

Qx10 – Questioning Policies, Premisses, Promises, & Purposes in the Rest of the Old Testament

Dear: Although I've done my best to demonstrate that the prime purpose of grandparents is to develop their grandchildren's patience [☺], I wouldn't be surprised if the speed with which I've been going through the Old Testament (OT) is dragging you down to despair [☹]. So, in hopes of giving you at least a little hope [☺], let me begin this chapter by trying to pick up my pace – at least from my usual cantankerous crawl to a cynical shuffle [☹].

To that end, I made preparations. First, I read the rest of the OT, flagging it with “little yellow stickies” at each location where some horrible or idiotic (or horrible and idiotic) policy was advocated. Incidentally, if some day you have a look at my copy of the Bible, you'll find that, when looked at its edge, it's almost entirely yellow! Next, I tried to organize my findings of sick and sickening policies into various policy groups, such as: sexism, slavery, barbarity, religious intolerance, etc. Unfortunately, though, as I'll now try to demonstrate, those divisions didn't work very well, because many of these sick policies are derived from and coupled with the advocated policy of racism, which in turn seems to be derived from the fabrication that the Israelites were a “holy people”, God's “chosen people” (and thereby, surprise surprise, the Jewish clerics were the “chosen clerics”).

RACISM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (OT)

I didn't waste my time searching for where the racist idiocy first appears in the OT, but it's clearly implied as early as in *Genesis 12*. There, the god that the clerics invented tells their possibly fictitious Abraham:

“I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you and make your name so great that it shall be used in blessings: those that bless you, I will bless; those that curse you, I will execrate [i.e., curse].”

The clerics subsequently argue that surely the Israelites are “chosen” and “holy”, because the creator of the universe blessed them and cursed their enemies (e.g., the Egyptians).

Then, by the time the clerics lead the reader to *Deuteronomy (Deut.) 7, 6*, the racist policy is clearly described, either in the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible as

...for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God; the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth

or in the New English Bible

...for you are a people holy to the LORD your God; the LORD your God chose you out of all nations on earth to be his special possession.

Meanwhile, Dear, I hope that, whenever you read (or hear) such terms as “holy people” or “holy race”, or “unholy people” or “unholy race”, or “chosen people” or “cursed people”, the concepts make your teeth clench, the back of your neck tighten, your eyes squint, and you seethe with anger at such idiocies.

The barbaric consequences of a group of people convincing themselves that they are “the chosen people”, chosen by none other than the creator of the universe HIMself, are so hideous that they should be hidden from the world – rather than repeated in the world’s most widely distributed book! The following gives descriptions of just a few of such “barbaric consequences” – and remember: these horrible activities were reportedly performed by a group of people who were commanded not to steal and not to murder.

Deut. 2, 33–35: “The LORD our God delivered him into our hands; we killed him with his sons and all his people. We captured all his cities at that time and put to death everyone in the cities: men, women, and dependents; we left no survivor.”

Deut. 7, 16: “You shall devour all the nations which the LORD your God is giving over to you. Spare none of them...” [Murdering them is perfectly okay!]

Deut. 12, 29: “When the LORD your God exterminates, as you advance, the nations whose country you are entering to occupy, you shall take their place and settle in their land. After they have been destroyed [have an exterminator’s ecstasy; have a destroyer’s dance!]...”

Deut. 19, 1: “When the LORD your God exterminates the nations whose land he is giving you, and you take their place and settle in their cities and houses... [don’t give even a moment’s thought to the victims you murdered and whose possessions you stole].”

Deut. 20, 10–15: “When you advance on a city to attack it, make an offer of peace. If the city accepts the offer and opens its gates to you, then all the people in it shall be put to forced labor and shall serve you. [Congratulations on creating a new definition

of ‘peace’ – better known as ‘slavery’!] If it does not make peace with you but offers battle, you shall besiege it, and the LORD your God will deliver it into your hands. You shall put all its males to the sword [also known as ‘murder’], but you may take the women, the dependents, and the cattle for yourselves, and plunder everything else in the city. You may enjoy the use of the spoils of your enemies which the LORD you God gives you. [And if you ‘enjoy’ women, then so much the better for you; on the other hand, many priests apparently prefer little boys.]”

Deut. 28, 9–10: “The LORD will set you up as his own holy people [happiness is being a holy person!]. . . Then all people on earth shall see that the LORD has named you as his very own, and they shall go in fear of you.” [Happiness is having everyone fear you!]

Deut. 33, 29: “Happy are you, people of Israel, peerless, set free [except from your ignorance]; the LORD is the shield that guards you, the Blessed One is your glorious sword [how a “sword” can be glorious is another question]. Your enemies come cringing to you, and you shall trample their bodies under foot. [Show no mercy: kill, kill, kill!]”

Joshua 6, 20: “So they blew the trumpets, and when the army heard the trumpet sound, they raised a great shout and down fell the walls [of Jericho]. The army advanced on the city. . . they put everyone to the sword [i.e., murdered], men and women, young and old, and also cattle, sheep, and asses [save for the asses in their own legions who perpetrated this massacre of innocents].”

Joshua 8, 24–28: “When the Israelites had cut down to the last man all the citizens of Ai who were in the open country or in the wilderness to which they had pursued them, and the massacre was complete, they all turned back to Ai and put it to the sword. The number who were killed [viz., murdered] that day, men and women, was twelve thousand, the whole population of Ai. Joshua held out his dagger and did not draw back his hand until he had put to death [i.e., murdered] all who lived in Ai. . . [And for this and your other atrocities, Joshua, may your name forever live in infamy.]”

Joshua 10 & 11: “On that same day, Joshua captured Makkedah and put both king and people to the sword, destroying both them and every living thing in the city [horses? dogs? pussycats? pet turtles?]. . . they left no survivor there. . . Meanwhile Horam king of Gezer had advanced to the relief of Lachish; but Joshua stuck them down, both king and people, and not a man of them survived. Then. . . to Eglon. . . they captured it and put its king to the sword together with every living thing in it and all its villages; as at Eglon, he left no survivor. . . Then. . . Debir. . . destroyed every living thing. . . So Joshua massacred the population of the whole region. . . He left no survivor, destroying everything that drew breath, as the LORD the God of Israel had commanded. [Happiness is having your god approve your massacres. And moreover:] It was the LORD’s purpose that they should offer an obstinate resistance to the Israelites [for who wouldn’t just love to be their slave?!], and that thus they

should be annihilated without mercy and utterly destroyed... [Happiness is having your god set it all up: make your enemies obstinate enough to fight but weak enough so that you can exterminate them, their families, and their pet turtles.]”

