

## WAR OF THE WORDVIEWS #20

### “Myths, Lies, and Half-Truths”

#### (Part One)

**"You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world."**

**Matthew 5:13-14**

Faith in these words of Jesus empowered the early church to "Christianize" cultures and disciple nations. But faith in myths, lies, and half-truths has left the modern church sitting on the sidelines while the battle for the soul of our nation rages on. Knowing the truth will set us free.

### I. Introduction

#### A. A Brief History of the Early Church

1. The 1<sup>st</sup> century followers of Jesus Christ had little evidence that the gospel would have any real impact on the world as it was in their day.

- **The mighty Roman Empire ruled the world**, including Israel, the land they lived in.
- The religion of Israel was in a mess; corrupted by the Scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites.

2. The early church had little going for it.

- The Leader of the movement had been crucified
- **The leaders He left behind were very ordinary men**; a fisherman (Peter) and a tentmaker (Paul); a former tax collector (Matthew); a former physician (Luke)
- Those who followed these leaders were persecuted and scattered from their homes and all but 1 of the original disciples died a martyr's death

3. But what happened? The Gospel they preached did change the world!

- The mighty Roman Empire would fall
- The Christian faith would expand through the whole world

- And by the time they were done, human calendars the calendars of the nations would be numbered based on the Cross of Christ! (We write “2018” on our checks, don’t we?)

## **B. Compare That with the American Church Today**

1. The early church “Christianized” a pagan culture. We are well on our way to paganizing a Christian culture!

a. They began with a few and ended up with many; we began with many and now have a few-church attendance continues down

b. The more they were persecuted, the more they committed. But for us, more persecution has led to less commitment-to the point where 80% of American pulpits avoid controversy altogether.

2. In this ‘War of the Worldview’ series, we have shown that...

**American Christian culture is in decline because less than 1 in 5 American Christians have a biblical worldview.**

3. The average churchgoer has no comprehensive system of belief that can apply the Bible to the great questions and decisions of life.

4. We suffer from “biblical illiteracy”; believing in myths, lies, and half-truths to the point it has now become a crisis.

## **II. We Have a Crisis of Biblical Illiteracy**

### **Recommended Book**

**Myths, Lies, and Half-Truths: How Misreading the Bible Neutralizes Christians and Empowers Liberals, Secularists and Atheists**

**Gary DeMar**

### **A. Misinformation and Misquotation**

1. The introduction to the book has a series of questions designed to test a person’s knowledge of the Bible. Here some examples of what many believe:

- The forbidden fruit was an apple. (The specific fruit is not mentioned).

- Delilah cut Samson’s hair. (She didn’t; she called a man to do it while Samson was sleeping on her lap.)
- Elijah was caught up to heaven in a chariot of fire. (He wasn’t; he was taken up by a whirlwind)
- Jonah was swallowed by a whale. (We don’t know if it was a whale; the bible just says ‘the Lord prepared a ‘great fish’)
- 3 wise men came to the manger to see the baby Jesus. (There’s no record any wise men came to the manger in Bethlehem; they actually came to see Him in Jerusalem. Also, we don’t know if there were 3 of them; there was more than 1; they brought 3 gifts; so we assume there were 3, but the Bible doesn’t say how many)
- Jesus fed the multitude. (He didn’t. He multiplied the loaves and fishes and gave to His disciples who fed the multitude)

2. Another sign of biblical illiteracy is how so many people claim to quote the Bible with things that are not in the Bible. Examples:

- “God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform” (not there)
- “God helps those who help themselves” (not there)
- “Cleanliness is next to godliness” (not there)
- “This too shall pass” (not there)
- “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread” (not there); the truth is that fools rush in to quote the Bible with verses that are not in the Bible.

3. So you may be thinking, “What difference does it make who cut Samson’s hair?” Or whether the forbidden fruit was an apple or a fig?” It’s true. Most of these things are minor matters; harmless mistakes.

4. But the point is that we are careless with the word of God about little things, we end up believing myths, lies and half-truths about the big things that really matter.

