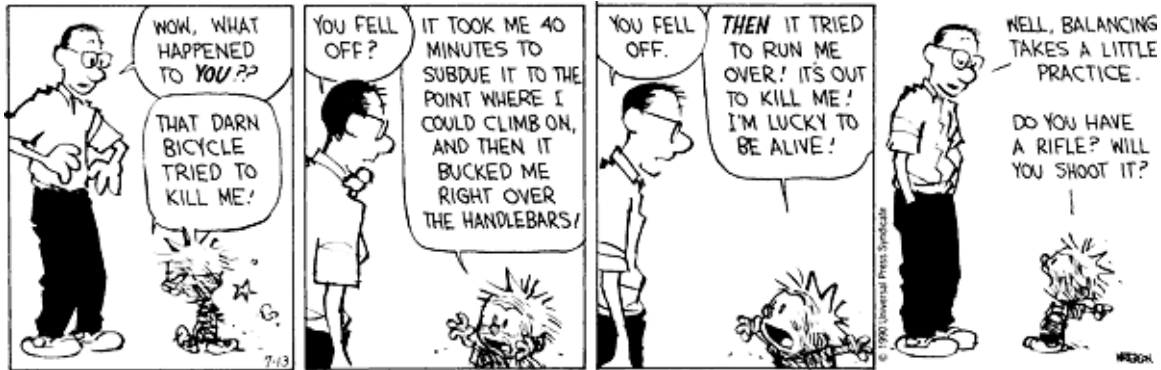


## *Yx6 – Little Boys with their Tall Tales*

Clerics with their “holy books” are a lot like little boys with their tall tales. It reminds me of a Calvin and Hobbes strip (© Bill Watterson):



We're not like that!

Riiiiight. What about all the stories you clerics made up, for example, your stories in the Bible?

They're not “stories”; we didn't make them up; they're God's holy truth!

Sure they are – no doubt starting with (at *Genesis 1, 1*):

In the beginning of creation, when God made heaven and earth, the earth was without form and void...

Absolutely.

Riiiiight. How do you know what happened? Even in your story, nobody was there until the sixth day. So, if there were no people until the sixth day, how could you know what happened during the first five days?

God was there.

Riiiiight – and he told you?

That's right.

And how do you know it was God who told you?

We just know.

Riiiiight – and even if God did tell you, how do you know he was telling the truth?

God doesn't lie!

Oh, really? The creation sequence given in the Bible is a lie. Data show that, in reality and for the limited creativity described: first [during the claimed "fourth day"] came the stars, which produced the heavy elements for our earth; then came the (dry) earth [the claimed "third day"]; next (after gravitational pressure heated the Earth's interior, creating magma and releasing hydrates in rocks) came water [the claimed "first day" and "second day"]; and next came plants and animals in the sea [the claimed "fifth day"] and then plants and animals on land [the claimed "third day"].

God doesn't lie.

Really? How about when he allegedly told Adam (at *Genesis 2, 17*) that if he ate fruit from the tree of knowledge, then "on the day that you eat from it, you will certainly die"; yet, at *Genesis 5, 5*, we're told that Adam continued to live for another 930 years? And how about when he told Cain (at *Genesis 4, 13*), "You shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on earth", and yet, at *Genesis 4, 17–24*, we learn that Cain settled down in a city and had a family? That means God lied to both Adam and Cain; so, how do you know he wasn't lying about what happened during the first days of creation?

Maybe God can change his mind and change data, but he doesn't lie.

Riiiiight... somebody's lying. Any chance it could be you clerics?

No way.

Riiiiight. Then tell me, what's with all this stuff about the Garden of Eden.

Whaddy mean "stuff"?

Well, you say (at *Genesis 3, 13*), "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and care for it."

That's right.

So Adam, the first man, was a farmer?

That's right.

Riiiiight. So, what about the couple of hundred thousand years before humans were farmers – when they were hunters and gatherers?

Maybe so, but Adam was a farmer.

Riiiiight. Says who?

Says God!

Says who?! And then, look at this nonsense about Cain.

What “nonsense”?

Well, *Genesis 4, 19* says that the sixth-generation son after Cain (the seventh after Adam), Tubal-Cain, was “the master of all coppersmiths and blacksmiths.”