Judges 3, 1–3: “These are the nations which the LORD left as a means of testing all the Israelites who had not taken part in the battles for Canaan, his purpose [**Ah ha! We are about to hear God’s purpose!**] being to teach succeeding generations of Israel, or those at least who had not learnt in former times, how to make war...”
[What a thoughtful, considerate god: leave some people for later Israelites to kill, because **his purpose was “to teach succeeding generation... how to make war”!**]

Kings 6 & 10: “It was in the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel... that he began to build the house of the LORD... All the survivors of the Amorites, Hittites, Pereizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites [the people who had lived relatively peacefully before the murdering Israelites stole their homes and lands from them – the people whom the Jews have yet to honor in some Holocaust museum], **who did not belong to Israel – that is their descendents who survived in the land, wherever the Israelites had been unable to annihilate them – were employed by Solomon [Employed?! Hah!] on perpetual forced labor [viz., slaves]...**”

Ezra 2, 64: “**The whole assembled people** [who were returning from Babylon, led by Ezra] **numbered 42,360, apart from their slaves, male and female, of whom there were 7,337...**” [So, on this exodus from Babylon, the Israelites definitely had slaves with them – and Ezra saw nothing wrong with owning slaves. Thus, the Israelites saw nothing wrong with the “institution of slavery” – just with the Israelites being slaves, “justifying” the slaughter of all Egyptian first-born, because of course “holy people” aren’t to be slaves, only the unholy ones – i.e., the ones who worshipped different gods.]

Ezra 9, 1–3: “**The people of Israel... have not kept themselves apart from the foreign population... They have taken women of these nations as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy race has become mixed with the foreign population...**”
[The holy race! Happiness is being a member of the holy race!]

Ezra 9 & 10: “[Some] of the leaders [of the returning group] approached me [Ezra], and said, ‘the people of Israel, including priests and Levites, have not kept themselves apart from the foreign population and from the abominable practices of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. They have taken women of these nations [as did Joseph and Moses!] as wives for themselves and their sons, so that **the holy race has become mixed with the foreign population’...**”

“Then, at the evening sacrifice... I [Ezra] knelt down and spread out my hands to the LORD my God and said, ‘Oh my God, I am humiliated [as a member of the holy race], I am ashamed to lift my face to thee, my God; for we are sunk in our iniquities [a

word that apparently Ezra liked using]... For we have neglected the commands which thou gavest through thy servants the prophets, when thou saidst, ‘The land which you are entering and will possess is a polluted land, polluted by the foreign population with their abominable practices, which have made it unclean from end to end. Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons, and do not marry your sons to their daughters’... [A concept that, more than 2,000 years later, Hitler would repeat – to preserve “racial purity” of the Aryans.]

“Ezra the priest stood up and said, ‘You have committed an offence in marrying foreign wives and have added to Israel’s guilt. Make your confession now to the LORD the God of your fathers and do his will [which, surprise, surprise, just happens to be the same as my will!], and separate yourselves from the foreign population and from your foreign wives’...” [And soon thereafter, all the “racially impure” wives and children were “dismissed”, without further description of their fates and to the eternal damnation of any people who condone such abandonment and such racism.]

Nehemiah 13, 3: “When the people heard the law [written in the book of Moses], they separated from Israel all who were of mixed blood. [Yes siree: all we want left is the “purebreds”! Stamp out the horrible mixed breeds in our midst! We must have racial purity – just as Hitler wanted!]

What putrefying crap! I’m sorry, Dear: although there’s more of it, I don’t plan to go through any more of this horrible stuff.

SEXISM & THE LAST STRAW

Instead, let me switch to another set of my “yellow stickies”, these dealing with policies of sexism – and worse. Earlier in this Qx, I showed you some of the horrible sexist policies advocated by the clerics. Examples included the punishment of Eve for learning the difference between good and evil, the way Lott treated his daughters, the Commandment that details how a father is to sell his daughter into slavery, the punishment of Moses’ sister for complaining, the relative cleanliness of women who give birth to a female child, deprecating or even disallowing a woman’s vow, and so on.

Here, first consider another example, this one from *Judges 19*, from which maybe you’ll begin to see that there’s something else wrong in the OT (besides some of the most horrible policies ever conceived). This story tells of a crowd of homosexuals, assembled in the street, yelling (*Judges 19, 22*):

Bring out the man who has gone into your house, for us to have intercourse with him.

To which the host responds:

No, my friends do nothing so wicked... Here is my daughter, a virgin; let me bring her out to you. Rape her and do to her what you please...

After you get over (at least temporarily) the horror of such a statement by any father, Dear, maybe you then said something similar to:

Hey, wait a minute! Deja vu! Haven't I seen this before?

And sure enough, if you check back to the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, you'll find a description of a similar crowd of homosexuals assembled in the street yelling out (*Genesis 19, 5*):

Bring [the visiting men] out... so that we may have intercourse with them.

To which Lott responds:

No, my friends, do not be so wicked. Look, I have two daughters, both virgins; let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them...

That is, Dear, don't you agree that something here is doubly wrong: not only a description of one of the most evil policies imaginable (and recall that the clerics described Lott as "righteous"!) but also an essentially identical event occurring, separated historically (so the clerical authors claim) by about 1,000 years?!

And yes, Dear, of course I agree: there's a chance that it could have happened. There's the platitude that "history repeats itself", and we know that evil continues. But in both cases, would a crowd of homosexuals assemble in the street and demand intercourse with one or two strange men? How could two different reporters, separated in time by ~1,000 years, have such mistaken views about homosexuals? A gang rape of a man may occur in a prison, but such rapists aren't seeking sex (let alone love) but to enforce a power structure. And would two fathers, separated in time by ~1,000 years, be perpetrators of such evil treatments of their daughters and both respond in the identical manner to crowds of power-mongering homosexual rapists, describing them as "my friends"? Surely any sane reader responds with something similar to:

Somebody's gotta be kidding! Somethin's wrong with these stories!

Now, Dear, when you were reading the Bible, I of course don't know where it would hit you that something is wrong with the stories. But certainly *Deuteronomy* is a likely spot. For example, maybe the logician in you revolted when you read at *Deut. 9, 21*:

I [Moses] took the calf, that sinful thing that you had made [when Moses was up on Mount Sinai] and burnt it and pounded it, grinding it until it was as fine as dust; then I flung its dust into the torrent that flowed down the mountain.

Upon reading that, you might then have remembered what the clerics had written earlier (at *Exodus 32, 19*):

As he approached the camp, Moses saw the bull-calf and the dancing, and he was angry... Then he took the calf they had made and burnt it; he ground it to powder, sprinkled it on water, and made the Israelites drink it.

If you saw this contradiction (either the gold was flushed down the river or the people drank it!) and remembered that even all monkeys and infants know that things exist and are distinct [i.e., any A is identically equal to itself (viz., $A \equiv A$) and not identical to what it's not (viz., $A \neq \neg A$)], then the logician in you might have complained:

Hey, wait a minute, there's somethin' wrong here!

Or maybe it was something smaller that triggered your skepticism. For example, maybe when you were reading Commandment # (who-knows-what-number!) about how to sanitize a contaminated house (using a bird dipped in the blood of another bird or whatever), then maybe it hit you:

Hey, this doesn't make sense! The Israelites are allegedly wandering around the desert for 40 years. I can imagine the young married couple in the front row, listening to Moses' sermon, turning to each other perplexed, and then the young man asking: "Hey, Moses; sorry to interrupt you, but what's a house?"!