**“If Christians have adopted myths as truths where little if any interpretation is needed, is it possible they may have adopted myths as truths in areas where greater study is needed.”**

**Gary DeMar**

5. This is what happened in Jesus' day; the true religion had been hijacked by the scribes and Pharisees who substituted the Word of God for the traditions of men.

a. So 5 times in the Sermon on the Mount, He repeats, "You have heard it said...but I say unto you."

a. **In each case, Jesus corrected how the Old Testament had been mis-taught or mis-quoted.**

6. We face the same problem today; we have to fix the false interpretations of the Word that have virtually shut us down as the salt and light effect the world so desperately needs.

7. So what are the "You have heard it said" statements of our day?

### III. A Laundry List of Lies, Myths and Half-Truths

#### A. How Does Your Worldview Respond?

**1. The world doesn't matter.** The world is full of sin. One day, God will burn up the world and create a new one.

a. The world does matter. God created the world and called it good.

b. The world IS full of sin. But God so loved the world He sent His Son to save us from our sins.

c. References to God "burning up the world" refer to judgmental cleansing; the "new heaven" and the "new earth" are not references to a new planet!

**2. Involvement with this world is not 'spiritual'. The Bible is only concerned with salvation and our real citizenship is in heaven which will be our eternal home.**

a. This is nothing more than classic Greek dualism; the error of Gnosticism; the compartmentalization of Christianity that produces people "so heavenly minded they are no earthly good."

**3. God's kingdom is not of this world. Christians should be politically neutral. After all, you can't legislate morality.**

a. The truth is, all that you CAN legislate is morality! Every law is passed based on somebody's morals! You can judge a nation's morality by examining a nation's laws! Abortion was illegal. Now it's legal. What changed? The morality of the lawmakers!

b. Neutrality is impossible! If God's people believe the lie and remain neutral, they will be neutralized! Somebody will make the laws. And that "somebody" will have a worldview; a moral standard. God forbid we leave that in the hands of those who hate God.

**The homosexual community is less than 1% of the population; but is having a tremendous impact on our culture and laws. The born-again Christian community makes up at least 35% of the population, but seems to have abandoned the culture and hidden the gospel under a bushel."**

**Gary DeMar**

c. It's popular for certain groups, like the gay community, to protest that Christians are trying to impose their worldview on them. So we go silent. And now we discover that the opposite is true; the gay community is imposing their worldview on the Church. The point is that somebody's worldview will legislate morality!

d. The great William Wilberforce succeeded in ending slavery in England; Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. challenged racial prejudice in America; taking a stand.

#### **4. The Bible teaches separation of church and state.**

a. This is a half-truth. The Bible teaches separate "spheres" of government and authority.

b. God establishes all government: Family, Church and State, and sets the bounds of each.

c. God commands us not to kill; but He assigns authority to the State to execute criminals and conduct war when the nation is threatened. The same Christian who obeys the commandment not to murder does not violate God's law when he becomes a soldier and kills an enemy. There is a separation in that sense.

d. But you have to misread the Bible to use the term as it's being used today as a "muzzle" for the church!

#### **5. It's always wrong to resist authority.**

a. The Bible teaches submission to authority. Romans 13 teaches submission to the civil government.

b. But there are limits! We are never compelled to obey authority where it would require us to break God's commandments!

- The Egyptian midwives spared Moses
- Rahab the harlot protected the spies
- Jonathan protected David from his father
- Daniel continued to pray in spite of the king's commands

c. Modernized: a Christian baker refuses to make a wedding cake for a Gay couple.

d. And what would have happened if Christian children continued to pray after prayer was banned in our public schools?

e. We might have missed a moment there.

## IV. Conclusion

### A. Salt and Light Update

1. If God didn't want us to affect the world, why would He make us the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world"?

a. Salt left to itself has no meaning; it requires an object (the earth)

b. Light has no meaning until it shines on an object (the world)

2. Un-salty salt is good for nothing. Is it any wonder the world has no use for us?

**"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.**

**Matthew 5:13 NIV**

3. The world knows a child must be literate if it's going to have a chance to succeed in this world. Does the American church know as much?

**"This is the first time in the history of the church that such a minimized worldview has become so pervasive in the Church."**

**Gary DeMar**