

UK BIBLE STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

Mid-July 2010

Scripture citations are to the British-English version of the New International Version (NIV-UK), unless noted..

CONSERVATION: The Christian and the Environment (Part 1 of 2)

By A. Prentice

I see a world in the future in which we understand that all life is related to us and we treat that life with great humility and respect. [David Suzuki, Canadian geneticist, environmentalist, broadcaster]

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. [Genesis 2: 15]

The Garden of Eden and man's place in it, was a model for the future. Adam's job was to till the soil and keep a watchful eye on this prototypal landscape, an environment which would provide his food and other resources essential to a happy, perfect life. We now can only guess at what that hope-filled future would have been. Man's expulsion from that place sounded the death knell for earth's one and only paradise, and he has been trying to come to terms with unruly Nature ever since.

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Q&A

Question: How may one reconcile Matthew 12: 30 with Mark 9: 40?

Matthew 12: 30: *'He who is not with me is against me, . . .'*

Mark 9: 40: *'[W]hoever is not against us is for us.'*

Answer: The context of each passage gives a clue to the understanding of these seemingly contradictory statements.

Prior to our Lord's declaration recorded in Matthew 12: 30, the Pharisees had attacked Him for doing good: 'eating' on the Sabbath (vs. 1-8), and healing on the Sabbath (vs. 9-14). So vindictive were they towards Him that they contemplated His assassination (v. 14).

In response, Jesus went to a different locality to continue His healing (vs. 15-21). The Pharisees followed, and when He healed the demoniac they accused Him of working for the very devil He was exorcising (vs. 22-29). It was at this juncture that Jesus condemned their wilful interference, launching into a harsh assessment of their unsympathetic motives and set forth the consequences of opposing His ministry (vs. 31-45).

In Mark 9: 40, Jesus responds to the officiousness of His own disciples who had censured the man casting out demons by His authority because he did not belong to their inner circle ('he was not one of us', v. 38). Our Lord's response, 'Do not stop him' (v. 39), was open-handed. His words recorded in v. 41, 'anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ', serve both as a rebuke to those sectarian Christians who deny salvation to any not associated with their particular grouping; and, additionally, as an encouragement that anyone who recognises Christ as

Saviour and King is justified by faith, regardless of doctrinal creed. A foreshadowing of this magnanimity can be found in the words of Moses, recorded in Numbers 11: 29 (link [here](#)).

IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

1938: Canada

Pierre Berton, *The Great Depression* (1990; McClelland & Stewart Inc., Toronto), 471, 472.

‘[I]t was almost impossible for any Jewish refugee to leap the barrier that the Immigration Branch had erected against the Jews. At the beginning of the year, Jewish refugees were required to have capital of at least five thousand dollars on entering the country. By December the department was rejecting those who had twenty thousand or more. Just before Hitler seized Czechoslovakia, a group of Jewish farm families with a total capital of one million dollars begged for entry visas. They were bluntly denied entry. . . . In Europe, where time was of the essence for anybody fleeing the Nazis, the very word “Jew” on an application form was enough to cause immediate rejection by Canadian officials. . . . Zita Plaut, who had managed to escape from Vienna to the Netherlands with her husband . . . applied for a visa to bring the couple and the rest of her family still in Germany to Canada. She told the Canadian official that the family had fifty thousand dollars in foreign currency. “Wonderful,” he said, and handed her a form. She filled it out and signed it. “Oh,” he said, “their name is Rappaport? They are Jewish? I’m sorry, we have no visas.” And he tore up the document as she watched.’

1996: USA

Robert H. Bork, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline* (1996; ReganBooks/Harper Collins, New York), 154-156.

‘The United States has surely never before experienced the social chaos and the accompanying personal tragedies that have become routine today: high rates of crime and low rates of punishment, high rates of illegitimate births subsidized by welfare, and high rates of family dissolution through no-fault divorce. These pathologies are recent, and it is now widely accepted that they are related to one another.

‘The proximate cause of these pathologies is the infatuation of modern liberalism with the individual’s right to self-gratification along with the kind of egalitarianism, largely based on guilt, that inhibits judgment and reform. These pathologies were easy to fall into and will be very difficult to climb out of. There is, in fact, no agreement about how to cure them. It may be, in fact, that a democratic nation will be unable to take the measures necessary, once we know what those measures are.

‘If radical individualism and egalitarianism are the causes, we should expect to see their various effects produced at about the same time as one another. And this is what we do see. During the same years that popular culture was becoming ever more sordid, the pathologies of divorce, illegitimacy, and crime exploded. . . . Rates of illegitimate births and the commission of serious crimes began rising together and did so at the same time in both the United States and England. . . . Crime and illegitimacy began rising rising in 1960. The men and women (or boys and girls) responsible must have been born not much later than 1945, and the culture that influenced them was that of the Forties and Fifties. The moral chaos of the universities did not become manifest until the mid-1960s. That chaos and the rhetoric and violence that went with it surely contributed to the social breakdown the crime and illegitimacy figures reflect, but they could not have caused it. This sug-

gests further that rising crime, illegitimacy, and student rebellion had a common cause. While the middle-class student radicals turned to dreams of revolution and the destruction of institutions, some of the lower classes turned to crime and sexual license, and probably for the same reasons. That fact bodes ill because it suggests a long-developing weakening of cultural constraints, constraints it will be very hard to put back in place.'

DRAGNET

Items of interest from the World Wide Web

Britain

'Printing' 3D objects

<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/10089419.stm>>

Switzerland

Solar plane completes night flight

<<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/08/2948681.htm>>

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