

# The Discerner

the voice of... **Religion Analysis Service**

A QUARTERLY EXPOSING  
UNBIBLICAL TEACHING & MOVEMENTS

Volume 35, Number 3

July • August • September 2015

Eckankar  
Confucianism  
Hare Krishna  
**Freemasons**  
*Jehovah's Witnesses*  
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*"Hereby know we the spirit of truth  
and the spirit of error" 1 John 4:6*

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## **DEAR READER**

RAS was abuzz throughout the summer with many activities to bring new readers to the Discerner. Steve Lagoon, President of Religion Analysis Service, has been busy attending conferences with result of many new subscribers to the Discerner. We are particularly pleased with the many new subscribers among pastors and other Christian workers!

All of this signifies our concern to "get the message out," confront cults and heresies, and offer solid biblical and apologetical help to pastors and workers.

Gifts to Religion Analysis Service are welcome at this important time for our ministry. Indeed, in the coming year, Religion Analysis Service will be celebrating out 70th year in ministry. Your gifts and prayers will help make it a banner year in every way!

## WITH THIS ISSUE

Over the years I have visited in several jails. It's always difficult to our hearts and constitutions to hear the clank of doors and keys as we are brought to the cells and to scrutinize faces that may mock you or turn away from you in disdain. We conducted church services in the large Mannheim prison in Germany. The week before we came a riot had occurred. We had to mind our "p's" and "q's" as we sang and gave our testimonies. The walls and metal bars seemed to be so gray and forbidding. We talked to prisoners who seemed to have no hope. But here and there were flickers of hope as we departed and heard the "clank, clank" again.

Our first article centers around a "lifer" (R.T.) who will never be released from prison. He writes about his "ministry of hope" to fellow prisoners. It is so gripping to read how he tries to show his jail buddies how hope in getting out of prison is nothing compared to the hope of being with Jesus Christ forever. Please let others know about R.T.'s testimony of love for the Lord and the Lord's Word.

Our second article concerns itself with a new cult called "Epiphany." Why do these groups seem to choose such lofty and beautiful titles for their nomenclature? Anyway, Steve Lagoon very aptly points out that this group is not so saintly and certainly not biblical.

Then what about the Quiz? Well, try to get 70% at least. These are wonderful words for the preacher or theologian but often not in the vocabulary of the average Christian.

Laurence J. Sutherland

# MINISTERING TO PRISONERS FROM THE INSIDE

by R.T.

*The following is an edited (for size) e-mail letter we received at the office of Religion Analysis Service. It was received from a prison inmate who shares his testimony of how God brought him to faith in Christ. We are thankful that God has used RAS to support his ministry to prisoners from the inside, and trust the letter will be a blessing to our readers.*

R.T.,

July 12, 2014

Attn: Steve Devore, Religion Analysis Service Inc.

Dear Steve,

Greetings in Christ. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you for providing back issues of "The Discerner (Vol. 14, Nos. 10-12, 1994)" with articles on "Oneness Pentecostals." I was aware of these doctrines, which is why I wrote to RAS. It's one thing for me to explain that Oneness Pentecostalism is a cult; quite another when an organization whose mission it is to expose heresy; even though we both are fulfilling the Ephesians 5:11 mandate. The inmates that uphold heresy use two arguments: "I can believe what I want and you can believe what you want," and the ad hominem defense, offense. Not surprisingly such always reject the God and, or His Scriptures. The argument goes: "Yes, between you and me, you can believe whatever you want. But do you believe that God says you can believe whatever?" and, or, "Now, let's apply the same prejudice and character assassination practices on the men of the Bible that you apply to me, and see if they stand."

Of course, the heretic may not want to study with me anymore. But the men these heretics are trying to lead astray want me to tell and teach them more. That's where organizations like RAS come in. But you have been faithful, in that whenever I write, and provide an essay justifying my request for information (which I enjoy doing), you have responded positively.

In your March 9, 2015 letter that accompanied the information I requested, you wrote:

“I’m also curious of your story. I’m interested in what landed you in prison, how you found the Lord, and how the Lord has been using you in your unique situation. It’s up to you, but if you feel the desire, please write to us.”

Well, I think you have a Christian right to be curious about a brother, about how a professing Christian’s Christianity is lived out, especially in prison. I will try to satisfactorily answer your questions.

### **What landed you in prison?**

About 14 years ago, I realized that prison inmates put a lot of stock in what a person is convicted of. Some professing Christians (I use the term “professing Christian” not with contempt but in light of observable reality) protest against hearing or learning from inmates with certain commitment offenses.

Likewise, when a prisoner gives his testimony, the contents of which someone else has instructed him to include, he talks mostly about what he has done in his past rather than what God through Jesus Christ has done. Compare Jn 20:31. Most want to think of Christianity as a religious self-help scheme and limit their conversation to what they used to be like, but now are reformed in their lifestyles, with very little of sin, righteousness and judgment ( Jn 16:8-11).

I happen to know:

God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise;  
God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him (1 Cor 1:27-29).

All I had was my KJV of the Bible and a Cruden’s Concordance. It’s entitled, “A Letter To ‘Lifers’, Who Profess Christianity, Who Have As Their Object of Hope Release From Prison”. This paper was not the beginning of how the Lord was using me in my unique situation (by unique situation I do not mean my incarceration, but rather my incarceration with so many religious errors to contend with). I remember one day at reception, laying down to go to bed, I asked the Lord if this is what the rest of my Christian life was going to be like; I was so exhausted from all the preaching and teaching, and debates about the truths contained in the Scriptures.

With prison being a collection of bad people and full of every wind of doctrine, I stay very busy with the work the Lord has prepared for me (Eph 2:10).

I enjoy all disciplines associated with my walk with Christ: evangelism, apologetics, church history (my favorite subject), Christian philosophy (I am currently engaged in a course entitled “Christian Worldview I” [with course II following; using ‘How Now Shall We Live?’, by Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey as the textbook], through Crossroad Bible Institute [studying with Crossroad Bible Institute since Nov. 2000]).