Or, if you were focusing on policies rather than stories, maybe you concluded that something was wrong when you found a policy advocated in the Bible that was self-contradictory. For example, there's the policy advocated at *Deut. 10, 12*:

What then, O Israel, does the LORD your God ask of you? Only to fear the LORD your God, to conform to all his ways, to love him, and to serve him with all your heart and soul.

How, you might have asked yourself, could anyone simultaneously fear, obey, love, and serve the same thing?

If you did ask such a question, of course I'd agree with your question's implied premiss: you (or anyone) can't simultaneously fear and love anything, let alone "with all your heart and soul." Further, people who obey out of fear, then (totally justifiably) they're just serving themselves.

On the other hand, people can simultaneously fear, obey, and serve someone: that someone would be a tyrannical master or dictator or similar, which fairly accurately describes the relationship that the clerics wanted between the Israelites and their god (aka the clerics!). Thereby, the people would become the clerics' slaves.

But if ever the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, then surely even they must have learned that no slave loves a feared master. And I bet that, to this day, pious Jews (and Christians, Muslims, and Mormons) who fear God love, not God, but themselves.

Anyway, as still another alternative, maybe the realization that something is wrong with the Bible didn't hit you all at once. Maybe the craziness just sort of crept up on you. For example, maybe you became confused, because the clerics couldn't convey a clear and consistent description of their God. Thus, if the following statement were by itself, maybe you could have accepted it (*Deut. 10, 14*):

To the LORD your God belongs heaven itself, the highest heaven, the earth and everything in it.

Your immediate assessment might have been something similar to:

Okay, that makes sense; that's what I've been taught since I was a kid; it's consistent with the stuff in *Genesis*: if God made heaven, and earth, and so on, then it's reasonable that everything belongs to him.

But then, somewhere in the back of your mind, maybe an assessment (and an associated question) might have started to gnaw its way toward your consciousness: Is this description of God consistent with descriptions elsewhere in the Bible? For example, you might have recalled the description in the "song" given in *Exodus 15*:

The LORD is a warrior: the LORD is his name...
 Who is like thee, O LORD, among the gods...
 Though broughtest them [the Israelites] in and didst plant them in the mount that is
 thy possession, thy dwelling-place, O LORD, of thy own making,
 the sanctuary, O LORD, which thy own hands prepared.

This “song” suggests a “warrior god” (one of many gods) who lives on a mountain. How does this jibe with the “creator god” described in *Genesis* and *Deuteronomy*? And your confusion might have continued to compound. For example, surely any sane reader becomes confused upon reading Moses’ alleged statement at *Deut. 4, 35*:

You have had sure proof that the LORD is God; there is no other.

If “there is no other”, then why ask: “Who is like thee, O LORD, among the gods...?” Similarly, try reconciling that with Moses’ alleged statement at *Deut. 4, 39*:

This day, then, be sure and take to heart that the LORD is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other.

If there’s no other god, then why didn’t God say so in the first place, rather than state in his first commandment: “You shall have no other god to set against me”? And if the Israelites had thought “there is no other [god]”, then wouldn’t they have responded to the first commandment with: “What ‘other god’?”

And if the above confuses a reader of the Bible, think of how *Deut. 10, 17* would have confused the Ancient Israelites:

...for the LORD your God is God of gods and LORD of LORDS [Hey, wait a minute, is there one or many?], the great, mighty, and terrible God. He is no respecter of persons [But, but, but... what if the person is an Israelite?] and is not to be bribed [But what about all those soothing odors of burning fat that you told us he liked so much?]; he secures justice for widows and orphans [Does that mean that widows and orphans get the justice they deserve when we slaughter them, after we slaughter their husbands and fathers?], and loves the alien who lives among you... You, too, must love the alien... [But, but, but... didn’t you just finish telling us to kill them all?]

Now, Dear, if similar has happened to you during your first reading of the Bible, imagine the confusion for people who have spent most of their careers studying the Bible in depth. I’ll show you some examples later, but for now, let me proceed with a simpler approach.

For this simpler approach, remember the old analogy of “the last straw that broke the camel’s back.” I rather like that analogy (depicting well the consequences of an accumulation), but it would be good to include the concept, also, that it depends on the camel. Thus, maybe a “Biblical scholar” can carry a large load before calling it quits. In contrast, for Thomas Paine (one of the principal founders of both the American and French Republics) his “last straw” was apparently found much earlier in the Bible, as is illustrated by the following quotation from his note entitled “Biblical Anachronism” [where ‘anachronism’ literally means ‘backward’ (Greek *ana-*) ‘time’ (Greek *khronos*), i.e., not in the correct time sequence].¹

The second verse makes God to say unto Noah, “Of every *clean* beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female, and of every beast that are *not clean*, by two, the male and his female.” Now, there was no such thing as beasts *clean* and *unclean* in the time of Noah. Neither were there any such people as Jews or Israelites at that time, to whom that distinction was a law. The law, called the law of Moses, by which [such] a distinction is made, [between] beasts *clean* and *unclean*, was not until several hundred years after the time that Noah is said to have lived. The story, therefore, detects itself [or contradicts itself] because the inventor forgot himself, by making God make use of an expression that could not be used at the time. The blunder is of the same kind, as if a man in telling a story about America a hundred years ago, should quote an expression from Mr. Jefferson’s inaugural speech as if spoken by him at that time. My opinion of this story is the same as what a man once said to another, who asked him in a drawling tone of voice, ‘Do you believe the account about No-ah?’ The other replied in the same tone of voice, ‘Ah-no’.

For you, Dear, I don’t know your tolerance level. But for me, I think the last straw that I could tolerate was at the end of *Deuteronomy*. Certainly I got “bad vibes” earlier in the Bible. When I read that the “righteous” Noah cursed his grandson into slavery for something minor that the boy’s father had done, that Abraham pimped his sister-wife Sarah and then blackmailed those he had duped, and that the “righteous” Lott offered his daughters to be raped by a mob; subsequently, I had zero interest in the clerics’ concept of “righteousness”.

When I read the commandment allegedly from the clerics’ God detailing how to sell my daughter into slavery, then subsequently, I knew that their God would never have anything to say that interests me. I scoffed at the

¹ Dear: You can find Paine’s collected works at several sites on the internet, e.g., at the great website “The Online Library of Liberty” (at <http://oll.libertyfund.org/Home3/index.php>); specifically, for the quotation used, see: <http://oll.libertyfund.org/Home3/HTML.php?recordID=0548.04>.

stupid science and the blunders in logic, and damn near vomited over the male chauvinism, racism, and the associated intolerance, slavery, and barbarism. But then, after all that, I threw down my copy of the Bible in disgust at what others might consider to be a silly little straw; yet, for me, it was the last straw. It's at *Deut. 31, 24*, reportedly describing how Moses passed power over to Joshua:

When Moses had finished writing down these laws in a book, from beginning to end, he gave this command to the Levites who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD: "Take this book of the law and put it beside the Ark of the Covenant... [viz., the stone tablets, claimed to be inscribed by God] to be a witness against you [Israelites]. For I know how defiant and stubborn you are; even during my lifetime you have defied the LORD; how much more, then, will you do so when I am dead? Assemble all the elders of your tribes and your officers; I will say all these things in their hearing and will summon heaven and earth to witness against them [Happiness is being able to summon heaven and earth to do your bidding]. For I know that after my death you will take to degrading practices and turn aside from the way which I told you to follow, and in days to come, disaster will come upon you..."

