

The Birds & I – Which Way Do You Read the Bible?

Scot's Encounter with a Blue Parakeet Passages

[p 22-25]

A blue parakeet once came into Scot's peaceful backyard. The mere presence of the parakeet terrorized the sparrows. Scot thinks that **we have tended to cage and silence the "blue parakeet" passages in the Bible – those passages and commands that make us uncomfortable or challenge our current notions.**

"How we respond to passages and questions will determine if we become aware of what is going on or not. When chance encounters with blue parakeet passages in the Bible happen to come our way, we are given the opportunity to observe and learn. In such cases, we really do open ourselves to the thrill of learning how to read the Bible.

But, like the sparrows, we have to get over our fears and learn to adjust to the squawks of the Bible's blue parakeets. We dare not tame them. How do you read the Bible? What happens to you when you encounter blue parakeet passages in the Bible will reveal all you need to know about how you read the Bible"

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did early Christians practice baptism for the dead? (1 Cor 15) 2. Does Jesus prohibit oath-taking? (Matthew 5) 3. Was Jesus created? (Colossians 1) 4. Is doubt the enemy of faith? (Mark 9) 5. Why does the Old Testament condemn mixed cloths and shellfish? (Leviticus 11, 19) 6. Should Christians submit to the government in all circumstances? (Romans 13) 7. Why were there wild animals with Jesus during his time of temptation in the wilderness? (Mark 1) 8. Did Jesus tell his disciples to carry swords for self-defense? (Luke 22) 9. What does it mean for women to be weaker vessels? (1 Peter 3) 10. The Rich Man and Lazarus: Is it a parable? And is it about heaven and hell? (Luke 16) 11. Is it possible to do works in Jesus' name and still be lost? (Matthew 7) 12. Did Jesus empty himself of divinity? (Philippians 2) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Was Adam an historical person? (Genesis 1-2 ,Romans 5) 14. Who was Paul referring to in Rom 7? 15. What does it mean for a camel to go through the eye of a needle? (Matt 19:24; Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25) 16. Do angels walk among us? (Hebrews 13:2) 17. Why did Jesus say he only came for Israel? (Matthew 15) 18. Why does Jesus say to hate your father and mother? (Luke 14, Matthew 10) 19. Who were the Nephilim? (Genesis 6:1-4) 20. Can Jesus do anything apart from the Father? (John 5) 21. What is the sin that leads to death? (1 John 5) 22. Did Jesus come to bring peace or a sword? (Matthew 10; Luke 12) 23. Can true Christians lose their salvation? (Hebrews 6) 24. Should we heap fiery coals on opponents' heads? (Romans 12) |
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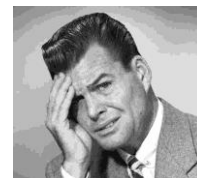
(Question 1 = Q1)

Q1: What's a blue parakeet represent to Scot?

Q2: What are some events in the Bible that you might skip over?

Q3: What is Scot trying to challenge his readers to do?

**Q4: (Optional)
Pick a couple of difficult passages from the list & explain why you might skip over it?**



Does this give you a headache?

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Q5: What is reading to retrieve?
a. What are the two kinds
b. What are the problems with this approach?

Read

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Q6: What was Paul approach?

If Paul was already adapting first-century Jewish ideas to first-century Gentile situations, can we expect to do anything else?

Does this sound like we are giving away too much?

3 Ways To Approach the Bible

[p 25-29]

1. Reading to Retrieve

Some of us have been taught to read the Bible in such a way that we *return* to the times of the Bible *in order to retrieve biblical ideas and practices for today.* There are two kinds of "return and retrieve" readers -some try to retrieve *all of it* and some admit we can retrieve only *what can be salvaged.* Consider those who seek to retrieve *all of it.* If Jesus taught table fellowship, such persons sometimes suggest that we should focus on table fellowship and gather in homes instead of big churches. If Paul said we should speak in tongues, we should speak in tongues...