It is true what the Bible says:

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” [11] And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equip- ping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ — from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Eph 4:7-16.

The Lord is kind to me, blessing me with the ability to apply God’s truth to specific situations, and the ability to understand and clearly explain biblical truth. It is so wonderful to watch, when the Lord sends men my way that have been misled; when they get it!

If you would like to know if I uphold a particular Christian Confession of Faith; the answer is, Yes, The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689.

Well, my brother, I’ll close for now. Please make sure that all interested brothers and sisters at RAS that want to connect with a real child of God, with the real “unique situation” of never getting out of prison, who spends the time God has given him in preparing bona fide, God-loving, God-fearing men for a life of preaching and teaching to those described in 1 Cor 1:26-31. To them I say “Hi, and I hope this letter warms your heart.”

**In a different place, Mr. Taft shared more information about his testimony:**

Personal Testimony: I was arrested in September 1999. This was not my first arrest; nor even the first time a prison term loomed large in my future. On one occasion I received a 3-year joint suspended sentence, (that is a 3-year prison sentence suspended pending successful

completion of a 3-year probation), and on another occasion I served a 14-year prison term.

I was not seeking God (Ro 3:11) (Scripture references are in retrospect, interpreting my experience in light of Scripture, as opposed to interpreting Scripture in light of experience.) I did not have godly sorrow for my sins. I did not even have worldly sorrow for my crimes. I was not seeking God or His Christ to get me out of jail or grant me relief from the situation I had found myself in. I was an enemy of the cross, my god was my worldly appetite and my glory was in my shame (Ph 3:18-19).

I was not seeking God nor His Christ when Christ raised me from my spiritual deadness and revealed the Father to me (Jn 5:21; Mt 11:27). “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit”(Jn 3:3). In my case; at least at the beginning, “the wind” was blowing softly. So soft I couldn’t even feel it. Could it be that I [heard] the sound of it, but [could not] tell where it [was coming] from and where it [was going]”? Indeed! Within days of my arrest the Lord put me in a two-man cell with a guy who had and read a Bible. Acts 17:26 Shortly thereafter he asked me if I would mind if he read the Bible out loud. There was no TV, radio, nor any other entertainment whatsoever; so I said, “I don’t care.” So he read after the evening meal. He read the Gospel according to John. For my part, it was in one ear and out the other... so I thought.

One day, after about a week of reading, he didn’t read that evening. I didn’t care. Oh yeah? Then why did I ask, “Aren’t you going to read the Bible tonight?” I cannot, with a clear conscience, assert that I gave a hoot about, or wanted to hear the Scriptures. God was in control of that moment, as He is every moment. That part I know! “Now I know in part, but then [when that which is perfect has come] I shall know just as I am known” (1 Co 13:12). Likewise, with the same mentality, the following day I asked a Trustee to get me one of those little New Testaments (a Gideon’s). Truly, “He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth” (Dn 4:35).

While I didn’t even open this little Bible, my cellie continued to read his aloud in the evening; that is, until a few days later, when I returned from court to find that he had been transferred; then I transferred the next day.

The new section of the jail I was transferred to afforded inmate’s access to both TV and books. For the first few days I sought to entertain myself with these amenities. But neither the TV nor the books could hold my interest. So, out of sheer boredom; again, so I thought, I just crawled up on my bunk and began reading that little New Testament.

It took a week and a half or two weeks, with absolutely no understanding of what I was reading, to get through the first ten chapters; and it didn’t

seem any less boring than the TV and books which were available. And that day in October I started chapter eleven was no different; that is, till I got to chapter thirteen.

### **Between chapters thirteen and twenty-four.**

Not only did I read more chapters on this day than I read the previous week and a half to two weeks; I also stopped on at least three occasions to consciously note, with excitement, that I was understanding what I was reading, (Mt 11:25-26; 13:10-11; Ac 16:14d); and in chapter twenty-four God revealed Himself to me ( Cf, 1 Co 15:8b; Gal 1:15).

In light of the passages above; my noticing this definite change taking place in me, the Lord speaking to me in parables, (Mt 13), and the Lord opening my heart; no one could argue that this was the day of His power in my life, the day of my new birth ( Ps 110:3).

I need not explain why prior to this, thoughts of God, however fleeting, did occur, (theologians have listed the rational arguments for His existence in at least five categories: Ontological, Cosmological, Teleological, Moral, and Historical, Ethnological; (cf Jn 1:1-5; Ro 1:19-21), but only that about six months before this day I did not fully believe in the existence of God due to the theory of evolution; evolution was a stumbling block for me. I specifically said so in a conversation with my then girlfriend. In that conversation I repeatedly emphasized “the big bang, the big bang!” My verse, Mt 24:21, says, “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.” At the moment I read these words; and in terms for a dummy, which I was; God said, “Randy, I am real. The ‘big bang’? Mine.”

Before I ever read these words in the Bible through which God “said” this to me, God really said, however He said it, “I AM WHO I AM;” i.e., THE SELF-EXISTENT ONE ( Ex 3:14). At the same time He “said” this to me, He corrected me on the “big bang.” “I created,” He said, “not a ‘big bang’ as you know it, but certainly with ‘great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world.

In retrospect, and unbeknownst to me at that time, the Lord was taking me through the process of teaching me the doctrines of grace (E.g., Eph chs 1-2). For in March of the following year, 2000, five months after the Lord had revealed Himself to me, two inmates showed up at the same housing location within the same jail. I don’t know what they saw, or observed in me; but they called me over and started asking me a bunch of questions about my faith. After about 45 minutes they paused, gave each other a nod, and told me I was Reformed. Having never heard the term before, I said, “No I’m not! I don’t even know what ‘Reformed’ is.” The rest is history, as they say; a very blessed history!



He revealed to me that, although I deserve eternal punishment in hell, “in [Christ] I have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace,” Eph 1:7, and that Christ “came that I may have life, and that I may have it more abundantly,” (Jn 10:10).