Moses (and at *Deut. 32, 44*, it states that also Joshua) then recited the two "historical poems" given in *Deut. 32*, detailing some of these "disasters".

Now, Dear, maybe you wonder: "Well, what's wrong with that?" Maybe you'd add: "That's nothing compared with some of the other stuff." Maybe, Dear, but for me it was the last straw. I mean, surely somewhere in here, someone with even just a little sanity says:

Then what, pray tell, is the point? If you say you know the outcome, if the outcome of the war is obvious, then what's the point of initiating the battle? If both of you (Moses and Joshua) are convinced that it's all pointless, then why proceed to murder millions of people? Call it quits! Pack it up! If you feel your hostility must be vented, why not take up bowling or similar, rather than murder civilians? You already have troops divided into twelve groups; why not organize a soccer league and have the tribes compete among themselves on a playing field?!

I'm sorry, Dear: the above may seem minor to you, but for me, it was the last straw.

SOMETHING ABOUT THIS CAMEL'S BACKGROUND

As I already wrote, the last straw also depends on the camel, so let me now tell you a story, which maybe illustrates something about this particular

camel (i.e., me) – and with which I’ll try to convey a message that I hope you’ll find useful.

The following occurred when I was in my late forties. I was leading a group of about 20 scientists and technicians on quite a large project, and we were working very hard: 20 hours per day, 7 days per week, was the norm for months on end. (Okay, so maybe I exaggerate a little – whose story is this, anyway?)

Anyway, because of one of his political moves (stabbing a dagger of deceit into another one of his supervisors), I was reporting to (I’ll not say “supervised by”) my former friend, former subordinate, traitor (I still have the dagger wound), and soon-to-be archenemy. (Okay, okay, so maybe there’s a smidgen of bias in this story, but will you please stop interrupting me! You may think – and I may hope – that time both “heals all wounds” and “wounds all heels”, but it ain’t necessarily so!)

Because of mismanagement of the organization, “annual appraisals” were again due (during which time, those to whom we reported wrote assessments of our performances, theoretically to help us improve, but whose practical consequence was almost invariably resentment, regardless of details in the appraisals). For my appraisal, however, not only were the details absolutely outrageous (accusing me of endangering the crew of our research aircraft, wasting money, and similar nonsense, and devoid of praise for my or my group’s scientific accomplishments, dedication, and resourcefulness) but also my enemy gave a copy of my appraisal to my sponsor (i.e., the person outside the company who controlled the funding of our research).

You should understand, Dear, that even for companies with an incompetent management that uses written appraisals (rather than much-more-productive “bull sessions”), all such companies (as far as I know) keep all appraisals in strictest confidence. People in the personnel (or “human resources”) department might eventually get a copy, but no one else. And I’m certain that it would “blow anyone away” to hear that a manager gave a copy of a scientist’s (draft) appraisal to his sponsor (who, in my case, happened to be visiting the lab and was a sufficiently good friend that he asked me and your grandmother out to dinner the night he received my “appraisal” – before I had received it!! – to “chat” about it and about the entire incident).

Well, probably unsurprisingly to you, I went ballistic. Not only because of the outrageous content of my appraisal, but because my enemy had shown it to my sponsor. Subsequently, when I responded in writing to my appraisal (as we were required to do), I also went beyond normal bounds: not only did I send a (draft) copy of my response to every member of my crew (with a request for suggestions about how to improve my response), along with a copy of the original appraisal (which normally should have been seen by no one else), but also I sent copies of both to my sponsor (who had returned to “headquarters”). That move of mine led to my enemy’s supervisor getting involved, and years later, my enemy finally getting pushed out of the company – but that’s a separate story.

And while I’m at it, Dear (although it’s irrelevant to this story), let me mention something else. Upon reading my appraisal and my (draft) response, my crew took what I’m fairly confident was an unprecedented action at our research organization. On my behalf (and of course without my knowledge), they wrote a “declaration of support”, praising my leadership and my accomplishments, which each of them signed and which they then distributed to “management”. To this day their action moves me, and believe it or not, it moves me mostly with a feeling of humility (which I mention in case you think I’m unaware of that emotion).

But such irrelevancies aside, Dear, let me get to the point of my story. [**“Oh please, do, Grampa – although I certainly don’t mean to rush you.”** Patience, child.] I don’t remember why, but I also gave a copy of my appraisal and my draft response (requesting suggestions for improvements to the draft) to a colleague who wasn’t a member of my crew. He was a competent scientist whose work I respected, but looking back at it now, I’m not sure why I gave him a copy, because I didn’t know him very well. I expect that one of the PhDs on my crew suggested that it might be useful to solicit his advice. He was right.

A few days later, this fellow dropped by my office with my two “documents” (my original appraisal and my draft response) in his hand. By this time, all the members of my crew had given me their comments, most of which were useful, and they did so in the usual way: by “marking up” the draft copy with their hand-written notes. When this fellow returned the copy I had given to him, he passed it to me, I glanced at it – and noticed that it didn’t include a single “mark-up”.

I'm sure I thanked him for his time, I remember looking at him with puzzlement (because his copy hadn't been marked up), and I hope I'll never forget his penetrating summary: **“What makes you think they give a damn?”**

And that, my Dear, is the end of my story.

“Grampa!”

What?

“That's not a story!”

Sure it is. Not only is it a story, it happens to be true – save, perhaps, for a few, minor misstatements that might have inadvertently occurred (☺).

“But you can't end a story like that!”

Well, that's the important stuff.

“Fine. But then what?”

Well, for a day-or-so I thought about his question, **“What makes you think they give a damn?”** Then I saw his point; so I quit.

“You quit what?”

I quit the job. I quit the department. I quit science.

“Then what did you do?”

Well, because your grandmother was employed at a different company in the community, I couldn't easily quit the community; so, I joined another department in company I was with, and for the rest of my ten-or-so years there, I worked for my same sponsor (and his successor) trying to build new science projects for them. That is, I abandoned doing science myself and worked to set up programs to fund others to do science.

“And tell me again why you did this.”

Because that fellow-scientist was right: I had written a long response to my appraisal, going into substantial (even excruciating) detail, attempting to justify my decisions, the risks we had to take to do the research, my safety consciousness, and of course my group's scientific goals and accomplishments, but then, with his single comment, that fellow scientist slapped me back to reality.

Previously and in writing the response, I had been working under the delusion of a pleasant but unexamined premiss: that management of the organization (and in particular the fellow to whom I was reporting) “gave a damn” about science (or about safety or about whatever else I was defending).

