

How to See Eye to Eye Religiously

Why do some people not see religious things the way we see them? Why is there so much difference between what we teach and what the denominations profess? Do we not all have the same Bible? Are we not all trying to serve the same God? Do we not all believe in the same Savior? These are perplexing questions, and they are not easily answered to everyone's satisfaction.

Basically, our understanding of the Scriptures differs from the majority of the religious world because we operate on a different principle of interpretation. To most religious people "truth" is relative, adjusting freely to different times and circumstances. For us, however, truth is truth. It is unalterable, unchangeable, and everlasting. But did "we" just arbitrarily decide this would be our regard for truth? Not at all. God's own word boldly claims "thy word is truth" (John 17:17) and "the word of the Lord is right; and all His works are done in truth." (Psalm 33:4) While there are scoffers at the idea of absolute truth, we accept Bible teaching that such does exist, and we are determined to know it. Pilate's piercing question, "What is truth?" (John 18:38) was prompted by these words from Jesus: "I have come into the world that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

This then, is the basis upon which we may come to see religious matters alike. There must be a commitment to the same standard of truth. No one would ever attempt to use differing standards of measurement if building a house, marking off a football field, or sewing a garment. This would guarantee error and disaster. Twelve inches must equal one foot on all our rulers if we desire uniformity. There must be a healthy regard and respect for the Bible on the part of every religious person in order for understanding to occur. Without this common devotion to God's word, all efforts to see things the same will fail. In order to come to agreement on matters essential to salvation, we must begin where we agree. From this point we must study the Scriptures, resolving differences as we go along. Major problems of difference are solved in small steps, and then we can be united in Christ. But we will never see things the same if we cannot agree on the existence, necessity, and location of the truth.

No Bible discussion is profitable unless every participant is a truth seeker. If everyone concerned really wants the truth, then coming to an agreement and an understanding of truth will be achievable. Believe it or not, it is possible to discuss religious differences without becoming rude or creating hurt feelings. People who love the truth are not concerned with who is right, but with what is right. Every truth seeker is willing to surrender any position if it is false. There is no other honorable course for an honest man. An honest man will seek the truth, and when he finds it he will believe it. "Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding." (Proverbs 23:23).

- by *Mark White*

Are the Gospel Writers Credible?

The writers of the Gospel accounts—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—quite definitely affirm that Jesus Christ claimed to be the Son of God, and that he performed miracles to authenticate that affirmation. Further, they allege that even though Jesus was put to death on the cross, after three days he came out of the grave, thus, forcefully demonstrating that he is Jehovah's beloved Son, and that his authority must be respected. There is really no dispute about what the record claims.

How do skeptics address these historical records? Generally speaking, they assert that the New Testament writers fabricated the accounts. The writers **knew** that Jesus did not do these things; they simply invented the stories.

Will this charge stand up in the light of logical inquiry? Let us think about it for a moment.

Logically speaking, it is the case that either there is an eternity wherein one will give an account for the deeds of his life, or else there is no existence after death. The logical "law of the excluded middle"—a thing either **is** or it **is not**—demands this.

Now, reflect upon the implications of this principle in light of the charge that the New Testament writers lied about the events in the life of Christ. If they **believed** in eternity, why would

they falsify the records regarding Jesus, knowing that such lies would exclude their entrance into heaven. Lying is well nigh universally conceded to be unethical.

On the other hand, if Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John **did not believe** in eternal accountability, and so callously fabricated the documents that affirmed Jesus' divine nature, why would they have subjected themselves to the persecution that accompanied Christianity—since this life would be all they believed they would ever enjoy?

It makes no sense at all. This is a problem that no skeptic can explain. The New Testament documents are reliable!

- by **Wayne Jackson**

God Does Not Forget His Own

Facing difficult and uncertain times, God's people felt that He had possibly abandoned them . . . *"But Zion said, 'The Lord has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me.'"* (Isaiah 49:14)

But God offered them the positive assurance that they so desperately needed . . . *"Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands . . ."* (vs. 15-16)

He assured them that it would be more likely for a woman to forget her own child than for Him to forget His people. Just as we sometimes write important reminders on the palm of our hand, even so the Father had them written on His hand. Although their circumstances seemed bleak, God had not forgotten them.

In our own lives we sometimes face a combination of trials and troubles that can raise doubt and uncertainty. At such times we must also remember God's promises . . . *"He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,' so that we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?'"* (Hebrews 13:5-6)

We have *"great and precious promises"* from the Creator of the entire universe (2 Peter 1:4). He loves us and cares for us, and He desires all good things for us (Jeremiah 29:11). It should surely comfort us to know that our Heavenly Father has our names written on His hand. *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?"* (Romans 8:31)

- by **Greg Gwin**