Christ both purchased and gives the gifts of “leadership.” The apostles committed these things to faithful men who in turn commit them to faithful men. (2Ti 2:1-2). I am one such faithful man. Since my conversion, I have studied with Mount Zion Bible Institute, including seminary courses, from May 23, 2000 to March 31, 2004; with Crossroad Bible Institute, from November 10, 2000 to the present day; and have completed a three year course in Systematic Theology through Whitefield College of the Bible (in Northern Ireland), from September 2002 to September 2005. This is plain and simply the love of God manifested!

The Objects of our hope, which we lay hold of by faith are:

**GOD.** “And now, LORD, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee”( Ps 39:7). “For in Thee, O LORD, do I hope: Thou wilt hear, O LORD my God” (Ps. 38:15).

**CHRIST.** “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope” (1 T 1:1). “And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable”( 1 Co 15:14, 19).

**SALVATION.** “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Ro 5:1, 11). “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (He 11:1).

**RESURRECTION.** “But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, ‘Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question (Ac 23:6). “And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust”(Ac 24:15).

**ETERNAL LIFE.** “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” ( Tit 1:2). “That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn 3:15). “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand” (Jh 10:28). “Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is eternal life, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” ( Jn 17:1-3).

GLORY. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Ro 5:1-5).

And the most blessed Object of our hope is:

THE RETURN OF CHRIST! “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (Jn 14:3). “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Ac 1:11). “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Ro 8:22-25).

And on what Grounds do we base our hope? Why, on GOD’S WORD and on GOD’S PROMISES, of course!

We base our hope on GOD’S WORD. Psalm 119 declares, “Let Thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even Thy salvation, according to Thy Word. And take not the Word of truth out of my mouth; for I have hoped in Thy judgments.” vv. 41-43. “Remember the Word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for Thy Word hath quickened me.” vv. 49-50.

“Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep Thy Words. I entreated Thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to Thy Word.” w. 57-58. “Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O LORD, according unto Thy Word.” w. 65, 67. “They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me. Let, I pray Thee, Thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Thy Word unto Thy servant.” v. 74-76. “My soul fainteth for Thy salvation: but I hope in Thy Word.” v. 81. And Paul, summarizing the Genesis account of Abraham’s faith, tells us, “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it [righteousness: Ro 4:22; author] was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead” (Ro 4:23-24). And again, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Ro 15:4).

Father, we thank Thee for Thy Word. Bless it to our hearts. Amen.

Thy Servant, In the Lord’s Work,

R.T.

God Bless You All

# EPIPHANY OR RECYCLED HERESY

by Steve Lagoon

In June of this year (2015), I was tipped off by Paul Ridgeway, host of a local Christian radio talk show in the Twin Cities, about a new presence making waves on the internet, purporting to have truth that will lead mankind to the next step of human evolution.

In looking at the basic material the group has posted on the internet (<http://www.thenewworldmessage.com>), it is clear that this group is antagonistic toward biblical Christian beliefs and a threat to those who might be tangled up in its web of deceit.

In this article, we will expose the deception of the group, primarily as it poses as a friend to the Christian while in reality *Epiphany* attacks everything Christians hold dear. All quotes are from the referenced website and will be merely identified by the tab headings for each. We will italicize *Epiphany* whenever referring to the group behind this website and it's supposed new revelation for man.

## The Meaning of Epiphany

It calls itself “**Epiphany-The New Message for the World.**” The *American Heritage Dictionary* tells us that Epiphany means either “a revelatory manifestation of a divine being” or a “spiritual event in which the subject [has] a sudden flash of recognition.”

We are reminded of the holiday **Epiphany** in which Christians from the earliest stages of church history have been celebrating the birth of Christ, the divine Son of God. His birth or appearance was an epiphany or revelation to the world. And so Vines, “Epiphany, lit., a shining forth,’ was used of the ‘appearance’ of a god to men.”

We shall see that this group in calling its message *Epiphany* has grandiose beliefs about its own significance. Indeed, the group believes the appearance of its revelatory message supersedes that of Christianity and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Who is EL?

The apparent leader of *Epiphany* (If, that is, its official name?) is “E.L.” We are not told anywhere on the website who E.L. is. We wonder if this is a further clue as to the overblown self-importance of

the group and its leader for as *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* tells us, EL “was the most common general designation of deity in the ancient Near East.” It was used for the true God of the Bible as well as the many false gods’ of the Ancient Near East. Time will tell if this is the suggestion intended for EL, but one thing is clear, this group has no small opinion of itself and believes that it alone has the truth that renders every religion of the world as superfluous.

### **Nothing New About This Epiphany**

While it claims to be a new revelation for the world, we will find that it is nothing but a syncretistic collection of heresies already taught by numerous other cultic groups. Solomon was correct to say: “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

What we will find is that although *Epiphany* claims to be compatible with the Christian faith, its teachings attack every essential teaching of the Christian faith. Jesus Himself warned that “Many false prophets will appear and deceive many people” (Matthew 24:11). Although *Epiphany* may claim to be an appearance of divine light, let us remember the important words of the apostle Paul, “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:13-14).

### **The Lure**

If we are to ask what it is that would draw someone to a cultic group such as *Epiphany*, or what it is that might draw the interest of those who visit their website, we would point out several likely hooks for the uniformed and unsuspecting fish that swim in these dangerous waters.

First, there seems to be the excitement of a new way of looking at the world. Wow, what if there really is a new message that will change all of us and the world we live in. *Epiphany* is trying to create this impression that it is about to bring on the world something incredible, “The fact that we evolve lets us know that there is something else going on, we just don’t know what it is. We are the caterpillar who does not know it will become a butterfly” (*Realists*).

Two, the website uses video graphics and language that seem to give the message an importance out of line with the actual content of its message. For instance, consider the primary message highlighted by the website:

“Our creator created the universe. This universe is a tool of our creation. This planet was placed here in this galaxy to give birth to life and this life is an extension of the universe and it is our innate nature that drives us to find our creator. As the search for our creator continues, we evolve. And then one day our descendants will come face to face with our creator and our creator will teach us how to create and then we will become creators and we will create universes (*Epiphany*).