Then, with insights and experiences of others, I saw his true goal: as he had done at least three times before to others, he was in the process of grabbing control of my research program (in particular, its large financial resources). In his position of power, he controlled all the cards. He could invent a completely bogus charge against me of unsafe aircraft operations – which was enough to make “upper management” come rushing to his defense (for they feared nothing more than lawsuits derived from unsafe operations – or even hints of unsafe operations, as written in a bogus “appraisal” – because once such a charge was “official”, recorded somewhere, then any plaintiff’s lawyer could have a field day). To add salt to the dagger wounds, he attempted to undermine my sponsor’s confidence in me and my group – but was unsuccessful in that subterfuge.

So, Dear, I admitted that in the battle I was defeated; so, I chose not to fight him on his turf. I concluded, further, that there was no point in fighting him, because I was convinced that eventually he would defeat himself. And in fact he did: after subsequently almost totally destroying the department, he was eventually pushed out of the company. You may not agree with my decision not to fight, Dear (as my crew didn’t), but I would hope that at least you’d agree with two concepts: 1) “[The best revenge is to live well](#)”, and 2) [Carefully choose the battles to fight](#).

There is another moral in my story, Dear, but it’s one that I actually hope you’ll never find useful! I think I’ve seen a similar statement from some ancient Oriental wisdom (maybe in Taoism or maybe Zen Buddhism), but I’ve been unable to find the exact quotation. So here’s my version: [treat your enemy as one of your great teachers](#).

But more to the point of policies in the Bible, I hope you’ll see value in another moral of my story.

CHECK YOUR PREMISES!

Dear, the reason for my dredging up those painful memories was to convey to you a message that I hope you’ll consider carefully: when you become confused, when things “don’t make any sense”, when the pieces of some jigsaw puzzle just won’t fit together, then, check your premisses. And I don’t mean checking just your obvious premisses. If your assumptions are obvious, then probably you’ll have already checked them.

If you’re still puzzled after checking your obvious premisses, then dig deeper: what basic assumptions did you make? Did you assume that others

were honest? Did you assume that you knew their goals? Did you assume that somebody cared about you, or your goals, or what you consider to be the normal goals of normal people? Did you assume that someone else gave a damn?

Again, Dear: when something makes no sense to you, check your premisses. Of course, maybe you'll find that some things still don't make sense (I still can't figure out why your grandmother...). But, Dear, if you work at it, you'll probably be able to make sense of most things. You may find that some things (people, processes, proposals, puzzles...) are quite complex (why people want to believe in their gods, what's going on in their brains, how this universe came into existence, why your grandmother...) and, in some cases, you may decide that your time is more important than understanding such complexities. But, Dear, if understanding them is sufficiently important to you, then keep digging until you understand: especially, dig out and evaluate all your premisses.

And if you're now thinking something similar to “**Talk about confusion, talk about not making any sense, talk about pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that don't fit!**”, then, Dear, now that I've finished still another test of your patience, let me get to my point, dealing with the Bible and why I plan to cut short my “questioning revelations” in the rest of the Old Testament.

If you will read the OT carefully, I'm sure that, sooner-or-later, somewhere-or-other in your reading, you'll stop yourself with something similar to: “**Hey, wait a minute; there's somethin' wrong here; this doesn't make sense!**” When that happens, then first, Dear, welcome to the club, and second, check your premisses. What did you assume?

- Did you assume that the Bible was “God's holy words”?
- Did you assume that you were reading revelations from God?
- Did you assume that God himself directed the pens of the clerics?
- Did you assume that God inspired the clerical authors of the Bible?
- Did you assume that the Bible describes how God guided an ancient people?
- Did you assume that the Bible was true?
- Did you assume that the Bible accurately describes history?

- Did you assume that the events depicted actually occurred?
- Did you assume that the clerical authors faithfully recorded the facts?
- Did you assume that the clerical authors' motive was to convey God's words?
- Did you assume that the clerics sought to guide the people for the people's benefit?
- Did you assume that the clerics gave a damn, either about truth or about people?
- Did you assume that God exists?

What data support such premisses?

Now, Dear, it's quite a challenge to provide you with sufficient data so you could make more reasonable assumptions (than those that, above, I hinted you might have made). I'll try to provide you some relevant data in the excursion **Yx**, dealing with "Your Indoctrination in the Mountainous God Lie". In the rest of this chapter, I want to try to give you just some general guidance and a glimpse of the total picture.

GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR EVALUATING ASSUMPTIONS

One item for a list entitled "general guidance" (besides strongly recommending that you check your premisses!) is that I again recommend that you frequently ask the critically important question: "What's the objective?" Another item of "general guidance" that I again recommend is that you be careful about how you pose your questions.

In earlier chapters, I hope that I adequately illustrated the importance of the question: "What's the objective?" For example, near the start of this book I addressed the question: What's the prime objective of humans? – and I trust that you've seen how my answer to that question (that we all pursue a trio of survival goals) has permeated the entire book. Yet, let me try to "hammer the point home", once again, this time by trying to show you why I consider it to be pointless for me to try to continue to review policies advocated in the OT.

My point is this: it can be extremely difficult (if not impossible) to understand advocated policies until you know the purpose they purport to serve. Thus, for the case of the story about my experiences at work, I

* Go to other chapters *via*

couldn't understand the traitor's policies until I saw that his purpose was to grab my program; once I saw that, his policies made sense to me.

Similarly, Dear, pray tell: how can anyone understand the policy advocated by Moses in his "farewell address" (in effect: "It ain't gonna do any good, but anyway, go ahead and murder all the people living peacefully on their land") – unless one knows the objective of the clerical authors who claimed to be speaking for Moses? And then, Dear, once you see the objectives of the clerics, then all the rest of their crazy policies (religious intolerance, sexism, slavery, racism, barbarism...) begin to make sense.

The other item in the category of "general guidance", mentioned above, is: be careful about how you pose your questions. For example, if you agree that to understand any group of policies, it's useful to first understand objectives, then be careful about how you seek to determine objectives. In particular, if you ask "What's the purpose of the Old Testament?", then be prepared to find some "wild and woolly answers" – because the question isn't properly posed. That is, Dear, books don't have purposes – people do.

If you want an illustration of that point, Dear, then I invite you to type into a good internet "search engine" the phrase "purpose of the Old Testament". You'll get thousands of "hits" – and you'll be buffeted by stupidity! Again, Dear: books don't have purposes, people do. If you then ask something similar to "What are the purposes to which people have put the Old Testament?", then you can start to gain some understanding of what otherwise appear to be absolutely crazy policies.

Before I demonstrate that claim, let me list a few purposes to which various groups of people have put (or wanted to put) the Old Testament (OT).

