



THE FOUNTAIN

CHRISTIAN CHURCH



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Acts 17:11

“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, or they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”

CHANGING MY MIND ON LUKE'S GENEALOGY

Sam Sears

The longer I'm a Christian, the more grace I have for people who come to different conclusions than I do about non-salvation issues. The more I learn, the more I am forced to see how much I don't know, how many ideas I hadn't heard, and the more I am challenged by encounters with intelligent, well-read, individuals who have good reasons for why they disagree with me.

Growing up, I was initially in a denominational church that seemingly had already settled every question someone could have about Scripture. How did the end times play out? They had a chart. How did you interpret Genesis? Again, clear chart available. What did the Bible say about alcohol? The common answer: all that wine was actually just grape juice. (It wasn't by the way.) Are the gifts of the Spirit still in operation? They had a firm hard line on that answer, too, despite people I loved who fellowshipped up the road disagreeing, and yet still clearly believing all the core doctrines of our faith.

On one hand, I understand that the initial founders of that, or any, denomination, had possibly really dug in and had good reasons for their positions. I know that since then, we have had greater access to older documents and can now better understand the cultural context in which Scripture was written. In large part, I agreed with them on what might be called the "secondary" issues — not areas of salvation, but important practical conclusions drawn from the Bible. As I read more though, I encountered other questions, other views, and eventually went to Bible college and seminary where I discovered more and more that not everybody agreed on every issue and that many people just assumed their denomination or favorite teacher was right, without ever actually looking into why.

I have also grown increasingly disappointed to see some of these secondary issues becoming the focus, rather than serving Jesus and telling others about Him. I enjoy a great debate; I enjoy learning; but how much time should Christians who disagree on what a single Hebrew word can mean, spend on that discussion, given what we know from Scripture that is clearer. We have standing orders to love our brothers and sisters in Christ and to share the Gospel with those who don't yet follow Jesus, and at some point, we can ignore those clear orders to debate a small disagreement more than we should or even allow that disagreement

to keep us from true biblical unity.

While the main teachings of Scripture are clear, some passages are less obvious in meaning or application. Jerome, the 4th century church scholar, and Bible translator, noted that, "The Scriptures are shallow enough for a babe to come and drink without fear of drowning and deep enough for a theologian to swim in without ever touching the bottom." It's in some of those matters among the depths that students of Scripture find themselves in the role of a detective. We have a couple of verses here, or a hard to translate word from the original language over there, and we must carefully put the clues together to understand the author's intention. To be clear, there is only one right interpretation (2 Peter 1:20), but that doesn't mean we always agree on what that right answer is. We should be able agree to disagree among ourselves on many of these issues, and failure to do so has unfortunately caused many church and even denominational divisions.

I strive to embrace one of the most beautiful heritages of our fellowship, that is the ability to agree to disagree on these non-salvation issues that are less clear. One of the most convincing reasons to do so? I've changed my mind on several of those issues, from who the Nephilim are, to how to interpret some of the terse early Hebrew in Genesis, to who is being referenced as a council in Psalm 82, and more. I have changed my mind on these issues when presented with Scripture, evidence for its context, and good, logical reasoning. I'm often humbled and amazed by what I realized I was missing.

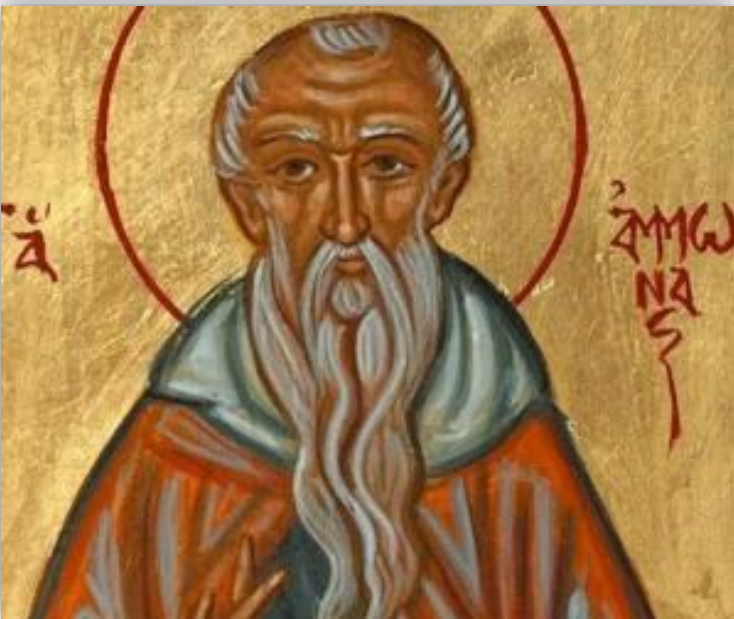
I recently received another reminder that I don't know everything, and that I should labor to be a good Berean (Acts 17:11), questioning even my favorite teachers as I pursue the truth. After confidently teaching through Luke's genealogy as part of our chapter by chapter, verse by verse, study through Luke, someone asked some good questions about my explanation for why Matthew and Luke record different genealogies. I wanted to address the difference in genealogies, because some make the claim that the Bible has "contradictions." So far, I've only found "apparent" contradictions, or things that look contradictory on the surface, but with some extra context, any confusion is cleared up.