This all sounds very surreal and important, but in fact, is not really saying much, certainly nothing of the kind of message that is supposed to revolutionize the world or bring about world peace!

Three, this new message seems to offer a way past all the arguments of today and shines forth the hope of world-wide peace and an evolution of mankind into a new world beyond all our hopes and dreams. In this way, the material appeals to the idealism of the young, and the young at heart, that are ready to abandon the past for the false promises of this demonic deception known as *Epiphany*.

For example, those inspired by the message of Epiphany are challenged to take on the zeal of a missionary or an evangelist:

For world peace to begin, it starts with your efforts to introduce the new message to your family and friends . . . ultimately introducing the message to people in every country and every language . . . Take your place in history and be remembered forever (*Frequently Asked Questions*).

The impressionable and idealistic are in danger of such noble sounding rhetoric, and can be fooled for a time in finding meaning in such an ultimately vacuous system.

Fourth, the reader is manipulated through the use of guilt. If one is skeptical of the material, they are made to feel as though they are close minded and hypocritical. They are compared to all those who have opposed the great advances for mankind in the past. The reader is challenged to, “Keep an open mind to new possibilities in reality and nature. A great adventure awaits us” (*Realists*).

## **Mind Control and Manipulation Techniques**

We have just alluded to the use of guilt as a tool of manipulation to draw members into this group. Let us examine this a bit further. Epiphany cleverly uses the example of the opposition Jesus Christ received when He was on earth and twists that into a motivation to join on with them. Surely this captures the spirit of Peter’s words

about those who “twist the Scriptures to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16).

And so *Epiphany* challenges the reader to avoid being like those who rejected Jesus and His new message for the world, but rather closed their minds and simply defended the status quo. In the same way, those who stood on their traditional belief and refused to consider Jesus’ message are compared to those who cling to their religious beliefs today and refuse to consider the new message of *Epiphany*.

For example:

Today there is a new message for the world [*Epiphany*]. Read the new message, your response reveals who you are. The way you treat this message is the way you treat Jesus . . . It is your obligation to help change the world and bring world peace . . . Share the new message with the world. This is the Christian mission (*Christians*).

Wow, what audacity to change the meaning of the Christian mission from the spreading of the Christian gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-11) to spreading the lies and delusions of a modern day heresy called *Epiphany*.

*Epiphany* suggests that how you react to its message shows whether you are a disciple, an apostle, a persecutor, or an executioner (*Christians*). So if you oppose *Epiphany* you are derisively called a persecutor and no doubt we at Religion Analysis Service who are exposing the lies of *Epiphany* are considered executioners.

But we care little about the sticks and stones and name calling of *Epiphany*. We are much more concerned with following the Scriptural admonitions to “have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them” (Ephesians 5:11) and to “speak the truth with love” (Ephesians 4:15).

To be clear, we do not object to anyone considering the message of *Epiphany*, for indeed the message pales in comparison with the glorious message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which has been changing hearts and lives since Christ walked the earth.

## **Epiphany Attacks Christian Beliefs**

In this section, we will see how this group attacks every essential doctrine of the Christian faith and shows that it is no friend to Christianity. *Epiphany* claims that “The new message is the complement to your faith. Embrace the new message” (*Christians*).

In another place they state, “Christians are surprised when they make a connection with the new message and realize, “There is no conflict” (*Frequently Asked Questions*).

This is the same kind of deception many cultic groups use as they claim their teachings are not against the Christian faith, but actually support it. We think of the Mormon missionary at the door who says he is not trying to change your religion. Indeed, he claims he just wants to help strengthen your own faith. Non-sense; he is sure his church is the one true church and he absolutely desires that you leave your church and convert to Mormonism.

*Epiphany* would have the Christian give up his belief in virtually every essential Christian teaching, leaving only an empty shell behind, and then suppose this is a compliment to our faith.

## God

Let us start out with the most basic question, the existence of God. *Epiphany* attempts an interesting approach by neither affirming theism or atheism, but proposing to believe in a middle pathway between the two. For instance, “On one side you have religion, on the other side you have atheism; the truth lies somewhere between” (*Acts*).

It agrees with the atheist in denying the existence of a transcendent supernatural being that created the universe. Yet, it is also critical of the atheist for having a negative and gloomy message, “This is a tedious theory that closes your mind and inspires no one. The Nothing Theory [atheism] at best is boring, has no vision, and lacks imagination” (*Realists*). *Epiphany* teaches that the universe (or some vague, unknown force within it) is our creator.

But note *Epiphany* is careful to distinguish the use of the small letter “c” in creator, since it does not believe in a personal and supernatural creator that stands in existence apart from the universe. Rather, the god or creator that *Epiphany* believes in is the universe itself.

For instance, “Believing in a creator does not mean believing in a god” (*Acts*). Indeed, *Epiphany* reminds us, “When you see the word ‘creator’ in *Epiphany* your first impulse may be to assume the theist definition, in as this message always assumes the generic definition” (*Just Say No*).

Philosophically, this would seem to be some kind of pantheism, but more information is needed to clarify their view.



## ***Epiphany* Atheism**

While *Epiphany* espouses a certain type of new age mysticism or spirituality, it is clearly atheistic in its denial of the existence of a supernatural being or God, the belief of which it equates with magic, “Use the word ‘magic’ to describe any theist fantasy” (*Just Say No*).

“Some people still believe in magic. They believe in miracles and the supernatural. We need to help them realize that magic is no longer necessary to explain things we don’t understand” (*Realists*).

Indeed, *Epiphany* condescendingly says, “We have to save them from themselves. We need to wake them up into reality. We have to get them off the magic. ‘Just Say No’ and help them realize that ‘the supernatural’ is not real” (*Just Say No*). It is clear that *Epiphany* rejects the God of the Bible.

