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Contact Information:

New address:

Jerry Bannon

Publisher

Wonder Springs

PO Box 1381

Orient, Washington USA 99160

phone: 509.496.5855

blog: www.wondersprings.org

email:

jerryb@wondersprings.org

chronicle@wondersprings.org

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Out of nothing

I was looking for an idea that would tie the “Deficit Love” and the “Overdraft Divorce” articles together. Monday evening I was listening to the White Horse Inn podcast whitehorseinn.org and they were talking about saving faith being created by God in the personality of an individual with no contribution from the person himself. Part of that discussion centered on the fact that God created saving faith like He created creation, out of nothing.

They went on to put this in the context that mankind has unlimited free will in “things natural,” it is only in “things heavenly,” because of man’s total depravity, that God creates the desire for regeneration and ultimately salvation through the message of the gospel. Perhaps it was the context of the presentation, but thinking unlimited free will in “things natural” totally misses the point that this willful natural agency is also highly controlled by our sin nature. Ultimately

the understanding of “things heavenly” however, will alter our perception of the natural order.

In that light, free will and things of any sort, should really be divided into created things and attributes of God. It is the love of God through grace, creating the gift of faith that is the ultimate source of human acceptance of the gospel found only in the life, death through crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is received by or through the word of God alone. However word in this sense, must include all communication of God with humanity and ultimately all things created.

The Bible creation account begins, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In this case this act of God created something out of nothing, or in classical theology it is called “ex nihilo.” Hence, in the philosophical sense also, in the Judeo Christian worldview, God



alone is the ultimate source of all reality as well as all creation. Therefore before, during, after, outside, and inside the time space matter universe, God is.

Mankind however, in his fallen state can not accept God as creator, therefore vast quantities of time and naturalistic explanations must be invented to describe not only how creation came to be, but also how man evolved out of these mindless processes. In the beginning was the "Big Bang." However, in this evolutionary worldview, it is philosophically acceptable to question what came before the big bang, because epistemologically the nature of the big bang is without knowledge, personality, or direction.

As the church, through the effects of the Enlightenment, was no longer capable of accepting by faith the concept of ex nihilo, we see not only the loss of absolutes within society, but also the concept that salvation was based upon an ex nihilo gift of God. Over the last two hundred years, both within society and the Protestant church we saw a return to a theology that was the Roman Catholic church's view at the time of the Reformation, and now we have moved beyond this, to an era where God saves those who are willing to save themselves, as well as help themselves to all things material, regardless of the plain easily understood exegesis of God's word and God as the source of all faith and truth.

Going back to Genesis, the Bible clearly states that the six days of creation, were essentially six days as we recognize them today. To put in a gap of millions and billions of years, between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 has no support other than perhaps a remnant of poor logic and faulty reasoning. The Bible clearly defines a young creation, as have all of Jewish and Christian culture until the last two centuries.

As we move on beyond Genesis 1:1 to the rest of the creation week, we no longer see God creating ex nihilo, but God reordering His creation through His spoken word. Through the spoken, or preached proclaimed as indicative word, order was formed out of the ultimate chaos of the original creation. In that light, I would say, contrary to what the great guys on the White Horse Inn had to say, God saves, or elects

people in that same way. God reorders sinful chaos of the human personality into the indicative truth and ordering power of His word alone. This is just how creation as we know it came to be, order from ultimate or perfect chaos.

Contrary to faith being a gift of God either created out of nothing, or by altering the personal chaos of sin, much of Christianity today looks at faith as a force, a personal force to be exercised toward God or something else, many times a material blessing. In order to exercise this force we must take steps towards that goal, or if the prize is significant enough, we must make a leap of faith, hoping in faith alone will give us a safe landing. That leap however, is really not faith at all but presumption, because true Godly faith demands God as the object of that faith.

If we look at faith in the true Bible context, faith is always focused upon God and His word. In that respect having faith for a new car must in some way be a requirement for your work in God's calling for your life. If you don't need the new car and get one anyway, chances are you just used your God given resources and went out and bought it, through a worldly credit or equity opportunity. There is nothing wrong with that, but to call that faith fails to bring glory to God.

In the Bible context of faith, what we are really looking at is the gospel of God's deficit love offered through Jesus Christ. It is a gift freely given through God's sovereignty. There is nothing we can do to merit that gift. The imperative to the church, collectively and as individuals, is then to become messengers of deficit love, through all means at our disposal. Deficit love is just another way of saying making disciples through the great commission. When through our attempts to give love to the unlovable, God blesses us with more of His grace to meet even more difficult circumstance. That is what growing in the image of Christ is all about.

The overdraft divorce comes into play when, "we believe the world and not the Bible."

This has become a cliché among Christians, but for the most part they don't believe the Bible, they believe what they have been told the Bible contains. In the world today there is someone out there on the radio, TV, or internet lands who will tell you what you want to hear. Most of the time that is basically

you are a good person and God wants to bless you, because He is a blessing God, and you sure deserve to be blessed.

Last week we looked at the connection between the bride of Christ, the church and the human marriage, in both the book of Ephesians and Revelation. But one of the prime, perhaps the prime grounds for a divorce in the Biblical sense is marital unfaithfulness. We say, having an affair, they used to call it adultery, the Bible calls such a bride a spiritual harlot. If you want to know what God really thinks about this type of harlotry just read what the prophets of the Old Testament had to say. The concept Bible is really speaking about however, is spiritual fornication, by either men or women, with the pleasures of this life, not as gifts from God, but as idols of pleasure, and paying to enjoy that pleasure.

So society is degenerating around the planet, because the Bible is not taken seriously by either the church or the world. There are still some people out there who believe that we are evolving to a higher social order, but most of the world is without hope. Why?, because faith, in the Biblical sense requires an object capable of providing truthfully and absolutely what it promises.

Will globalism provide those criteria? How about environmental sustainability? We could make a long list of deficit wannabes! None of them have the power to make even a significant change in the direction the world is now heading because none of them deal with the evil that lies within the hearts of men and women. To say I am a good person and I am trying harder to be a better person, does not change the reality that within yourself dwells no good thing.

The only good thing that deals successfully with evil and death in this world is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God is building His church around the world, many times, most of the time?, in spite of the established church. Why is it that church so often loses it's God given message? Ultimately I suppose that God gets the glory for the creation of saving faith within the Kingdom of God. There are times and places however, in which the word of God takes precedence and not only the church, but also the surrounding society again finds it's compass of morality. In the Bible record, that only takes place, when naturally things get so bad, that human reason, planning and other means not only no longer work, but just seem too limited compared to chaotic real reality.

At that time not only the church, but many people develop a prayer life. "Oh, God help!"

That chaotic reality is simply a fallen world and human evil and sin allowed to evolve naturally. When the chaos is bad enough nature creates a desire that only God can fulfill. Where that comes from, reordering the frantic chaos of human worry, or is created out of nothing is really not the issue. It is simply when mankind sees nothing he can do will work, then God can an will change that reality.

Just how close are we in society to being filled with no good thing, or nothing of any value. Much closer than you will hear on the news. Look up, God's good news of the gospel, changes people and also the dark and dismal world. That word must be proclaimed or preached by human instruments, who find deficit love more valuable than anything riches the world has to offer. Then the change will come, out of nothing, in times too short for mankind to see any other alternative than a move of God.