CHANGING MY MIND ON LUKE'S GENEALOGY (CONT)

Sam Sears

I presented what is called the Matrilineal theory. This idea is that the reason Matthew and Luke differ, is that Luke gives Mary's genealogy, but I was asked, "If that's the case, then why isn't Mary mentioned clearly in that portion of the text?" The answer "worked." It solved what some might see as a contradiction, but was it derived from the text itself, or was it a neat answer just put on top of the text that happened to fit? While I had previously been swayed by Norman L. Geisler's confidence in the theory, as I responded to the question, I realized it was just one theory of many to make sense of the biblical data.

Michael Jones of Inspiring Philosophy has a reputation for being a thorough researcher. While he affirms that there is no Greek word for son-in-law, and holds that the Matrilineal theory is possible, in his research on the subject, he also looked to the earliest known Christian explanation. Church historian, Eusebius, writing in the third century, who quoted an earlier second to third century Christian and historian, Sextus Julius Africanus, as explaining the difference by claiming that a Levirate marriage had occurred.



A Levirate marriage was a biblical practice, described in Deuteronomy 25:1-5, where the brother of a deceased man who had no children, would marry his brother's widow and father a child with her who would be the legal heir of her deceased husband. It might sound bizarre to us, but in their culture a widow depended on the care of her children in her old age as

there were no nursing homes or social security payments. If there was no child, an older woman would face hunger and severe poverty once she was unable to work. She would similarly face hardship for simply being a single woman past marriageable age. This explanation is rooted in the culture with more attestation than using a mother's genealogy. This would fit well with Matthew's use of the more literal "begot" and Luke's "son of" language as from a legal standpoint, in their culture, both could be true.

At the bare minimum, we know that Luke had access to Matthew's writings, he made his choice on purpose, and the early church was not concerned with the seeming "contradiction." Even after a few hundred years passed, an explanation was given that was thoroughly rooted in their culture. No one saw this as a "gotcha" moment, even if we aren't entirely sure what they knew to cause them to feel that way. This matches well with how a detective makes a case based on two or more eyewitness accounts. They can see all the hooks that fit together in the accounts even if each account isn't exhaustive in detail.

While I'd still recommend Geisler and his co-author Thomas Howe's book, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties*, which supports the Matrilineal theory, I'm not troubled that they don't come to the same conclusion that others do. Both are possible solutions. I now favor Africanus's explanation, for multiple reasons. While we have more than one potential answer for this "apparent" contradiction, it still can't be counted as a confirmed contradiction by the Bible's skeptics, because we have possible explanations. I look forward to learning which of these solutions is the right one when we get to Heaven. In the meantime, I'm fine with knowing there are explanations, even if I can't be certain which one is correct, especially considering all the archeological and textual evidence we have that supports the New Testament as a reliable historical document.

LOVE IN ACTION

By Carrie Guy

Ministry is more than just teaching the word of God once a week from a pulpit, it is also, living it out. Being a community, the body of Christ, loving each other and reaching out to love on those in the neighborhoods around us is crucial in our walk with Christ.

I read a book once that changed the idea of defining what we believe. Nancy Leigh DeMoss shares in her book, *"The Lies Women Believe, and the Truth that Sets Them Free,"* that what we believe isn't what we say we believe but what we do and how we act. If we say we believe God has freed us but live every day as if we are in bondage, we don't actually, believe God has freed us. Its so important that our actions follow our words (James 2).