## **The Bible**

In response to the question “What about the Bible?” *Epiphany* states, “We leave many steps behind us as we follow a new path” (*Frequently Asked Questions*). Notice how the Bible message is almost ridiculed as an outdated relic of history:

Now that The New Message for the World is here we don’t have to repeat the same old stories over and over again. Now we have new material. We are no longer stuck in the past. No more camels in the desert, dusty scrolls, or stale wine (*Frequently Asked Questions*).

Further, *Epiphany* attempts to destroy faith in the Bible’s reliability,

Over time the original texts are lost, stolen, or altered by men who use them for their own purposes. The path began straight and narrow, but over time twists and turns were placed in the road and we lost our way. Splintered into fragments, broken pieces of texts are reconstructed into a message that is a mere shell of what it used to be (*Frequently Asked Questions*).

Of course, the clear implication is that although the Bible is no longer a reliable guide, the new message of *Epiphany* is just what is needed today. However, we wonder how we are to entrust our lives to this new message from *Epiphany* when we know nothing about its origin.

That is, is this message supposed to be from God? We are never told that, nor does *Epiphany* believe in such a personal God in the first place. That must mean that this so called “New Message for the



world” is just someone’s opinion, and we are not even allowed to know who that someone is!

We can contrast that with the Bible. We know where it came from. We know its history. We know its central message about faith in Jesus Christ and how that message has stood the test of time.

## **Jesus Christ**

One of the fundamental teachings of the Bible is the deity of Christ. The babe in Bethlehem was not only a human child, but the divine Son of God (John 1:1-3, 20:28; Hebrews 1:8-12).

In its denial of the existence of a supernatural being, it follows that Jesus Christ cannot be God either. *Epiphany* states, “If your belief has people with supernatural powers then either take away the powers or remove the person entirely” (*Believe*).

Again, “We do not know who our creator is, but we do know our creator is not a supernatural being with supernatural powers . . . We were created by something that is unknowable and inconceivable” (*Realists*).

Further, “When they ask me ‘Are you an atheist?’ I say, ‘No, I am not an atheist, I just don’t believe in magic.’ They then ask ‘what magic? I reply, ‘The supernatural and miracles.’ (*Just Say No*).

In one swift blow, *Epiphany* discards the belief in the supernatural and miracles. In so doing it attacks the Christian belief in God, denies that Jesus is God, denies Jesus’ miracles, and most importantly denies Jesus’ resurrection from the dead! How can these claims by *Epiphany* possible be compatible with the Christian faith?

## **Miracles, the Resurrection, and the Gospel**

*Epiphany* offers only a short statement concerning death saying only, “Death is the transition from corporeal to non-corporeal. Your body becomes a part of the planet and the acorporeal becomes a part of the universe” (*Frequently Asked Questions*).

There is no suggestion by *Epiphany* that man will survive the death of their bodies, that we have souls, or in an afterlife in heaven, or in the bodily resurrection.

Obviously, that all contrasts with the Bible that affirms them all and makes the death and resurrection of Christ the center of the biblical message and the heart of the saving gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 10:9-13; John 3:16).

## Conclusion

We have seen that after a review of the contents of the website of *Epiphany*, that it denies almost every essential Christian belief. We do not classify it as a *cult* per se, since it makes no claim to be Christian. However, we do use the term *cultic* due to some of the deceit used by the group. Not only does the group deceive by suggesting that *Epiphany* is compatible with Christian beliefs but we also note the secrecy of the identity of *Epiphany* and its leaders.

It may well be asked if *Epiphany* is a religion at all, or merely a negation of it. However, we note that *Epiphany* formerly rejects atheism, and is in a search for a creator that is somehow associated with the universe itself, which suggests a pantheistic belief.

From the available writings, there is no evidence that the group holds anything like worship services, but rather disdains the traditional trappings of such worship, “1. Remove the rituals. 2. Take away the ceremony” (*Believe*).

So while the group appears to have no formal worship, it does invade the space of religion by suggesting that its message and way supercede all the religions of the world. Sure, you can still worship your old faith, so long as you strip it of everything meaningful. But the reality is, according to *Epiphany*, that all the old religions, most specifically Christianity, are set aside as yesterday’s news and of little value in comparison to the revolutionary light arriving in the world in the form of *Epiphany*.

What is quite troubling is the evangelistic fervor that is expected of those who buy into the message of *Epiphany*:

This is where world peace begins. This is our future . . . Now that we understand the true purpose of our existence, there are no more conflicts of beliefs and we live in peace. How soon depends upon our embrace of the new message and our efforts to share the new message with the world . . . Introduce this message to your colleagues, family and friends. Be a messenger for the new message . . . Talk to people. Engage in dialogue. Expand the dialogue into public arenas, schools, colleges, and universities . . . Contact reporters and various media outlets to outline your efforts . . . Develop marketing and promotions campaigns. Commercials, PSA’s and billboards, work with event planners and engage local celebrities . . . Recruit teachers and teachers and volunteers (*World Peace*).

It is tragic to envision those who are deceived by this message giving so much of their lives to the lie that is *Epiphany*. As has happened so often before, many idealistic people, most especially the young, will tragically be drawn into the movement only to be manipulated and victimized while the leaders of the group enjoy the power and the money that will flow to them.

The impressionable are even told, “You will be loved and revered for enlightening the nation into a new future” (*World Peace*). We plead with any that may be entertaining the message of this group to flee and rather turn to Jesus Christ who said, “Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest”(Matthew 11:28).

In order to allow our readers to have insight into the evasive and secretive ways of Epiphany, I will share with our readers the e-mail exchange that I had with E. L., the leader of Epiphany:

**On June 16, 2015, I sent this e-mail to the leader of Epiphany:**

El, This is all fascinating. How can I learn more? Steve Lagoon

**On June 17, E. L. responded:**

The Link to ‘Just Say No’ <http://www.thenewworldmessage.com/p/how-to-use-magic.html>

Best regards, E. L.

**On the same day, June 17, I responded back to E. L as follows:**

E. L.

Your message seems to be surrounded by a bit of secrecy. That is, your website doesn’t have an”About Us” tab like most websites or organizations do. This kind of secrecy is typical of groups that use mind control tactics to both lure and retain followers. If you are bringing a message of light to the world, why are you hiding in the darkness, not even revealing your name? Consider the words of the gospel of John “Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear his evil deeds will be exposed”(John 3:19).

