Now here's the heart and core. Let's come to the Epistle of 1-John, chapter one. Let's see the heart and core of what true Christianity really is. Gathering together on Sabbath is part of it, but what on earth good does it do to gather on any day if God is not in your life? What good does it do to come to church on the Sabbath, that being the right day, and the ministers and teachers and people are all carnal? *It doesn't do any good either.* The day is important, but **how** you use that day is the most important.

This is what we're involved with and let's also understand, because in here they say, 'Well, you have to make people feel important. Give them a job; give them something to do.' Well, as I mentioned, that wears out after a period of time. Here's the truth on being important: ***You understand the calling of God and you understand that God the Father, the Sovereign of the universe, has dealt in your life and has called you to the greatest possible existence that can be—to be a son or daughter of God.*** So don't ever think, 'I'm not important.' That's why the church should not be filled with a hierarchy. You have the equal and the more equal.

Here's what it should be, right here. Think of this from this point of view: In writing the first chapter of 1-John, this is not too long before John died. So he's gone through the whole gamut of it. At this point he's somewhere close to a hundred years old.

1-John 1: "That which was from *the* beginning... [Now that ties in with Christ Who was the Word, Who was with God and was God and also

the beginning of the calling of the Church.] ...that which we have heard... [from Christ Himself] ...that which we have seen with our own eyes!, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of life." Now notice the importance of where he starts with this. He doesn't start with the Church; he doesn't start with a building; he doesn't start with a group of people. He starts with God and he starts with Christ. Because all of those other things are meaningless:

- unless you have the Spirit of God
- unless you live by the truth of God
- unless you have a personal relationship through prayer and study and living God's way with God the Father and Jesus Christ

Verse 2: "(And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us)." And as Paul wrote, 'God manifested in the flesh.' So never think that God doesn't love you. Don't let the shortcomings of men come between you and God.

- God loves you.
- God created you.
- You are important to Him.

Why would He create you if you're not important? Why would He call you if you're not important? Need to understand that. So the question then becomes: how do we respond to God and how do we maintain that?

Verse 3: "That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for **the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ.**" That's where to start! When people go to church, whether Sunday keeping or Sabbath keeping, if they're not taught this and they don't have it and they don't receive the Spirit of God, they're going to get bored. They're going to get turned off, because they just come back to the same-old/same-old all the time—right? They're not growing in knowledge, they're not growing in Truth, they are not enthused in their lives, they're not enthused in what they're studying, because there's no life, there's no Spirit, there's no Christ, there's no God. So they recognize that and they leave by the millions.

So people want to know about God and find out about God, and especially those who are the descendants of the ten-tribes of Israel have more of a real wanting to find God and know God than maybe other people. I can't say that absolutely for sure, but there's a reason why there are more churches in America than any other country in the world.

Now v 4: “These things we are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full.” It’s not a matter that you’re enthused when you start. You grow in grace and knowledge and understanding and you become more zealous and more enthused the longer that you have this personal relationship with God. But one of the major reasons is that when people go to church and they’re not taught this, and Sunday-keepers can only go so far. The reason is that Sunday-keeping blocks understanding because they become blinded, because they won’t respond to the Word of God.

How many have seen this advertisement? I’ve mentioned this before, but I’ll mention it again. You see this little girl and there’s a man there that says, ‘Would you like this bicycle?’ ‘Oh, Yes! I’d like this bicycle.’ ‘Well, get on it.’ So she gets on it, she starts riding away and he says, ‘Whoa.’ She looks up at him mystified. He says, ‘You see this line around here? You can’t ride it outside of this square.’ She looks at him very disgusting. Same way with this little kid, ‘Would you like this truck?’ ‘Yeah.’ So he goes boom, boom, boom with the truck and he’s having a lot of fun. Then he says, ‘You’re time is up,’ and he gives him a cardboard cutout. He says, ‘Well, you can’t have that truck, here’s one I made myself.’ The kid looks mystified, holding this floppy little cardboard truck, and he says, ‘This is a piece of junk.’ Well, it’s the same way in church.