Saying we love people is only true when we love them in practice. That can come in a variety of ways: when we meet the needs of those around us, or take the time to get to know our neighbor, we are living out the gospel. When we take someone a meal to someone that has just had a baby or facing hard time, that is sharing God's love. When we go out of our way to give someone a ride home, that is sharing God's love. When we take someone who doesn't have a car to run errands, that is sharing God's love. The examples and opportunities are endless. The beauty of it is, there is something for all of us to do because not every way requires money and not every opportunity is a grand gesture. Sometimes the smallest acts of love mean the most, when we share God's love through meeting someone's needs, pray with someone or just sit with them and let them cry. The supernatural aspect of it all is we are also transformed by the love of Christ as we give it

God blesses me at times by dropping opportunities into my lap. I am blessed that he chooses to include me even if I'm uncomfortable. Sure, I at times have an initial grumble but the process trades that complaint for gratitude. I pray God continues to give us opportunities

as a church to share his love with the people around us.

Over the past few months I've been part of two new things at our church that has been a blessing to me and given me hope in opportunities to reach out into our neighborhood. The first is a *Mommy & Me* group we've slowly started and the second is the garden we are revitalizing out behind the shed.

Mommy & Me has met twice and so far we have gathered with three ladies from our church with babies, but we hope to invite others to join us as we go.



Alina (and baby Isabella), Noelle (baby Daxton) and Yvette (with baby Noah)



Our summer meet up meant kids joined in

LOVE IN ACTION(CONT)

By Carrie Guy

The Garden started up when Susanne Kupfer and I started chatting about those boxes behind the shed. We discussed ideas and with all her gardening skills, Susanne quickly became the chief of our team. I told her I'd organize the people if she would do all the garden planning. I've already learned so much and we don't plant seeds until later this month. We saw that this could be a way to invite the neighbors in and we continue to pray over each step as we venture out in this garden project. The potential this has to meet physical food needs and create relationships in the process is such a wonderful blessing from God and definitely speaks of love in action. I'm excited for what is ahead. I welcome your prayers and hope you find a way to get involved at the Fountain, there is a place for all of us!



This is just a few members of our garden team filling dirt into the boxes.



First, we weeded. They actually came up pretty easily. Next we watered and put down plastic to fumigate and kill potential weeds. We ordered soil and this photo was taken after we filled the boxes with soil and weeded around the boxes. We then put plastic down again to ensure no weeds when we plant seeds middle of the month.



A PEEK INTO OUR LIBRARY

By Rona Swanson

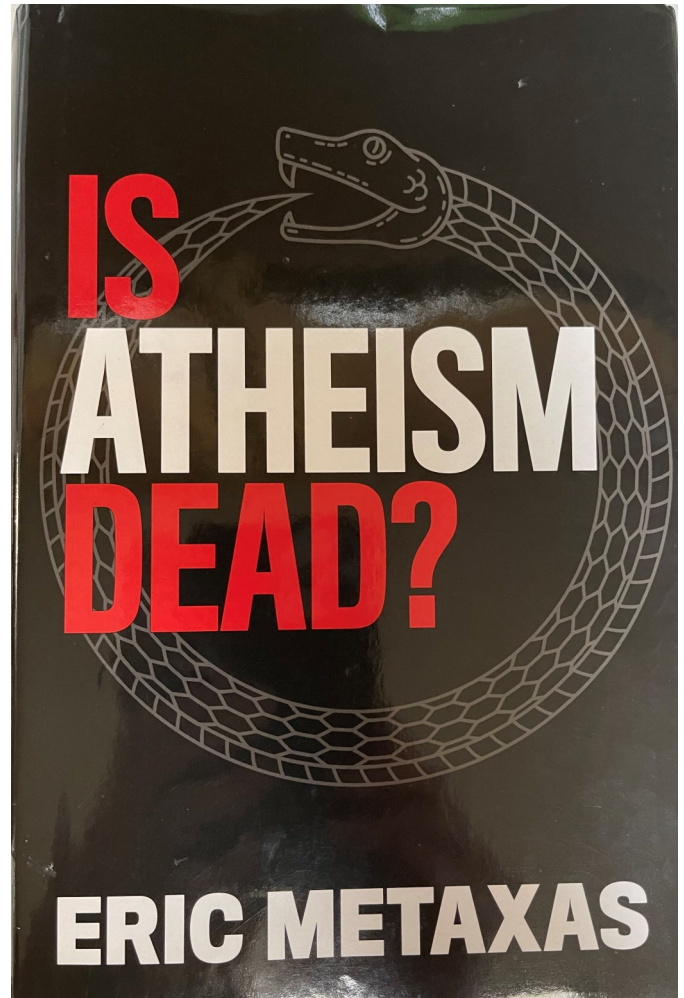
Our library is full of books to borrow and enjoy. In the hopes of encouraging you to come and see, I am writing this review regarding a recent addition to the shelves.