After reading your entire website, I politely asked for further information from you, hoping to find clarification about your group. Instead, you just directed me back to the website again.

I find that your actions do not line up with the lofty rhetoric on your website.

Steve Lagoon, President of Religion Analysis Service, Minnesota

**On June 19, E. L. responded:**

The best way to get information is to ask a straight forward honest question. What is your question?

**On the Same day, June 19, I responded:**

E. L.

Thank you for your response. I have several questions. Where is your group located? Do you have a headquarters or an address? Who is the leader or leaders of the group? Are you a 501 3c non-profit organization registered with the United States government? Who is authorized to speak for you? Is Epiphany the name of your group?

Do you have public or private meetings? Do you have any kind of religious services? Do you consider your group to be a religion? What do you think of pantheism which says that all that is is a part of the universe and that universe is somehow equated with God? Where did your new message come from or how was it received?

Do you have other information for the public about your group or is the website all there is to review? How many people are a part of your movement?

There you go. I would appreciate it if you could address these questions.

Thank-you, Steve Lagoon, Religion Analysis Service

**E. L. responded on June 21 as follows:**

It is I and the new message for the world. Now tell me how you discovered this website and why you ask these questions.

## **I responded on June 24:**

E.L.,

Let me begin by noting that you did not directly answer any of the specific questions I posed to you. “It is I and the new message for the world” is a very vague and elusive response.

I will answer your question directly. I was told of your website by a local radio host in the Twin Cities (Minnesota). His radio station had apparently received an e-mail promotion from you or your group, and the radio host told me about it because of my position as President of Religion Analysis Service, a non-profit Christian ministry that analyzes religions and contrasts them with what we believe is the standard of truth, biblical Christianity.

We discussed your writings on a recent program, warning the listeners about your radical claims. Now, since I have directly answered your question, can you answer at least some of mine.

Steve Lagoon

## **On June 27th, E. L. responded:**

There are no groups and there is no building. There is only this message.

Best regards, E. L.

## **On the same day, June 27th, I sent this message back to E.L.:**

EL,

Why are you so clearly evasive?

For instance, You must have some kind of place, address to process the donations that you solicit on your website. I assume that the donations are not used directly by you, but must be processed by some organization. But, if there is no organization, then you personally must live or dwell somewhere (near the place where the donations come in, I assume). Why won't you identify where you presently live or handle your business from? I'm not asking you for a street address, at this point, just a city, state, or country would be helpful!

It seems the kind of secrecy you are using is just what cults and cult leaders do.

Steve Lagoon, Religion Analysis Service

**On the fourth of July, E. L. sent me what can only be understood as a spiritual warning:**

It is time to redirect your focus, *choose* whether to hold onto the past or let go into the future. The answers you seek are in the messages. The new message is an update for all of the *old messages*, from a time when we believed in magic until today. Compare the old with the new; continue waiting for the past or move forward (emphasis is E. L.'s).

Best, E. L.

**I responded the same day, July 4th:**

E.L.

What are the consequences if I choose to continue following the old message (Christianity and the gospel of Jesus Christ) and reject your alleged “new message”?

Steve Lagoon, Religion Analysis Service

His final response was simply to redirect me to his website with no further attempt to communicate.

We think the record speaks for itself.

# IS THE GENESIS CREATION ACCOUNT A MYTH LIKE THE ENUMA ELISH?

by Steve Lagoon

Most Christians have probably heard the theory that the Bible is based on myths. One of the most well-known claims along these lines is that the creation account in chapter one of the book of Genesis was derived from an ancient Near Eastern creation story of the Babylonians known as the Enuma Elish, or sometimes called the Epic of Creation. What are Christians to make of such claims?

## What is the Enuma Elish

The World of the Old Testament describes the basic story of the so-called Babylonian Creation story more popularly known as the Enuma Elish:

The most complete creation account account from Babylon is usually called the Enuma Elish . . . In the beginning there were two gods, Apsu and Tiamat, who represented the fresh waters (male) and marine waters (female). They cohabited and produced a second generation of divine beings. Soon Apsu was suffering from insomnia because the young deities were making so much noise; he just could not get to sleep. He wanted to kill the noisy upstarts, despite the protests of his spouse, Tiamat. But before he managed to do that, Ea, the God of wisdom and magic, put Apsu to sleep under a magic spell and killed him.

Not to be outdone, wife Tiamat plotted revenge on her husband's killer and those who aided the killing. Her first move was to take a second husband, whose name was kingu. Then she raised an army for her retaliation plans.

At this point the gods appealed to the god Marduk to save them. He happily accepted the challenge, on the condition that if he was victorious over Tiamat, they would make him chief of all gods.

The confrontation between Tiamat and Marduk ended in a blazing victory for Marduk. He captured Tiamat's followers and made them his slaves. The he cut the corpse of Tiamat in half, creating heaven from one half of it and the earth from the other half. He ordered the earlier supporters of Tiamat to take care of the world.

Shortly thereafter, Marduk conceived another plan. He had Kingu killed and arranged for Ea to make man out of his blood. In the words of the story, man's lot is to be 'burdened with the toil of the gods.'

Upon reading the translation of the Enuma Elish, one is struck with an entirely different tone than is received by reading the Genesis account of creation. There is simply no comparison between the actions of the all-to-human Babylonian gods and the sober and yet majestic description of the Lord God's creation of the universe.

### **Similarities and Differences**

Yes, there are similarities. I am not sure how anyone could make up a creation narrative without such similarities. But the differences are so extreme that it boggles the mind how some scholars can seriously believe that the Genesis account of creation is derived from the Enuma Elish.