- From my experience as a boy in need of toilet paper for our out-house, I know a useful (and highly appropriate) purpose for the OT (and, for that matter, all "holy books"). For people with indoor plumbing, however, I wouldn't recommend the use, because I suspect that modern "flush toilets" are sufficiently "intelligent" that they, too, wouldn't let so much garbage pass.
- Modern-day Christian and Mormon clerics, in contrast (!), identify the purpose of the OT to be essential "background information" about the nature of God and his plans to produce a son, Jesus, by raping a virgin (subsequently to become Joseph's wife). This "purpose" can provide non-Christians and non-Mormons with substantial amusement – at least for those people who are immune to the pains suffered by so many who were tortured and murdered for refusing to accept such idiotic notions.

- Modern-day pious Zionists (i.e., those religious fanatics who support re-establishing a “Jewish homeland” in the land of the Canaanites) use the OT to “support” their claim that the land (which even their god said belonged to the Canaanites!) in fact belongs to them. This use of the OT can also provide sane humans with substantial amusement – tempered, however, by the pain of seeing so many people murdered in the land of the Canaanites by people whose brain functions are extremely rudimentary, i.e., both Jewish zealots, who don’t see the illogic in their claims, and Palestinians, who don’t have the courage to state that God (aka Allah) never had the right to expropriate someone else’s land.
- Looking further back, spanning approximately 2400 years since the OT was written, the purposes to which the Israelites (and of course their clerics) have put the OT have been really quite amazing. Throughout almost that entire time period, without having a nation of their own (courtesy the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Muslims, and Christians), the Israelites have used the OT (and their enemies!) essentially to define themselves: of course as “the chosen people”, but also to define their rituals, customs, and laws, as well as what they’ve been conned into believing is their history. Similar to little boys who, in their make-believe world, establish a “good-guys club” (but different, in that the Israelites had no home to which to return, where mothers and fathers have a way of returning kids to reality!), pious Jews have continued to play their make-believe games for approximately 100 generations! Fortunately for humanity, some of the brightest among them (Spinoza, Freud, Maslow, Einstein, Feynman, and many others, including Emma Goldman and Emmy Noether) realized that the game was silly and chose to rejoin the rest of humanity – thereby, not only demonstrating they recognized that they were the same as the rest of us but also demonstrating (through their accomplishments) that, in many ways, they were far superior to the vast majority of us!

But beyond the above, there are two really quite astounding purposes to which the OT were put – by the clerical authors who wrote the New Testament (NT) and by the clerical authors who, in the first place, wrote the OT. In a nutshell, the purpose (similar for both groups of clerics) was simply propaganda – perpetrating what are politely called “priestly fabrications” (but which in plainer English are called “lies”) for the priests’ purpose of gaining power over the people.

Now, Dear, immediately I should caution you that I can’t justify that last statement without showing you as evidence a great deal of “background information”. In the chapters to follow dealing with the NT, I’ll show you at least a little of such evidence and provide references to where you can find more; in **Yx**, I’ll show you more. In the remainder of this chapter, what I want to do is show you just a first glimpse of the total picture.

A GLIMPSE AT THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE OF THE OT

To provide you with at least a glimpse of the original purpose of the OT, I'd like to mention an analogy that comes to mind. I do so somewhat hesitatingly, because then, I'll necessarily be glancing at the OT from a historical perspective (which I've advertised that I'd be avoiding, in favor of a policy or "quintessential" perspective) and because, generally, I'm not keen on analogies (since they're necessarily incomplete and their details can easily confuse more than clarify). Nonetheless, I'll suggest: trying to understand the policies advocated in the OT is like trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle.

As I've also already mentioned, many of the pieces of this puzzle just don't seem to fit. Depending on details, various failures to fit can be (switching the analogy) the last straw that breaks the camel's back – causing the puzzler to want to chuck the whole dam jigsaw puzzle into the trash. But, as I've also already written, if objectives can be discerned, if the purposes of the people who created the puzzle can be understood, then the pieces begin to fit together. And though it'll take me many chapters to justify my description of these purposes, below I'll provide at least a glimpse of the picture that's on the cover of the box containing the jigsaw puzzle, which in words would be something similar to:

The Bible isn't God's "holy word", it contains no "divine revelations", it isn't history... it's propaganda!

In outline, the OT's origin appears to be roughly as follows. From the evidence sketched later, it appears that about 800 years after Moses lived (if he ever did!), when a group of Israelites were living in Babylon (sticking together because they had a common language, common customs, and a group of fables, legends, and stories about their past), the priests among them became enamored by many aspects of the religion of their conquerors, the Persians. At about this time, the technology needed for creating books became available to a group of priests, apparently led by Ezra. So, they set themselves the task (at which they were successful) of writing a book (the majority of the OT) to convince the Israelites that their "true God" wasn't their old, vengeful, volcano god, one of many gods and jealous of the other gods, but instead was (or should be!) a new, improved god, creator and ruler of the universe, i.e., the Persians' god.

Thus, one principal purpose of the clerics was to convert the Israelites from their old religion to a version of the Persian religion: they kept enough of the old stories so the Israelites would think the new religion was the religion that their forefathers had practiced all along. To that end, they gathered together a bunch of old myths, legends, stories, and songs and wrote a “propaganda pamphlet” to promote their version of the Persian religion – a piece of propaganda (including the faked Pentateuch allegedly written by Moses) that they passed off on the unsuspecting Israelites as their history.

Again, Dear, I can’t show you the justification for the above conclusion without showing you substantial background information. Nonetheless, it’s relatively easy to show you at least two critical features of the above “picture”, namely, that Ezra was a liar and that Ezra and Co-Conspirators (which I’ll abbreviate to Ezra & C-C) were the authors of what they claimed were the laws of Moses. Below, I’ll start with the demonstration that Ezra was a liar.

Ezra’s Lies about Cyrus the Great

Approximately three generations after Nebuchadnezzar overran Israel and took some of their leaders to Babylon as prisoners, the king of Persia, Cyrus the Great, conquered Babylon in 539 BCE – and then treated the Israelites amazingly well. Specifically, as reported in the Bible’s *Book of Ezra 1*, 1–4 (quoted here from the King James Version of the Bible):

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia... the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it also in writing* [italics added] , saying:

“Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, the LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.”

Thus, rather foolishly, Ezra (who, himself, comes into this story two generations of kings later) wrote in the above quotation (or subsequent clerics who rewrote the *Book of Ezra* wrote) that Cyrus “**put it** [the proclamation] **also in writing.**” That’s rather foolish, because if a person is going to “stretch the truth”, then generally, it’s not a good idea to lie about something for which conflicting evidence might become available!

And it has. On the internet, Dear, you can see photographs of a clay “barrel” called the “Cylinder of Cyrus” (or search for the “Chart of Cyrus”), and

although parts of it are damaged, the following is what you can find on the internet to be the translation of Cyrus' proclamation. To this translation, I've added *the italics* and the comments in brackets [such as these]; I assume the translator added the comments shown both in parentheses (such as these), perhaps as explanation, and in "curly brackets" {such as these}, I assume to provide expected translations of damaged or missing text.