That's right.

Sure it is. So in seven generations, humans somehow leaped through a million or more years of the Stone Ages, right into the Bronze Age?

That's what God said.

Riiiiight. You're just making this stuff up.

Uh, huh.

So, you're sticking to your story (at *Genesis 5, 3*) that Adam was 130 years old when he fathered his third son, Seth (the first two being Cain and Abel)?

It's what God said.

Sure he did. And “after the birth of Seth, he lived 800 years, and had other sons and daughters.”

That’s what happened.

Sure it did – but tell me, what would be the advantage to Adam and Eve to have two children (Cain and Abel) as soon as possible and then not to have another child until they were 130 years old?

Humans gain wisdom with age.

Maybe some do, but before humans had the wisdom to develop contraception, genetic “wisdom” dictated that sexual reproduction was the best way for genes to continue, taking advantage of random mutations that could overcome changing environmental and biological conditions.

Not in the beginning.

Do you have any data to support your claim?

Sacred scripture says it’s so.

Riiiiight. In *Genesis 5* you claim that each guy, starting with Seth, lived: 912 years, 905 years, 910 years, 895 years, 962 years, 365 years, 969 years, and then 777 years for Noah. And the finale for you: Noah had triplets (Shem, Ham, and Japheth), or maybe got three of his wives pregnant the same year, when he was exactly 500 years old. You’re just pulling numbers out of your hats – and big numbers at that, to try to make it appear that a long time elapsed. Your stories are like those concocted by four year olds!

It’s God’s holy truth!

It’s not “truth”; it’s childish nonsense. You’re obviously searching for a solution to a nonproblem: DNA molecules have no use for old, worn-out hosts after they’ve reproduced and done what they can to help the next generation.

Maybe now, but not then.

Oh, ya, I forgot. That was when (according to *Genesis 6, 2*): “The sons of the gods saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; so they took for themselves such women as they chose.”

That’s right.

Really? Well, after you tell us how many gods there were, maybe you’d explain why the “sons of gods” were permitted to rape the “daughters of men”.

Who said anything about rape?

Well it sounds as if you’ve forgotten your own tall tale. At *Genesis 6, 6*, you say: “In those days, when the sons of the gods had intercourse with the daughters of men and got children by them, the Nephilim were on earth. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.”

We didn’t forget. That’s the way it was.

Riiiiight. Adults call it rape. And maybe even your God considered it bad, since you tell us (at *Genesis 6, 5*): “When the Lord saw that man had done much evil on earth [what did he expect, when the sons of god were raping the daughters of men?!] and that his thoughts and inclinations were always evil [no wonder, with such examples set by the gods!], he [God] was sorry that he had made man on earth, and he was grieved at heart.”

Again, that’s just the way it was.

Riiiiight. So, your god was “grieved at heart”. And you claim (*Genesis 6, 7*):

He [Yahweh] said, “This race of men whom I have created, I will wipe them off the face of the earth – man and beast, reptile and birds. I am sorry that I ever made them.”

That means that your god admits that he made a mistake; so, he isn’t omniscient: if he were, he would have known how humans would have turned out.

No way: God knows everything!

Well, then, if he does, he's evil. If he were omniscient, then he would have known that Adam and Eve would eat fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; so, if your god were omniscient, then that means it was a set-up: his goal was to kick the kids out from the Garden of Eden.

No way! God would have let them stay, but they didn't obey him.

It really would help if you boys wouldn't be so silly. Here, try to see it from another example. If your god were omniscient, then he would have known that Cain would kill Abel; so, your omniscient god was an accomplice in Abel's murder.

No way! Cain killed Abel, not God!

Oh little boys, try thinking for a change. Here, try it one more time: if your god were omniscient, then he would have known how "the race of men" would turn out; so, his decision to "wipe them off the face of the earth [even the innocent little birds and bees and bunnies!]", can mean only one of two things: 1) he's not omniscient, or 2) his goal all along was to kill everybody. So, if as you claim he's omniscient, then he's evil.

No way! They were bad people.