Howard Vos compares and contrast Genesis with Enuma Elish:

One finds some interesting similarities. (1) Genesis speaks of seven days of creation; the Babylonian account was recorded on seven tablets. (2) Both describe a time when the earth was waste and void. (3) In Genesis order follows chaos; in Enuma Elish Marduk defeats chaos and establishes order. (4) Both accounts tell of the creation of moon, stars, plant life, animals, and man. (5) Man was created on the sixth day according to Genesis; Enuma Elish records man's creation on the sixth tablet.

### **Other Similarities**

We could add to the similarities that both speak of the stars being set up as markers of times and season (Genesis 1:14-19 and Enuma Elish 5:1 (which stands for tablet 5, verse 1). Others have pointed out that both texts involve a god concerned with rest (Genesis 2:2 and Enuma Elish 1:35-40), but this similarity is superficial in that the "rest" of Genesis 2:2 is a rest or ceasing from labor in contrast to Apsu's very human like craving for sleep in the face of the noisy god-kids. Following Speiser, Henri Blocher suggests one more similarity with Genesis: "The Babylonian story Enuma Elish includes the construction of Babel [6:60-62]."



## **Oh, But the Differences**

Let's return to Howard Voss for a summary of the important differences between the Genesis and Enuma Elish accounts of creation:

But the differences are vastly greater. In the first place, Enuma Elish is not primarily a creation account. Its purpose is political: to advance the cause of Babylon in her bid for supremacy by portraying the preeminent place of her patron deity Marduk among the gods . . . The gross mythology and inferior morals of Enuma Elish have no parallel in Genesis . . . In starting its account of creation with the existence of matter, Enuma Elish implies eternity of matter; Scripture teaches that God is a spirit Who is the author of all matter.”

## **Why the Claim the Genesis is Derived from Enuma Elish?**

And yet, the claim of dependence and relationship between Genesis and Enuma Elish continues to be popular today. Consider the claims of Tim Callahan, the Religion Editor for Skeptic Magazine:

Another blow to the uniqueness of Genesis 1 is that it is almost certainly based on the sequence of creation events in Enuma Elish, the Babylonian creation epic. In this story, after killing the chaos dragon Ti'amat, Marduk slices her body in half lengthwise, top to bottom, using the top half to create the firmament of heaven, separating the waters above from the waters below, and using the bottom half to create land separate from the waters below. Before Marduk had killed her, Ti'amat ruled over a chaotic, formless void, much like the initial state of creation in Genesis 1:2: “And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” The Hebrew word for the deep is *tehom*. In its feminine plural form, *tehomot*, “deeps,” it is cognate with the Akkadian, *Ti'amat*.

## **Tiamat and Tehom**

One line of evidence that supporters point to in favor of a connection between Genesis and Enuma Elish is the similarity and supposed linguistic relationship between the Babylonian word Tiamat and the Hebrew word Tehom. Tehom is usually translated in Genesis 1:2 as “The Deep,” referring to the waters of the original earth's formless condition before God's work during the days of creation.

Mark Hillmer stated, “The most remarkable coincidence between Genesis 1:2 and Enuma Elish is the biblical word for ‘the deep’ and

the Babylonian word Tiamat. Tiamat is the female monster-goddess who tries to make all the younger gods subservient. Marduk, the god of the city of Babylon, manages to kill Tiamat, and her dismembered body serves as the foundation and sky of the world. What we perhaps have in ‘the deep’—tehom—is a demythologized relic of the old polytheistic creation myth.”

### **Problems with the Genesis-Enuma Elish Theory**

At this point, we need to evaluate the claims that Enuma Elish was the source for the Genesis account of creation. Keep in mind that most adherents to this theory believe that the author(s) of Genesis edited out much of the pagan elements of the Babylonian version including the polytheism and pantheism, with the result that Genesis acted as a polemic against the religious views of the cultures around them.

Roberto Ouro notes the popular claim:

B. W. Anderson, among others, assumes that there is some kind of relationship or linguistic dependence between the Babylonian Tiamat and the Hebrew Tehom.’ Scholars who followed Gunkel have maintained that the author of Genesis borrowed the Babylonian name Tiamat and demythologized it.”

However, Ouro quotes Heidel’s linguistic argument against the theory:

Heidel affirms: “But to derive tehom from Tiamat is grammatically impossible, because the former has a masculine, the latter a feminine, ending. As a loan-word from Ti’amat, Tehom would need a feminine ending, in accordance with the laws of derivation from Babylonian in Hebrew . . . Had Ti’amat been taken over into Hebrew, it would either have been left as it was or it would have been changed to ti’ama or teama, with the feminine ending a, but it would not have become tehom.

Ouro himself states:

Thus, the popular position that the Hebrew tehom was borrowed from the Babylonian divine name Tiamat, to which it is mythologically related, lacks any basis.

After a thorough and detailed discussion of the issue, Ouro concludes:

In conclusion, both the OT and the Ancient Near Eastern literature indicate that the term tehom in Gen 1:2 must be

interpreted as a lifeless part of the cosmos, a part of the created world, a purely physical concept. Tehom is matter; it has no personality or autonomy and it is not an antagonistic and turbulent power. The “ocean/ abyss” opposes no resistance to God’s creating activity.” Certainly there is no evidence that the term *tehom*, as used in Gen 1:2, refers at all to a conflict between a monster of the chaos and a creator-god.” There is no evidence of a mythical concept in *tehom*. Therefore, it is impossible to speak about a demythification of a mythical being in Gen 1:2. The author of Genesis 1 applies this term in a nonmythical and depersonified way . . . In short, the description of *tehom* in Gen 1:2 does not derive from the influence of any Ancient Near Eastern mythology but it is based on the Hebrew conception of the world which explicitly rejects the mythological notions of surrounding nations.

This is the same conclusion that the authors of *Hard Sayings of the Bible* affirm:

First of all, the biblical account of creation does not exhibit the forms or substance of myth. All attempts to see an allusion to the goddess Tiamat in the Hebrew word *tehom*, ‘the deep’(Gen 1:2) were marked with failure from the beginning since such an equation violated the rules of morphology and equivalency in cognate languages. No reputable scholar today appeals to this as evidence that the Bible once was in the form of a myth . . . In short, nothing has been found in the biblical narrative of creation to tie it to the mythical ancient Near Eastern Cosmogonies.