All other kings of the entire world [states Cyrus], from the Upper to the Lower Sea, those who are seated in throne rooms, (those who) live in other {types of buildings as well as} all the kings of the West land living in tents [possibly meaning the Arabs or the Israelites], brought their heavy tributes and kissed my feet in Babylon (Su.an.na). (As to the region) from... as far as Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnunna, the towns Zamban, Me-Turnu, Der as well as the region of the Gutians, *I returned to (these) sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris, the sanctuaries of which have been ruins for a long time, the images which (used) to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I (also) gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations. Furthermore, I resettled upon the command of Marduk, the great LORD, all the gods of Sumer and Akkad whom Nabonidus has brought into Babylon (Su.an.na) to the anger of the LORD of the gods [Marduk] unharmed, in their (former) chapels, the places which made them happy.*

May all the gods whom I have resettled in their sacred cities ask daily Bel and Nebo for a long life for me and may they recommend me (to him); to Marduk, my LORD, they may say this: "Cyrus, the king who worships you, and Cambyses, his son..." ...all of them I settled in a peaceful place ducks and doves... I endeavored to fortify/repair their dwelling places... (six lines destroyed).

Thus, this original of Cyrus' proclamation paints a picture very different from the one described in the Bible. The picture painted in the OT is that Cyrus recognized the Hebrew god Yahweh as the "chief god". Thus as I quoted above from *Ezra 1, 2* (quoted here from the New English Bible):

This is the word of Cyrus king of Persia: "The LORD the God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah."

But, Dear, as you can see from the Cylinder of Cyrus, that's not what Cyrus wrote! Cyrus clearly states that the Sumerian or Babylonian god Marduk was "the king of the gods", and that it was Marduk, not Yahweh, who wanted all the "lesser gods" (such as Yahweh) returned to their cities. Therefore, Dear, in case there were any doubt previously, certainly now there's no doubt that the OT has terribly corrupted the historical record of what actually happened. That is, Ezra lied.

Ezra & C-C Concocted the Stories about Moses

As for my demonstration that Ezra and Co-Conspirators (Ezra & C-C) created the propaganda piece called the Pentateuch (i.e., the first five books of the OT), actually, it isn't my claim: it says so in the Bible! And yes, Dear, you bet I realize that nothing in the Bible should be taken "on faith", but I don't see how it could have been anything but the clerics' own ego (and stupidity) that led them to indict themselves!

But in any case, both "the faithful" and I can find in the OT: 1) that Ezra was given his authority, not by God, but by his boss, King Artaxerxes of Persia and 2) that Ezra "laid down the law" (allegedly written by Moses) on the poor Israelites, who apparently had never heard about such laws before. To see details, start at *Ezra 7*, 11–26 (quoted here from the KJV):

Now this is the copy of the letter that the King Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel:

"Artaxerxes, king of kings [known to be a Zoroastrian], unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven...

"I make a decree... Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counselors, to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to *the law of thy God which is in thine hand* [italics added]... And thou, Ezra, after *the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand* [italics added], set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know [the laws] not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment."

If that's true (and I don't know if it is, because I don't know if the original of this "letter" has been found), then it's really quite amazing: the king of Persia, Artaxerxes, who ruled the largest empire the world had ever known, gave Ezra absolutely sweeping powers, not only to teach the Israelites "the law" (which apparently was contained in a book "in thine hand") but also to enforce this law in any way Ezra saw fit "whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment." And as described in *Nehemiah 8*, 1–18, Ezra proceeded to do exactly what his boss, the Persian king Artaxerxes, told him to do:

When the seventh month came, and the Israelites were now settled in their towns, the people assembled... and Ezra the scribe was asked to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had enjoined upon Israel. On the first day of the seventh month [‘seven’ is a “sacred number”, doncha know!], Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly... [He just happened to have a complete copy of the laws of Moses, from 800-or-so years earlier!] He read from it... from early morning till noon... all the people listened attentively to the book of the law. Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform made for the purpose, and beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah [co-authors (or better, co-conspirators)] on his right hand; and on his left [other co-authors (or better, co-conspirators) – all needed to show the people that the priests were united in their conspiracy, were] Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchiah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam... And day by day, from the first day to the last, the book of the law of God was read...

Now, Dear, I admit that I’m worried that showing you the above two “data points” might be inadequate for you to appreciate their significance, to see that they strongly suggest what the clerics were doing is just foisting a new religion – and more significantly, a new priesthood – on the poor Israelites. To help you see it better, consider the following, which Joseph McCabe (1867–1955) wrote in his book entitled *The Story of Religious Controversy*.²

As to Ezra, remember that he was not only a zealous priest but “a ready scribe in the law of Moses” (*Ezra* 7, 6). In fact, for once I think we shall find much food for thought in an apocryphal work (*I Esdras* 14, 22): “I [Ezra] shall write all that hath been done in the world since the beginning and the things that were written in thy law.” He (and his associates) did. The old Hebrews, admitting that he wrote the whole Pentateuch, used to say that he had “revelation” to help him. The clerical professors say that he had some mysterious fund of old materials, which he “worked up” and made to serve his purpose. What do you think? Remember, this book made the priesthood all-powerful for the first time in Judea.

But as a minimum, Dear, if you’ll entertain the possibility that the OT (or more accurately, the Pentateuch or Torah) is just history re-written as a propaganda ploy to promote a new priesthood, then I essentially guarantee you that a huge number of pieces of the jigsaw puzzle readily fall into place.

For example, if you wonder why *Genesis* contains two conflicting stories about the origin of humans, then consider the following possibility, which I outlined in a chapter in the earlier “excursion” **Ix** (namely, in Chapter **Ix5**). Thus, the second story (dealing with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, at the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates) was probably the myth that the Hebrews retold ever since they emigrated from Mesopotamia, whereas

² Available at http://www.infidels.org/library/historical/joseph_mccabe/religious_controversy/.

the other story (dealing with the first seven days and which appears first in the Bible) was the Persian version (with seven “periods” rather than seven “days”), demonstrating that the new and improved Jewish god (i.e., the Persian god) didn’t just mess around with apples, snakes, and punishing men and women for learning the difference between good and evil, but busied himself with important stuff, such as creating the universe.

Or if, Dear, similar to me, you were hung up on Moses’ farewell address, saying (in effect) “**even though it’s a complete waste of time, go ahead and exterminate the people of Palestine**”, then again, check your premiss. For me, the policy is mind boggling in its idiocy – if it were a policy proposed by Moses. But the idiocy is understandable if viewed from the perspective of Ezra & C-C, who wrote it 800 years after Moses had died. The point of their story was to convey to then-living Israelites that: 1) the prophets among us have always been able to see into the future, 2) you people have always been reluctant to follow us, even though we could see the future, 3) learn your lesson: accept the new [improved, Persian] god that we’re advocating and follow us on an exodus from Babylon to the land that Cyrus promised us, and of course, 4) the collection plates are there, near the exit; heap them heavy as you leave.

With that insight, there then seems to be some sense in the “**primary charge**” (as it’s called in the Bible) or, better, “**primary threat**” of Moses to the Jewish people (that their god would punish them for violations of “the law”). This threat is described at *Deut. 4, 25-26* as follows.