In other words, we are to live out the Bible today by *returning* to the *early church and retrieving all its ideas no matter how uncomfortable, no matter how politically incorrect, no matter what it costs us.* The emphasis here is to practice *whatever* the Bible teaches-to absorb and live out *all of it.*

God spoke in Moses' days in Moses's ways & [p 27-28]
God spoke in Job's days in Job's ways, &
God spoke in David's days in David's ways, &
God spoke in Solomon's days in Solomon's ways, &
God spoke in Jeremiah's days, in Jesus's days,
In Paul's days, in Peter's days, in John's days.&
we are called to discern how God is carrying on that pattern in our world today.

Q7: What is your thoughts on this quote from pages 27-28?

Had you heard that a major failure of missionary work was the unfortunate imposing of Western ways on African/Asian/Central American ways?

2. Reading Through Tradition [p 29-33]

Ordinary people need to learn to read the Bible *through* tradition or they will misread the Bible and create schisms in the church. The most alarming danger of the "return and retrieve" way of Bible reading is found throughout the Western world: it seems too often that *everybody* reads the Bible for herself or himself, and *everybody* does *what's* right in her or his *own* eyes.

There are two senses of tradition here, one that I adhere to strongly (Great Tradition) and one that repels me (traditionalism)

We can reduce the **Great Tradition** to the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed, and the importance of justification by faith from the Reformation. These creeds point us toward the non negotiables of the faith; they point us to what God has led the church to see as its most important doctrines.

Traditionalism is the inflexible, don't-ask-questions, do-it-the-way-it-has- always-been-done approach to Bible reading. It reads the Bible *through* tradition. What happens then? Those who read the Bible *through* tradition always see the traditional way of reading the Bible. This approach is nearly incapable of renewal and adaptation.

See Six Steps Leading to Traditionalism (in margin): [p 32-33]

Somewhere around here we become ineffective in our world and become increasingly cantankerous about how the youth are wandering away from the faith. The Bible itself points us away from traditionalism. The biblical authors and the early fathers didn't fossilize traditions. Instead-and here we come to a major moment in this book-they *went back* to the Bible so they *could* come *forward* into the present.

3. Reading With Tradition [p 34-38]

"God was on the move; God is on the move; and God will always be on the move. Those who walk with God and listen to God are also on the move. Reading the Bible so we can live it out today means being on the move-always. Anyone who stops and wants to turn a particular moment into a monument, as the disciples did when Jesus was transfigured before them, will soon be wondering where God has gone.

So, how can we read the Bible that is both a "return and retrieval" reading as well as being respectful of the Great Tradition? I suggest we learn to read the Bible *with* the Great Tradition. We dare not ignore what God has said to the church through the ages (as the return and retrieval folks often do), nor dare we fossilize past interpretations into traditionalism. Instead, *we need to go back to the Bible so we can move forward through the church and speak God's Word in our days in our ways.*

...But we are also to move forward by *setting the Bible loose to renew and keep on renewing* who we are, what we think, how we express the gospel, and how we live out the gospel in our world."

Q8 What is reading through tradition?
 a. What is the "great tradition?"
 b. What is the problem with this approach?

Six Steps Leading to Traditionalism

- Step 1: We read the Bible
- Step 2: Confront an Issue – Statement
- Step 3: Fossilize Our Decision
Our Tradition Perfect
- Step 4: Bound to Our Tradition
Now Traditionalism
- Step 5: Bound to Read Through
Our Tradition
- Step 6: No Questions: Kicked Out

Q9: Where & how have you seen these 6 steps work?

Q10: What is reading with tradition?

- a. Why does Scot call it the 3rd way?
- b. How do we do it?
- c. What are the dangers?

Q11: What was Scot's confession?
How did he find renewal?

Q12: What is Scot's motto now?

Q: Complete these statements for yourself

For me the Bible is:
More intimate than _____

More unusual than _____

Has the glory of _____

**"No Desire to Tame
The Blue Parakeets"**

Story | Listening | Discerning

"Let the Bible be the Bible!"