

ACCEPTABLE WORDS IN SUCH A TIME

by Henry M. Morris III*

We have perhaps experienced more emotive reaction and fruitless searching in the past few weeks than ever in our lifetimes. The attack on New York and Washington, D.C., was so surprising, so brutal, so devastating, that all of us have run the gamut of anger and fear, pride and shame, wonder and worry, and . . . helplessness. The enemy is elusive and widespread, yet must be brought to justice.

Retaliation against key targets will surely hurt innocent civilians, but the terrorists cannot be allowed to continue their operations. Even our righteous cause is muddled by the prospect of getting "our hands dirty" in the "shadows" of necessary intelligence activities. And some are even asking whether we are *really* in the right?

How will we answer the many (especially in other nations) who will ask us to justify our actions? Is there a clear message in Scripture? Will others listen when we speak? Is Christian "justice" the same as American defensive strategy? What words of comfort and wisdom can possibly be acceptable in such a time as this?

As we try to make sense out of this terrible event and plan our actions in response, there are seven basic Biblical truths that can help us keep a right perspective.

Basic Truth #1. God is not the author of evil.

The perfect creation was originally "very good," but was soon marred by Lucifer's lie and Adam's rebellion. God has "no pleasure" in wickedness, does not "tempt" any man with evil, loves "righteousness," and hates "wickedness." God does not cause evil.

[Genesis 1:31; John 8:44; Genesis 3:17; Romans 5:12]

Basic Truth #2. Because God is love, God allows the possibility of evil.

Three absolute attributes of God appear to be in conflict. God is love. God is holy. God is omnipotent. The apparent conflict is often stated in the question: "If God loves the world and is all powerful, why would He allow 'this' to happen?" The answer? God wills love, love requires choice, and choice allows evil.

[I John 4:7-8; Isaiah 5:16; I John 1:5-6; John 3:19; John 17:26]

Basic Truth #3. Habitually choosing evil produces evil people.

God's love is exercised toward all men and His salvation is potentially sufficient for all. God has revealed Himself through His creation and through conscience to everyone and wants everyone to be saved.

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All men are sinners, but when men consciously and repeatedly choose against God, they can become overtly evil both in action and in desire.

[Titus 2:11; I John 2:2; I Peter 3:9; Romans 1:20; I Timothy 2:4; Romans 1:21,23,25 ; Romans 2:13,15]

Basic Truth #4. Evil people hate God and God's people.

Once a conscious choice to reject God's truth and love has been made, those individuals begin to hate God, the truth revealed in His word, and those who follow its teachings.

[Psalm 34:21; Proverbs 29:10; John 15:18–19; 17:14]

Basic Truth #5. Hatred for God and God's people drives evil.

Make no mistake. Those who love evil, hate righteousness. Petty selfishness is often stroked and invoked to justify a host of social evils, and the sin burden constantly overlays human behavior. But an evil heart produces evil deeds and can drive an evil person to commit atrocities.

[John 3:20–21; James 4:1–4; I John 2:16–17; Mark 7:20–23]

Basic Truth #6. Global conflicts center around God's plan for His people.

The foundation for this present imminent global conflict lies in God's promise to Abraham. "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless him that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:2–3). This promise has its partial fulfillment in both the literal seed of Abraham (i.e., Isaac—see Genesis 26:1–5) but more generally in his spiritual seed (that is, Jesus Christ—see Galatians 3:6–10,16). In comparison to God's plan of creation and redemption (both through Christ), all self-serving

power plays and politics of nations are like "the small dust of the balance" (Isaiah 40:15) in God's sight.

Basic Truth #7. Global activities are driven by worldview belief systems.

In the broadest sense, there are only two basic belief systems among the nations: theism and naturalism. One believes in supernatural influence on the affairs of men, the other does not. One seeks to explain purpose and order in terms of spiritual powers, the other only in terms of physical forces and human intellect. Not many consciously exclude God from their thinking, but many either ignore Him or invoke His name to justify evil actions. But this is the key: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). This is why we are clearly told, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

The Confusion Is Real

Theism can and does take many forms. "God" is defined by people in many different ways. The God of Islam and the gods of Eastern religions are very different from the creating and redeeming God of the Bible. It is unfortunately true that the freedom enjoyed by other religions to exist and prosper in Christian countries is not permitted in Islamic countries nor in most Eastern countries.