When you have children and grandchildren and grow old in the land, if you then fall into the degrading practice of making any kind of carved figure, *doing what is wrong in the eyes of the LORD your God* [italics added, for reasons to be explained] and provoking him to anger, I [Moses] summon heaven and earth to witness against you this day: you will soon vanish from the land which you are to occupy after crossing the Jordan. You will not live long in it; you will be swept away. The LORD will disperse you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations to which the LORD will lead you. There you will worship gods made by human hands out of wood and stone, gods that can neither see nor hear, neither eat nor smell.

Now, Dear, I trust you agree that this threat is clear enough, certainly clear enough for such apparently intelligent fellows as Saul, David, Solomon, and so on, all of whom lived earlier than Ezra. Yet, according to the Bible, they (and many others) ignored this warning – which the clerical authors used (in

hindsight, in their version of prophetic “vision”) to “explain” why the Israelites were punished, exactly as they claimed Moses warned.

The easiest way to see how many times the Israelites allegedly “**did wrong in the eyes of the LORD**”, that is, “sinned” (at least, according to Ezra & C-C!) is to search for “wrong in the eyes of the LORD” in a “Bible search engine” on the Internet. The result will probably “blow you away”. Some examples are the following:³

Judges 2:11, Judges 3:7, Judges 3:12, Judges 4:1, Judges 6:1, Judges 10:6, Judges 13:1, 1 Samuel 12:17, 1 Samuel 15:19, 2 Samuel 12:9, 1 Kings 11:6, 1 Kings 14:22, 1 Kings 15:5, 1 Kings 15:26, 1 Kings 16:7, 1 Kings 16:25, 1 Kings 16:30, 1 Kings 21:25, 1 Kings 22:52, 2 Kings 3:2, 2 Kings 8:18, 2 Kings 13:2, 2 Kings 13:11, 2 Kings 14:3, 2 Kings 15:9, 2 Kings 15:18, 2 Kings 15:24, 2 Kings 16:2, 2 Kings 17:2, 2 Kings 17:17, 2 Kings 21:2, 2 Kings 23:32, 2 Kings 24:9, 2 Chronicles 22:4, 2 Chronicles 28:1, 2 Chronicles 29:6, 2 Chronicles 33:2, 2 Chronicles 33:6, 2 Chronicles 33:22, and 2 Chronicles 36:5.

If you have the time, Dear, you may want to read a few of those passages. Of course, there’s some finite (but small!) probability that the OT is right: that the Jewish people were “**stupid**” and “**wicked**” and “**sinful**” and “**did what was evil in the eyes of the LORD**”. But, Dear, given the evidence that the Jewish people are pretty much the same as any other group of people, then isn’t it more likely the case that, previously, they had never heard about this “**primary charge**” from Moses? That is, if a normally intelligent people had experienced the incredible (meaning “not credible”!) miracles, such as they reportedly had experienced, and then had been given some rather simple rules (such as don’t use your pocket knife to whittle some little figurines), then would they “**do evil in the eyes of the LORD**”? Or is it a more likely that the people (and their kings) never heard of these silly little rules, and that centuries later, the priests of the Ezra-era concocted the whole thing as a propaganda-sham to promote their own interests?!

SUMMARY: A GLANCE BACK AND A GLIMPSE FORWARD

And thus, Dear, maybe you see not only why I quit working in science but also why I plan to quit reviewing the “revelations” in the OT – at least for now, until the “excursion” **Yx**, when I’ll at least begin to look at various “holy books” from a historical perspective. Thus, I think it’s pointless to

³ Obtained from (and in the reference format of) www.bible.gospelcom.net.

continue to try to review clerical policies when these policies make no sense until they're interpreted in terms of the objectives of the clerical authors.

My colleague asked me: “**What makes you think they give a damn?**” Equivalently he might have asked: “Do you understand their purposes?” And similarly I say to you: “It's pointless to try to unravel the policies described in the OT, until you understand the purposes of the clerical authors.” And once you see their purposes [namely, create a book of propaganda to promote their version of the Persian religion, to get the Jews to return from Babylon to “the promised land” (promised by Cyrus, not God!), and to gain power over the people!), then, Dear, the policies they advocated (and continue to advocate) become little more than background noise, buried in a monstrous roar of clerical greed for power and control, sought by concocting a monstrous con game.

Let me try to say it a different way. When that traitor in my life brought bogus charges against me (e.g., dealing with aircraft safety and excessive expenses), I defended myself based on the premiss that he sought safe, cost-effective, useful research. I could understand such policies, supported them, and proceeded to show whoever would pay attention that I was ardently pursuing those policies. But my premiss that I understood his purpose was wrong: the purpose he was pursuing was not safe, cost-effective, useful research but to gain control of my research project (which was the largest research project in the department). It was therefore pointless for me to point to my successes in pursuing the policies that he claimed that he, too, was pursuing: his claims were a ruse that he used in pursuit of his true objective. And similarly in the case of the apparent policies advocated in the OT: they're a ruse – concocted by the clerics in pursuit of their true purpose, namely, to gain power over the people.

So now, Dear, I have two obvious options. One is to try to show you further evidence supporting the indictment that the policies promoted in the OT are just a ruse to promote the clerics' purpose, i.e., to gain power over the people. But, Dear, I guarantee that you don't want me to lead you that way – at least not yet – because it's truly a “mountainous task” to try to understand even just some of the clerics' skullduggery. Therefore, I plan to delay initiating that task until **Yx**, dealing with “Your Indoctrination in the Mountainous God Lie.” Nonetheless, if you're too impatient to wait 'til then (“**Who, me? Impatient?**” Yes, you, ya little skunk!), then “go for it.” But I

warn you, Dear: people have spent their entire careers digging – and still haven't dug to the full depths of the clerics' deceptions.

The other obvious option – the one I've chosen – is simply to quit going through the OT (at least for now), and proceed to dig into policies advocated in the New Testament (NT). And yes, Dear, as I'll be showing you, this choice is the familiar: jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. That is, as I'll be showing you (especially in **Yx**), the NT is another monstrous "priestly fabrication": upon seeing all the booty that the Jewish clerics collected from their sham (the OT), a new group of clerics (Christian clerics) "grabbed some of the action" by fabricating their own "holy book" (the NT) and the "butcher emperor" Constantine and subsequent popes used the clerical concoction to solidify their power.

And so on it went. Muslim clerics found that a mint could be made out of the alleged "divine revelations" given to Muhammad. Subsequently, clerics of other Christian denominations saw that they could put new spins on the NT. Eventually (would that it could be said "finally"!) still another breed of clerics, starting with Joseph Smith, Jr. found that they could make a fortune promoting a concoction by Sidney Rigdon called The Book of Mormon (in which you were unfortunately indoctrinated). And in every case it's the same: nothing but propaganda created for the benefit of clerics.

But I'll show you more of that later in this **Qx** and in **Yx**. For the next chapter, my plan is to start digging into policies promoted in the New Testament (NT). To prepare for that, please read the first "gospel" in the NT (viz., "the Gospel according to Mathew") – after you get some exercise!