You go to a Sunday-keeping church and people are all enthused, and like this, and you get there and find out that everything is just a start, like on that bicycle. You get on it, you’re ready to go, and say—whoop! ‘don’t need to do any more, once saved always saved, believe in the Lord, that’s all you need to do.’ Those are the seeds of destruction sown for the future.

The comment was made: the people of Israel have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. And when they go to church and they don’t get the knowledge, that becomes a problem. Another problem is that most pastors fall out after five years. And they admit that they have not been prepared. They admit that they don’t know their Bibles. This will become important when we start covering some of these questions that this gentleman emailed me.

Here is the Barna’s Beefs in Christianity Today, August 5, 2002—Nine Challenges for American Christianity (christianitytoday.com):

### 1. Same Old Same Old:

Worship is stale. Nothing new, nothing challenging, etc. It’s the same old, same old.

### 2. Decline of the Evangelicals:

Evangelicals are watering down their beliefs—to what? *To get the un-churched in church.* So what are

you doing? Rather than coming out of the world, as God calls us to do, ‘do not become part of the world,’ they’re bringing in the world. When you bring in the world, what do you have to do? *You become like the world.*

### 3. Ethnic Ascension:

Evangelical congregations are still by-in-large split into all-white, all-black, or all-Hispanic groups.

### 4. What About the Bible:

Many Christians, especially younger ones, don’t take the Bible seriously. Do you know why they don’t take it seriously? *Not only have they not been taught, but because the ministers don’t take it seriously.* We’ll see here in just a little bit. Especially on issues such as divorce and premarital sex.

### 5. Costless Faith:

Christianity has essentially no built-in cost. What do you mean *no built-in cost*? All you do is believe in the Lord, and then do whatever you want to do, because once saved-always saved, and there’s no law. Whereas Luke 14 says, ‘Count the cost.’ We’ll talk about some of these things as we go along here.

### 6. Understanding the Supernatural:

Any expression of the supernatural has been excised from Sunday worship. Just like on the Sabbath. Have you ever really been inspired on the Sabbath? *Yes!* that’s a spiritual experience. Here she’s talking about speaking in tongues, and rolling in the aisles, and things like this. That’s not necessarily a spiritual experience from God.

### 7. New Form and Substance:

No one is ready for the fact that generation-Y Christians are going to radically re-invent the church. So one error leads to another error. So they bring in rock music, which is the antithesis of what they need. They bring in—‘let’s minister to the homosexuals,’ rather than saying repent. So they’re reinventing church for the worse.

### 8. Isolation Amid Plenty:

U.S. churches tend to “compete rather than cooperate.” I think that’s inherent in the way that things are. That may not necessarily be a bad thing, because if you carry cooperation to the fullest, you have what? *The full implementation of ecumenical movement* and ‘all roads lead to God’, and that’s not true.

### 9. Where are the Leaders?:

There is a dearth of good leaders, those who fill America’s pulpits are teachers, good people all, but not leaders with a vision. That gets down to this: if the minister or teacher, elder, does not have a personal relationship with God on an ongoing, daily basis, if he’s not studying the Word of God, growing in grace and knowledge, he cannot possibly continue to help the brethren on an ongoing basis.



Continuing in the book, *Quitting Church*:

Many people I encountered were disappointed or perplexed in some way with God. They've been Christians for more than a decade and some have experienced serious suffering.

Well, Jesus said we're going to suffer, but they don't explain it to them, you see, and don't give them faith, don't give them hope in the difficulties that they are going through.

The more honest ones admitted something was not working in their Christian faith.

What is that? They didn't have the Spirit of God. If you don't have the Spirit of God, it isn't going to work.

In fact, God seemed to be confounding their prayers... [because they're not repenting] ...Their churches were useless in giving meaningful counsel and if these people brought up their concerns in a Bible study, their doubts and anger toward God were frowned on by others in the group. They were like wounded soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan to a country that barely knew that they were at war. Such people needed sermons on unanswered prayers, but their pastors were giving power-point presentations on attaining breakthroughs. My research suggested that people are simply not being pastored.

That's part of it.

So many people are no longer content to waste part of their Sundays on an institution that gives them nothing.