Clifford Wilson quotes the informative statement of British scholar Kenneth A. Kitchen:

The common assumption that the Hebrew account is simply a purged and simplified version of the Babylonian legend . . . is fallacious on methodological grounds. In the Ancient Near East, the rule is that simple accounts or traditions may give rise (be accretion and embellishment) to elaborate legends, but not vice versa. In the ancient Orient, legends were not simplified or turned into pseudo-history (historicized) as has been assumed for early Genesis.

So the very idea of such a wholesale borrowing and reworking of a text is contrary to the practices of these ancient cultures.

## **Further Evidence against the Genesis-Enuma Elish Theory**

J. V. Kinnier Wilson adds:

The Theory that the Hebrew Genesis is genetically related to the Babylonian has long been held . . . and has relied to a large extent on the much publicized equation of Tiamat with the Hebrew Tehom ‘the deep’ (e.g. Gen. 1:2). It is now, however, recognised that, since the two words have different meanings—for they cannot be used interchangeably . . . As to the only other serious proposition that has been made in favour of a relationship between the two accounts, namely, that both works follow a common sequence for the acts of creation . . . we believe the comparison to be partly artificial, partly explainable in terms of coincidence. Thus it seems very probable that the epic has no connection of any kind or at any point with Genesis.

### **The Position of Peter Enns**

At this time, I want to briefly examine the position of Peter Enns on this question. I do so because of his rising prominence and influence among evangelical scholars today.

Enns quite correctly notes that the scholarly consensus is against a direct connection between the Babylonian creation story Enuma Elish. Yet, he seems intent on holding on to the connection, if only in a less direct way.

Enns stated:

Scholars are no longer eager to draw a direct line of dependence from Enuma Elish to Genesis. Instead, the two texts participate in a similar conceptual world concerning the nature of beginnings.

This seems to be an attempt for Enns to have his cake and eat it too. That is, though he knows that the old and popular arguments have been thoroughly discredited, yet somehow Enns wants there to remain a connection. For Enns, that connection involves the late dating of Genesis and early dating of the various forms of Enuma Elish, with the clearly implied assertion that the Genesis creation story is culturally dependent on the likes of Enuma Elish, and shares their mythological character. This, of course, despite the statement just quoted by the expert British Assyriologist J. V. Kinnier Wilson that “the epic has no connection of any kind or at any point with Genesis.”

Therefore, for Enns, since the two narratives are like two peas of a pod, the narrative account of creation in Genesis can no more be taken serious as real history than can be the likes of Enuma Elish. For example, Enns stated:

What bearing does the relationship between Genesis 1 and Enuma Elish have on the evolution issue? It means that any thought of Genesis 1 providing a scientifically or historically accurate account of cosmic origins, and therefore being wholly distinct from the ‘fanciful’ story in Enuma Elish, cannot be seriously entertained. Apart from the obvious scientific problems with such an idea, it simply ignores the conceptual similarities between Genesis 1 and Enuma Elish.”

It is alarming to see one claiming to be an evangelical holding to such a radical position concerning the origin and reliability of Genesis and its creation story. In doing so, as the foregoing has shown, he is going against the consensus of experts in the field, and against the literal interpretation of the creation story that Jesus and the apostle Paul held to.

What is most shocking to me is how pervasive this theory of the Genesis creation story being derived from the Enuma Elish is, even in schools that claim to be conservative and Bible believing. Indeed, I had professors in my college and seminary days that both taught and affirmed this theory. Now, we have no problems being taught about the issue and being informed students of Scripture. But I was very troubled to be sitting in seminary classes and seeing my peers being misled by the instructor and materials by Peter Enns. Indeed, week by week in our classes, the student’s papers and comments came in line with these troubling views.

It is hoped that this article will be helpful to those Christians who are being taught these errors, and that their trust and confidence in Scripture can be restored. For one of the greatest problems with theories like these are that they are deceptive covers for a new infiltration of liberal ideas into conservative education. Further, they seek to undermine the very idea of inspiration; for rather than Genesis being a narrative description of the creation and origin of the universe, by God, advocates of these ideas want to reduce Genesis to a merely human book.

Christians, let us stand together on the majestic beauty and magnificent revelation of God’s word and not be taken captive by the deceptive and destructive ideas born in the pit of Hell.

## QUIZ: OFT-USED BIBLICAL TERMS AND WORDS

1. diakonia

- a. God-blessed in church service
- b. persecution of the church
- c. long speech
- d. encouragement, exhortation

2. koinonia

- a. a discipline in the church
- b. vigorous appeal
- c. fellowship among believers
- d. legal disputation

3. parusie

- a. Jesus' sacrifice
- b. return of Christ
- c. desperate situation
- d. participation in suffering

4. apocryphal

- a. pertaining to Jesus' discourses
- b. pertaining to non-canonical books
- c. pertaining to the book of Revelation
- d. pertaining to secret knowledge

5. synergy

- a. unusual wisdom
- b. laziness
- c. tactic in warfare
- d. collective effort

6. epiphany

- a. mission plan
- b. music program
- c. appearance of God
- d. charismatic gift

7. quo vadis

- a. a little creek
- b. with doubt
- c. condemnation
- d. which way?

8. liturgy

- a. wind instruments
- b. all elements of a church service
- c. singing of choir
- d. recitation of the Lord's prayer

9. cosmology

- a. study of earth's rock formations
- b. study of earth's various cultures
- c. study of the world's currencies
- d. study of the universe

10. apostasy

- a. abiding in God's truth
- b. God's format of design for creation
- c. fading away from biblical truth
- d. doing good works for the church

**Answers:**

1. (a); 2. (a); 3. (b); 4. (b); 5. (d); 6. (d); 7. (c); 8. (d); 9. (b); 10. (c)

**Personal Notes on the Articles:**

Please feel free to email us at [info@ras.org](mailto:info@ras.org) if you have any questions or comments.

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