Eric Metaxas has written a new book called Is Atheism Dead? that is certainly worth reading. He reminds us that in 1966 Time Magazine asked the question "IS GOD DEAD?" Science was assuring us that there was no need for the God myth. They had an explanation for how we came to be, and we needn't be bothered with a "Higher Power".

Half a century later, Eric responds. At times his writing is downright witty, but he resoundingly builds the case that to believe in a Creator-less universe is no longer tenable. He takes us on a trip through archaeology, nanoscience, and physics that overwhelmingly confirms the account of creation in the ancient Hebrew scriptures. He allows the leading atheists of our time speak in their own words and then shows the folly of their reasoning.

For those who want to dig deeper into the glorious revelations of a Creator Who is still revealing the truth, this is a joyous journey of discovery.

It is my hope that you will be inspired to check it out!



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

September 2022

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Nina Suttles..... | 1 |
| Jacob Gunning..... | 6 |
| Sue Ritter | 12 |
| Danny Frigulti..... | 14 |
| Margie Barlogio | 15 |
| Donna Romer..... | 19 |
| Jenna Shane | 19 |
| Mary Cosmey | 21 |
| Carrie Guy | 24 |

Happy Anniversary!

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Mike & Glenda Gunning..... | 9 |
| Carl & Ruthy Shane | 10 |
| Earl & Carolyn Subejano | 14 |
| Connor & Judy Jameson..... | 21 |

ATTENDANCE & GIVING

August 2022

Average In Person Attendance

97

Total Giving

\$ 29,423.03

PRAYER CONCERNS

September 2022

Pray for the desire and opportunity to effectively share your faith! Our Nation and Leaders. Teachers & Students in Visalia. Our Brothers & Sisters at Elim.

Health: Ana Morales, Brad Sears, Bonnie Henson, Donna Eastin, Heather Smith, Jean Lamb, Jeff Rolph, Jeremy Holley, JoAnne Jordan, Kevin Guy, Kevin Ray (DHF pastor), Marilee Douglass, Mary Stemkoski, Pam Shattuck, Fred Wilder

Cancer: Ann Johnson, Bill Morland, David Thomas, David Welch, Janet Hagan, Jason McKaughan, Jim Shackelford, Joe Grant, Keith Moore, Mike Gunning, Olly Ajluni, Sandra Campbell, Shannan Ajluni

Other Needs: Nina Suttles (Vision)

Military: Brett Boland – Virginia, Michael Reid – San Diego, CA, Preston Correa – Marine, Tyler Richwine – Marine

Missionaries: some of our missionaries cannot be listed for their safety.

Nationally Based Global Mission Organizations: Adolfo Ibarra, Crosslink Development International, Central Missionary Clearinghouse, Soaring for Christ, Radical Truth, Maven, Gideons International, Our Daily Bread Ministries, Jews for Jesus, Pioneers, Team Expansion

Local Ministries: Care Pregnancy Center, Good News Jail Ministry, Hands in the Community, Love In the Name of Christ, Stephen Ministries, Tulare Kings Right to Life, Turning Point, Visalia Rescue Mission, Visalia Senior Housing

We no longer have a cleaning company. Please help us keep our building clean. A clean house of worship is one way, we can show honor to God.

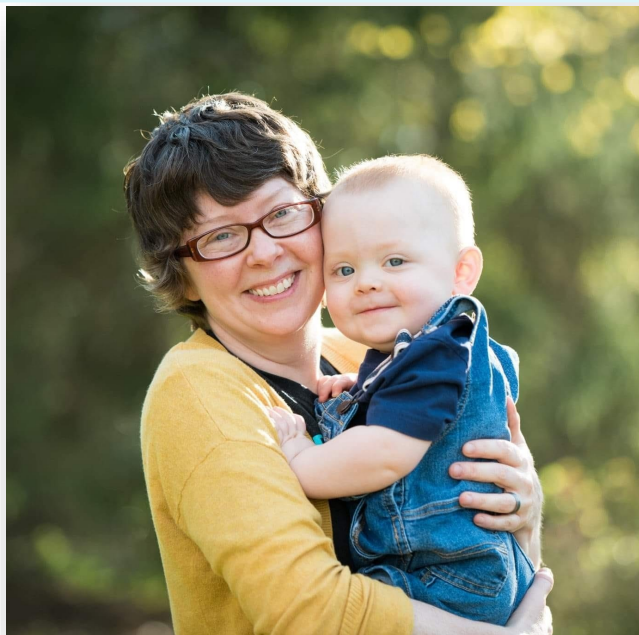
Col. 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,



THANK YOU!