Quite an indicting book, very insightful indeed! I'll bring more on some of these things of 'quitting church,' especially on Church at Home. So this is why we can expect Church at Home to be very successful if we do it in the right way. It has to be challenging; it has to be Scriptural; it has to be answering their questions, and so forth.

Now let's look at some of the things as to why the churches are not working and we will look at it from this point of view, from this man's questions. Now he sent a whole list of questions, via email and he's undoubtedly an evangelical. So I asked him, 'Please send me your address and I'll send you some printed material and I will handle the questions in a Bible study—or two or three—depending on how long to go through it.' But I told him I would answer the questions.

First of all, before I begin answering some of the questions, let's come to Appendix A in the Bible, which is *Fourteen Rules for Bible Study*. He says, 'How do you study the Bible?' Very first appendix in the appendices, we have twenty-six of them, A to Z. *Fourteen Rules of Bible Study*:

1. Begin with Scriptures that are easy to understand.
2. Let the Bible interpret and prove the Bible. Don't look for what you want to prove—look for what the Bible actually says.
3. Understand the context—the verses before and after, and the chapters before and after. Does your understanding of a particular verse harmonize with the rest of the Bible?
4. As much as possible, try to understand the original Hebrew or Greek. But never try to establish doctrine or teachings by using only *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. *Strong's* can be helpful at times, but is very limited.
5. Ask: What does the Scripture clearly say?
6. Ask: What does the Scripture not say?

We'll use all of these things as we answer his questions, because he sent me a page and a half of questions, very challenging! The reason I'm going through them is so that in the future, if you are confronted with these questions, you will know how to answer them.

7. Ask: To whom was the book written?
8. Ask: Who wrote it?
9. Ask: Who said it?
10. Understand the historical time frame in which the book was written.
11. Base your study on the Scriptural knowledge you already have. What do you know up to this point in time?

That's very important, because the Bible was inspired by the mind of God and He's eternal and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and He has put it together 'line upon line, here a little, there a little, precept upon precept,' so we need to approach it that way. Yes, there're going to be times when you read things you don't understand.

It took me years before I understood the book of Job. The first time I read it, I thought, 'Sure enough, God's gotta be wrong. This man was righteous.' And I looked at my life and I said *you're a rotten sinner compared to him*. But later, I understood. And the key is this: any righteousness that Job did came from God, not him.

12. Do not allow personal assumptions or preconceived ideas to influence your understanding and conclusions.
13. Do not form conclusions based on partial facts, insufficient information, or the opinions and speculations of others.

That's why when you hear sermons, when I speculate and I have my cow bell out, I ring it. That way everybody knows this is my opinion. It may or may not be true. Key important thing:

14. Opinions—regardless of how strongly you feel about them—don't necessarily count. Scripture alone must be your standard and guide.

Having said that, now we're ready to start answering this gentleman's questions.

He says, 'I heard your first lesson on trying to refute the fact that Paul did preach another gospel.' Because a lot of people out there say, 'Paul preached another gospel, so we don't need this of what Christ has done, we don't need this of what He said because that was for the Jews. But that's not for us Gentiles.' But what if you are an Israelite, in fact, not being a Jew, but descended from one of the ten tribes? Now what do you do?

'If you permit me, I would like to pose some questions for you to clear up for me.' We'll be happy to do that. Now, please, do not get turned off because I'm going to be very straightforward with these answers and with these questions. I will show you by Scripture how to answer them using the *Fourteen Rules of Bible Study*.

Here's the first question. Let's come to Matthew 15:22. Now this is trying to prove that Jesus' ministry was only for the Jews, so the evangelicals conclude, 'If it's only for the Jews, we don't need to do it.' So we get the context, remember, read the verses before and the verses afterward—right?

Matthew 15:22 "And, behold, a Canaanite woman... [one of those Gentiles, as some people would say] ...who came from those borders cried to Him, saying, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is grievously possessed by a demon.' But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came *and* requested of Him, saying, 'Send her away, for she is crying out behind us.' But He answered *and* said, 'I have not been sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'" (vs 22-24).