No, yours is a bad god. Sin mastered him, just as he allegedly said (at *Genesis 4, 7*):

"If you do well, you are accepted; if not, sin is demon crouching at the door. It shall be eager for you, and you will be mastered by it."

And now, at *Genesis 6, 8*, God admits that he didn't do well: "he [God] was sorry that he had made man on earth, and he was grieved at heart." So, sin (crouching at his door) "mastered" him.

No one can master God!

Sorry, boys, but sin obviously did master him. Look what he plans to do because of his admitted mistake: he plans to kill everyone and every living thing. Mistake after mistake; so, sin is the master of your god.

God isn't sinful! He didn't eliminate "everyone and every living thing." He saved Noah and the animals in the Ark.

Yah, right. He said he would kill "everyone and every living thing" and then he didn't do it. So, he lied again.

God doesn't lie: he changed his mind – because Noah was a good man.

Oh, sure, and why was Noah judged to be good?

Just as the Bible says (at *Genesis 6, 9*): "Noah was a righteous man, the one blameless man of his time..."

Riiiiight. And we soon learn (at *Genesis 7, 5*) what "righteous" means to you clerics: "Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him."

That's right.

Yah, right: a righteous person obeys – you clerics.

Not us! Righteous people obey God. Adam and Eve didn't obey God, but Noah did.

Oh, sure, and you clerics just happen to be the spokesmen for God; so, people better obey what you say – cause you speak for God.

We simply relay what God Almighty said.

Sure you do – like this silly story about God flooding the whole Earth.

It's not a "silly story"; it's God's holy truth.

Riiiiight – and no doubt for some amazing reason, it just happens to be the same as the Sumerian flood myths from approximately 2,000 years earlier, about Ziusudra<sup>1</sup> or Atrahasis,<sup>2</sup> outlined in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., [http://www.livius.org/ei-er/eridu/eridu\\_genesis.html](http://www.livius.org/ei-er/eridu/eridu_genesis.html).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood3-t-atrahasis.html>.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., <http://zenofzero.net/docs/Ix06Gilgamesh.pdf>.

That's not so! They're not the same!

Well, okay, I admit that: like all little boys with their stories growing taller in the telling, you've made the numbers bigger. For example, instead of raining for seven days and seven nights, you pushed the numbers up to 40 days and 40 nights. But otherwise, the stories are so similar<sup>4</sup> that only a cleric would claim that the Noah story isn't plagiarism.

There's much more than that that's different!

Oh, yes, I agree. For one, you changed the names of the principal character. Thus, as given in *The Ancient Near East: A History* (Harcourt Brace, Orlando, 1998, p. 32) by William W. Hallo and William Kelly Simpson:

In the earliest Sumerian version, he appears as Ubar-Tutu, “friend of the god Tutu”, or as Ziusudra [or Zisudra or Zi-ud-sura], “life of long days”. Later he is simply (and perhaps erroneously) called after his city, Shuruppak [or Curuppak or son of Shuruppak, now the city of Tall Fa'rah in Iraq]. The earliest Akkadian sources call him Atar-hasis, “exceeding wise”, while the later ones, incorporated in the canonical Gilgamesh epic, refer to him as Uta-napishtam, “he has found (everlasting) life.” In the Bible his name is Noah.

Also, and more significantly, you distorted the moral of the original Sumerian myth.

No way! We didn't “distort” anything.

Riiiiight. In the original flood myth, the *Atrahasis Epic*, Enlil (“Lord of the Wind”, similar to Woden of Wednesday fame) decided to drown everyone, because people made too much noise: “The noise of mankind {has become too intense for me; with their uproar} I am deprived of sleep.” But Enki (“Lord of the Earth”) alerted Atrahasis to the deluge, advising him to build a barge to save his family and “creatures of the steppe”.

The moral of the original myth appears after Enlil was reprimanded by the god Ea (the protector of humans), who showed some sense of justice (as given in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, with italics added):

Then with these words Ea himself said to Enlil: “Sly god, sky darkener, and tough fighter, how dare you drown so many little people without consulting me? *Why not*

---

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood6-parallels.html>.