Khari McElrath

Khari Lanning McElrath graduated with Sam Sears from Luther Rice with an M.A. in Apologetics. The Fountain has supported her on two short term mission trips, and she wanted to say Thank you! We echo that, thank you for being a church that loves missionaries!



My husband and I have served at Biltmore Church in Western North Carolina for six years, and Biltmore is part of a larger support network for a number of churches around the globe. We help to establish, fund, encourage, and strengthen new churches both nationally and internationally. One such church is Redeemer, Queen's Park in North-



west London.

Redeemer was founded in early 2019, and from the instant I found out about this budding community of believers in the "Big Smoke," I wanted to

be a part of nurturing its growth. But then came COVID, and the whole world shut down. It wasn't



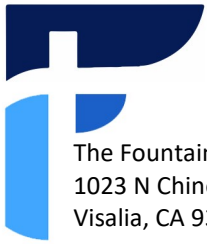
until three years later that I would land in London.

Thanks to your support, I was able to contribute to this movement that seeks to connect people to Jesus through the local church. Our team of six spent a week building up the body in various ways. We assisted with preparation for their church services, as they do not have a permanent location yet, which meant setting up snacks, chairs, and so on. We also handed out leaflets door-to-door, in order to let the locals know about Redeemer's location and service times. There were some interesting and promising spiritual conversations along the way, yet our primary focus was to nurture this small patch of lush growth amidst the dry desert. We aimed to refresh them, to let them know that they are not alone in the wasteland. So, we also spent some time just getting to know the people of Redeemer and to be an encouragement to them. Many of its members have left everything familiar behind to help build this church in a city where only 2% are Christian.

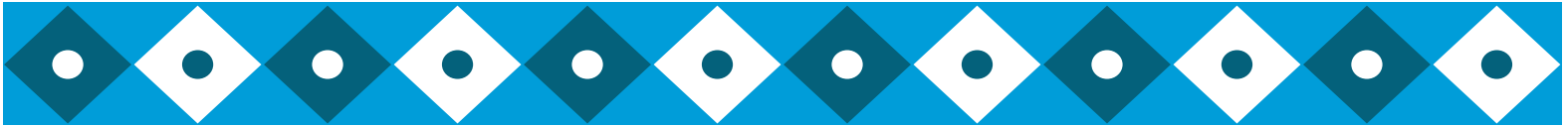
So, thank you for supporting what God is doing in London!!

September 2022

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| | | | | 1 10:00 Berean Watchmen | 2 6:30 Men's Group | 3 |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #e6f2ff;"> <p>*Family Night { Children's Studies Youth Group Men's Bible Study Women's Bible Study</p> </div> | | | | | | |
| 4 9:00 Worship 10:30 Worship | 5 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study | 6 10:00 Staff | 7 6:00 Family Night | 8 10:00 Berean Watchmen | 9 6:30 Men's Group | 10 8:00 Prayer Walk |
| 11 10:30 Combined Worship | 12 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study | 13 10:00 Staff | 14 6:00 Family Night | 15 10:00 Berean Watchmen | 16 6:30 Men's Group | 17 |
| 18 10:30 Worship | 19 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study | 20 10:00 Staff | 21 6:00 Family Night | 22 10:00 Berean Watchmen | 23 6:30 Men's Group | 24 |
| 25 10:30 Worship 12:00 Elder Council | 26 10:40 Prayer Warriors 12:00 Women's Bible Study | 27 10:00 Staff | 28 6:00 Family Night | 29 10:00 Berean Watchmen | 30 6:30 Men's Group | |



The Fountain
1023 N Chinowth St
Visalia, CA 93291



Coming Events

Worship Services combined beginning Sept. 11th - 10:30 AM

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Family Night every Wednesday - 6:00 PM

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Stop by our website for more information on Bible Studies
and coming events at www.thefountaincc.org