So his question was: **Why that?** But notice, read on, v 25: "Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, help me!' .... [notice Jesus' answer]: ...But He answered *and* said, 'It is not proper to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the dogs.' And

she said, 'Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.'.... [So what did Jesus say about the belief of the Jews?]: ...Then Jesus answered *and* said to her, 'O woman, great *is* your faith! As you have desired, so be it to you.' And her daughter was healed from that hour" (vs 25-28). If He was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, why did He heal this Gentile woman's daughter? And say that her faith was greater than those of the house of Israel? We'll answer those questions here in a little bit.

Let's come to Romans 15:8. We need to do the same thing again when we get there: read the verses before and the verses after. This is what they use to confirm, 'Well, we don't have to follow anything in the Gospels, because that was for the Jews. And what's for the Jews is not for the Gentiles.' Really?

Romans 15:8: "Now I tell *you that* Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for *the* truth of God, so that He might confirm the promises *given* to the fathers.... [Note that: Who were the fathers? *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David*, etc.—right? Now let's read on, because it talks about the Gentiles after this—right?] ...And *that* the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, exactly as it is written: 'For this cause I will confess You among *the* Gentiles, and I will praise Your name.' And again it says, 'Rejoice, *all* you Gentiles, with His people'; and again, 'Praise the Lord, *all* you Gentiles; and praise Him, all you peoples.' And again, Isaiah says, 'There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that arises shall rule *the* Gentiles: in Him shall *all the* Gentiles hope'" (vs 8-12).

Doesn't sound like an exclusion of the Gentiles—does it? Though He was sent to the Jews first. Remember, for what? *To fulfill the promises given to the fathers*—right? So that doesn't mean that the Gospel is not for the Gentiles, and that doesn't mean that Paul gave a different gospel. We'll answer that question as we go along, because, you see, we need to get the full answer, not a partial answer.

Verse 13: "May the God of hope fill you now with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope *and* in *the* power of *the* Holy Spirit." Was there a prophecy given to the fathers? *Yes!*

- Gen. 3:15: the first promise of the Messiah—correct? *Yes!*
- Gen. 15: the promise and covenant given to Abraham—correct? *Yes!* physical seed and spiritual seed.
- Gen. 22: the promise given to Isaac—correct? *Yes!*
- Gen. 49: the promises given to the twelve tribes and that there would come the

Messiah through the tribe of Judah—correct? *Yes!*

Now let's go to Deuteronomy 18:15 and see why He came to the children of Israel, the Jews notably, first. We've covered this in time past, but we'll cover it again, so that we can see exactly what the promise was. Fulfilling the promises of God does what? *Proves that the Word of God is true!* Would you want God to give a promise and never fulfill it? Could you then believe in God? Would you want Jesus then to go to the Gentiles first and neglect the Jews and house of Israel? *No*, because the promise to the fathers had to be fulfilled first.

Now notice it here in Deuteronomy 18:15; very important: “The LORD your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, One like me... [lawgiver; mediator.] ...To Him you shall hearken, according to all that you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, “Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, so that I do not die.”... [They said, ‘Moses, you speak to us and we’ll listen.’ But they never did.] ...And the LORD said to me, “They have spoken well what they have spoken...” (vs 15-17).

In other words, they're well intended, but He knew they were going to sin. Another great mistake that people make in reading the Bible is this: ***The covenant of Israel never had promises of eternal life***—only to the fathers. They had promises of the land, physical blessings in return for obedience in the letter of the law. And so they wanted a human being to talk to them, so that's one of the reasons why Christ also came in the flesh.

Verse 18: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, *One* like you, and will put My words in His mouth. And He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall come to pass, whatever man will not hearken to My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require *it* of him” (vs 18-19). So He had to fulfill the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Now we saw that Jesus healed the Canaanite woman's daughter—correct? *Yes!* Now let's look at one more Scripture, but put in your notes John 4. What is that account about, right in the middle of it? It's about the Samaritan woman at the well—is that not correct? Did He not talk to her? Did it not puzzle His disciples? *Yes!* Did she not go and get many of the men out of the city of Samaria and did He not stay there for several days teaching them? *Yes!* Were they Gentiles? *Yes!* Their origin came when the king of Babylon brought them in from Babylon and the king of Assyria when he took the ten tribes of Israel out of the northern part of Israel.