*just kill the one who offended you; drown only the sinner? Keep hold of his life cord; harness his destiny. Rather than killing rains, set cats at people's throats. Rather than killing rains, set starvation on dry, parched throats. Rather than killing rains, set sickness on the minds and hearts of people."*

*Ea opened his mouth to speak, saying to valiant Enlil: "Thou wisest of the gods, thou hero, how couldst thou, unreasoning, bring on the deluge? On the sinner impose his sin. On the transgressor impose his transgression! (Yet) be lenient, lest he be cut off. Be patient, lest he be dislodged. Instead of thy bringing on the deluge, would that a lion had risen up to diminish mankind! Instead of thy bringing on the deluge, would that a wolf had risen up to diminish mankind! Instead of thy bringing on the deluge, would that a famine had risen up to lay low mankind! Instead of thy bringing on the deluge, would that pestilence had risen up to smite down mankind! "*

But besides that tremendous moral ("on the transgressor impose his transgression!"), the moral of the entire story was that, in the post-flood world, to overcome problems caused by overpopulation, some birth control policies would be initiated:

*"In addition, let there be a third category among the peoples; among the peoples women who bear and women who do not bear. Let there be among the peoples the Pashittu-demon to snatch the baby from the lap of her who bore it. Establish Ugbabtu-women, Entu-women, and Igisitu-women and let them be taboo and so stop childbirth."*

Well, God's opposed to birth control and abortion.

Well, I don't know about God, but I can understand why you clerics are opposed: birth control cuts down on the number of people you clerics control – and on your revenue stream. So, you changed the sensible moral of the plagiarized myth to something more fitting for your plan to rule the Jewish people, specifically (starting at *Genesis 9, 5*):

*...for your life-blood, I will demand satisfaction; from every animal I will require it, and from a man also I will require satisfaction for the death of his fellow man... But you must be fruitful and increase [just keep popping out the babies, until our coffers our overflowing], swarm throughout the earth and rule over it.*

That's what God wants: women are to produce babies and men are to rule.

Riiiiight. It reminds me of another Calvin and Hobbes strip (© Bill Watterson):



And just as fanciful as Calvin's imagined tiger is the imagined flood concocted by you childish clerics. It never happened.

It did so!

Oh? Why don't you look at some data: the Greenland ice-core data<sup>5</sup> show that no worldwide flood occurred during the past 100,000 years. Besides, though, it couldn't happen: rain occurs after water evaporates from the oceans (there is no leaky vault in the heavens!); so, the more it rained, the more the sea level would drop. Have you ever heard of the hydrological cycle?

If God wanted to flood the whole earth, he could do it – and it would have been easy for him to eliminate the record in the Greenland ice-core data. God is all-powerful!

Riiiiight. If he's omnipotent, then rather than kill essentially everyone, why didn't he just wave his magic wand (or whatever) and make people better?

Who can fathom the wisdom of God?

Well, I don't know about that, but a lot of people can fathom the "wisdom" of you clerics: you want to rule. But tell me, if your God is so omniscient, why does he need a rainbow to remind him not to flood the earth again (*Genesis 9, 14*):

"... the bow shall be seen in the cloud. Then will I remember the covenant which I have made between myself and you and living things of every kind. Never again shall the waters become a flood to destroy all living creatures. When I see it, it will

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., <http://www.asa3.org/aSA/PSCF/2003/PSCF12-03Seely.pdf>.

remind me of the everlasting covenant between God and living things on earth of every kind.”

It may not bother you little boys that you don't understand the cause of rainbows, but doesn't it bother you, at least a little, that your God needs a rainbow to remind himself not to flood the earth?!

God works in mysterious ways.

There's nothing mysterious about this. It's a silly story concocted by childish, conniving clerics who'd rather rule than work for a living.

There's nothing “conniving” about it; it's the way it happened! God is all knowing, all-powerful, and all good.

He's not omnipotent: he needs to take a rest after six days of naming things. He's not omniscient: he keeps making mistakes. And not only is he not omnibenevolent, he's evil: he tromps on the spirit of humanity.

No way!

Yes, way. Look at the central theme of your entire story: in it, everything deteriorates. You start with an omniscient, omnipotent, omni-this-than-and-the-other-thing god, plus the perfect Garden of Eden, and people living for almost a thousand years; from then on, it's downhill all the way (punishing Adam and Eve, Cain murdering Abel, the sons of the gods raping the daughter of men, God drowning essentially every living thing).

