

The Precepts of Man or God?

Anthropologists have long known that man, throughout history, everywhere and every epoch, have had a concept of right and wrong, not merely “good and bad, “which is often a personal choice of daily outcome, but actual *right and wrong*.

Sociologists carefully debate the source of mankind’s ideas of right and wrong. Is the source merely what humans like? Few arrive at that conclusion because virtually always the mores of a society label numerous things as “wrong” which are, indeed, pleasurable. One may find it pleasurable to kill a pesky neighbor, or have an affair with his wife, but very, very seldom has any society labeled those things as “good.”

One popular approach taken today is to attempt to find a gene that explains cultural rights and wrongs. Others try to track history and the development of culture itself in an attempt to spot just when and where homo sapiens decided to introduce “right and wrong” - not merely laws to control behavior, but actual right and wrong on which to base those laws.

Historical anthropologists know that some sort of worship of a higher power is part of virtually every culture known, from the very beginning. And his mores have always been closely linked to his beliefs of right and wrong. Careful analysts are left to wonder which came first, the mores or the religious beliefs - they seem so inextricably linked. Although many educated people will reject that notion, knowing that if they choose to believe in God, that belief itself will then require them to adhere to the tenets of that belief system.

I find it profound that the Judeo-Christian Bible labels many of man’s darker proclivities as “bad” while at the same time delivering incredible joy to those genuine believers in Jehovah God who follow that book. It certainly seems counter-intuitive, yet it is a fact.

I also find it just as profound that those particular scriptures answer all of life’s greatest questions, “Who are we?” “Why are we here?” “Where are we going?” One more profundity: In the very first verse of the Bible, all five of the realities that science can measure are found, *time, force, energy, space, and matter*. “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*”

In the beginning: time (measure with a time piece).

God: force (measured with various instruments such as a pressure gauge, a scale for weight, a measure of BTU available in a substance, etc.)

Created: energy (the expending of energy to create and organize).

Heavens: comprised of space and matter (what we see when we look up, measured with telescopes and calculations, even lasers.)

Earth: matter (good old terra firma, just grab a handful!).

Thousands of the world’s great scientists have concluded that the Judeo-Christian Bible is, indeed a true and trustworthy book, genuinely from God. That conclusion inexorably leads to some practical, daily considerations, “If the Bible is from a true and living God, shouldn’t I follow His laws?” “If the Bible is from God, then I can, indeed, see what behaviors lead to success and fulfillment and what behaviors lead to failure and sorrow.” Indeed, that is the case. True believers who follow God and His word find great joy, fulfillment and success in life, whatever circumstances may arise (see Philippians 4:10-12, wherein Paul described great rejoicing, even though he wrote from prison).

One last observation: I see great sorrow in our world. I see great suffering among those who have attempted to ignore God's laws. And I also see great and unnecessary suffering among believers who ignore God's clear scriptures and decide to teach their own ideas above God's word. No wonder Jesus said, "But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." No wonder Jesus said, "If you love Me you will keep My commandments." No wonder Jesus said, "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great."

Scripture uses some form of the word, "joy" or rejoice" over 500 times. But that rejoicing is a special gift from God for those who love Him, keep His commandments, and follow the precepts of God and not man.

Ray Wallace