Let's hear the words that the Apostle Paul wrote concerning Jesus and concerning the teachings. Now this is just one, there are many others. Let's come to 1-Timothy 6. Now remember, Timothy was a minister-evangelist for the church at Ephesus, which was basically Gentile. So when we get all the Scriptures on it and put it together, here's what we understand. Jesus came to the Jews and the Israelites ***first***. Then, as we'll see a little later, He opened the door for Gentiles for conversion, but He Himself healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman and talked to the Samaritan woman at the well, and stayed in Samaria teaching the people and they recognized Him to be the Messiah. So He did not totally exclude the Gentiles—correct? *Yes!*

1-Timothy 6:3: “If anyone teaches any different doctrine, and does not adhere to sound words, ***even those of our Lord Jesus Christ***... [This is to Gentiles, remember.] ...and the doctrine *that is* according to Godliness... [What does he say? Does that include all the words of Jesus Christ? Does that include what He taught the Jews? *Yes, indeed!*] ...He is proud and knows nothing. Rather, he has a morbid attraction to questions and disputes over words, from which come envy, arguments, blasphemy, wicked suspicions, vain reasonings of men who have been corrupted in *their* minds and *are* destitute of the truth—*men* who believe that gain is Godliness. From such withdraw *yourself*” (vs 3-5). That sounds a little different than what is advocated in these questions—does it not? *Yes, indeed!*

Let's look at something that Paul did in greetings to all of his churches. Let's come here to Galatians, the first chapter. Now I know there are some difficult verses in there, and we'll tackle some of those, but all in due time in proper order.

Galatians 1:1: “Paul, *an* apostle, not *sent* from men nor *made* by man, but by Jesus Christ and God *the* Father, Who raised Him from *the* dead... [What does it say about Jesus Christ? ‘The same yesterday, today, and forever’—correct? Would He teach the Jews to do one thing and the Gentiles another thing? *No*, you go back to Isa. 56 and it says that the Gentile is to keep the Sabbath. The Sabbath is God's Sabbath not the Jewish Sabbath. Though the Jews today say, ‘It's our Sabbath and Gentiles shouldn't keep it.’ That's not a teaching of God, that's a teaching of Judaism and Judaism is the culprit at the bottom of the pile of all of these false assumptions that evangelicals teach so they can have an easy gospel and bring in the un-churched into their building.] ...And all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia. Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins... [Jew and Gentile—correct?] ...in order that He might deliver us from the

present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father; to Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 1-5). Now we’ll talk about some other things with this, in just a bit.

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Let’s go to Galatians 3:26: “Because you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” And what did Jesus say? ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’ **No one, Jew or Gentile!** He also said He is the door and there’s only one door and there’s only one way—is that not correct? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 27: “For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.... [And we’re going to see in the next message that is the key to understanding some of these difficult Scriptures.] ...There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.... [That’s because you all believe the same thing; all keep the same thing; all have the same faith that comes from God—correct?] ...And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to *the* promise” (vs 27-29).

How then can you divide the ministry of Christ from the teachings of Paul? Maybe there’s something more to understand; and there is and we’ll get to those.

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Ezekiel 18:1-17
- 2) Obadiah 10-14
- 3) Luke 13:1-5
- 4) Mark 13:5-8
- 5) Psalm 44:21
- 6) Matthew 5:42-45
- 7) Romans 12:19-20
- 8) 1-John 1:1-4
- 9) Matthew 15:22-28
- 10) Romans 15:8-13
- 11) Deuteronomy 18:15-19
- 12) 1-Timothy 6:3-5
- 13) Galatians 1:1-5
- 14) Galatians 3:26-29

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2-Chronicles 33-35
- James 2
- Luke 14
- Genesis 3:15; 15; 22; 49
- John 4
- Isaiah 56

#### Also referenced:

- Book: *Quitting Church* by Julia Duin
- Article: *George Barna’s Beefs* from *Christianity Today*, August 5, 2002