That's the way it happened!

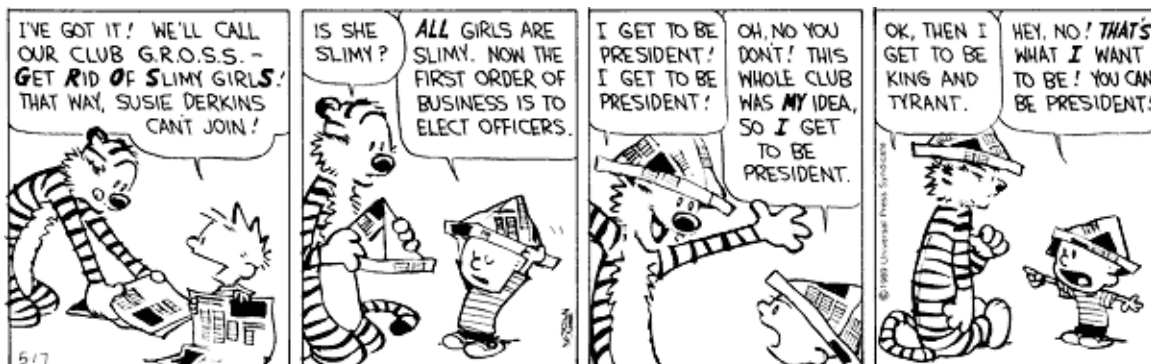
It never did and it never will! With no thanks to you childish, conniving clerics of the world, and instead, with all thanks to the accomplishments of humans, it's been exactly the opposite: as hunters and gathers humans barely survived, humans advanced to agricultural and civilizations, and in spite of setbacks from you ignorant clerics and damnable tyrants, humans have continued to progress – all, exactly opposite from what you've concocted in your damnable stories of all your “holy books”.

That's not God's view.

Riiiiight – and I suppose you otta know: since you foolish little boys concocted your gods, then I guess it’s reasonable that you claim to know God’s views. In your childish worldview, humanity “devolved” (from the original glorious state established by your gods to the current state of “abomination”), and in your imaginative plans, you’ll re-establish the former glorious state of the gods, to form what you disingenuously call a ‘theocracy’ (‘disingenuous’, since it won’t be the gods in control but you clerics). In reality, in contrast, humanity has evolved and we’ll continue to evolve – assuming we can eliminate all the damnable gods of all you childish clerics.

We’re not childish – we know the truth.

Oh, sure. You claim “to know” simply by “revelation”; we struggle to know by the scientific method. You claim you represent and honor your gods; we seek to honor and help our fellow humans. You call yourselves ‘theists’ and negate us with your word ‘atheists’; we see ourselves as scientific humanists and could justifiably negate you as unscientific antihumans – unscientific antihumans who plan to rule, just as Bill Watterson saw:



Thus, Ahmadinejad and Bush became merely presidents. And thus, Isaac Asimov’s denouncement and his resentment:

Imagine the people who believe such things and who are not ashamed to ignore, totally, all the patient findings of thinking minds through all the centuries since the Bible was written. And it is these ignorant people, the most uneducated, the most unimaginative, the most unthinking among us, who would make themselves the guides and leaders of us all; who would force their feeble and childish beliefs on us; who would invade our schools and libraries and homes. I personally resent it bitterly...

### But at least we can hope that Freud was right:

While the different religions wrangle with one another as to which of them is in possession of the truth, in our view the truth of religion may be altogether disregarded. Religion is an attempt to get control over the sensory world, in which we are placed, by means of the wish-world, which we have developed inside us as a result of biological and psychological necessities. But it cannot achieve its end. Its doctrines carry with them the stamp of the times in which they originated, the ignorant childhood days of the human race. Its consolations deserve no trust. Experience teaches us that the world is not a nursery...

If one attempts to assign to religion its place in man's evolution, it seems not so much to be a lasting acquisition, as a parallel to the neurosis which the civilized individual must pass through on his way from childhood to maturity.