Many third-world cultures follow animism (spirit worship). Ancestor worship is more prevalent in many Eastern cultures, as well as pantheism and polytheism. The "New Age" movement crosses and fuses elements of various religions—including Christianity, in an effort to sound and feel spiritual while justifying sinful behavior and desires.

Underlying all, of course, is the Great Adversary, who seeks to twist the truth and draw the worship of all men to himself and replace all "gods" as the God of

this world. Satan is driven, like “a roaring lion,” to “devour” (I Peter 5:8) all who oppose him. The real “war,” is a spiritual one (Ephesians 6:12–13). President Bush is absolutely correct when he said that this campaign will be “unlike any other we have ever seen.” It can be worldwide in scope, transcultural in impact, and possibly years in the execution. But God has sovereignly ordained nations, and government’s primary duty is the safety of its citizens. We fully concur with the stated goals of protecting our shores from terrorism, and doing so by whatever means our leaders deem necessary. We have reason to believe that President Bush will prayerfully seek divine guidance in his decisions. We also need to pray much to that end.

But we can make a difference!

Will all terrorists finally be eliminated and evil conquered? Not until Jesus Christ sets up His earthly reign. Freedom is administered through truth (John 8:32,36), and Satan, when resisted in “the faith” (I Peter 5:9) will “flee” (James 4:7).

The spiritual core of what has made the United States a great nation has risen to the surface during these past few weeks. However, many will soon want to return to the era before September 11, 2001—the era dominated in the nominally Christian West by a naturalistic and humanistic worldview. Just as there are comparatively few Islamic and Muslim followers who really embrace the murderous fanaticism that was displayed on that horrible day, so are there comparatively few in English speaking countries around the world who truly “believe” the anti-God, anti-truth worldview of evolutionary naturalism.

But those few hold inordinate sway! In just the same way, a small minority of fanatical Muslims truly *believe* in their

perverted version of Islam and have acquired great influence.

Dallas Willard relates an instance in his book, *The Divine Conspiracy*, that he occasionally applies in his classes at the University of Southern California.

In our culture one is considered educated if one “knows the right answers.” That is, if one knows which answers are the correct ones. I sometimes joke with my students at the university where I teach by asking them if they believe what they wrote on their tests. They always laugh. They know belief is not required. Belief only controls life. (Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, Harper, 1998, page 317.)

Much of what is embraced philosophically (and even religiously) does not require real *belief*. We parrot the accepted clichés and politically correct jargon of our cultural circles as though we “believe,” but what is really transpiring is that we are “giving” the right answers because we “know” what to say. But when these all fail, and we are finally on our own, then, what we truly believe takes over its real center and control of our lives.

ICR is fighting the battle at the level of the worldviews, the belief systems. We not only deplore the “symptoms” (abortion, immorality, injustice, terrorism, etc.), we are attempting to cure the “disease” of false worldviews that “changed the truth of God into a lie,” worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator (Romans 1:25).

Ours is a winning strategy assured of ultimate victory, for our Captain is the Lord of hosts, Maker of heaven and earth who has redeemed us from sin and death by His blood, and is alive forevermore! 🏹

WHAT ABOUT STEM CELL RESEARCH?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

Stem cell research and utilization is much in the news. Since it involves the “harvesting” of living human tissue, everyone recognizes the difficult ethical questions involved. I suggest that a creationist viewpoint is necessary for proper decisions.

Human stem cells are those embryonic cells which result from the uniting of human egg and sperm and the first few cell divisions to follow. These magnificent cells carry the potential to construct any type of cell—flesh, blood, bone, teeth, heart, liver, hair, etc. Specialized growth comes later as proteins and enzymes trigger their differentiation and specific development. By harvesting the original stem cells before their specialization and by controlling their environment and later growth, medical science hopes to be able to regenerate damaged tissue in patients.


Biologists know that life comes from life—that there is no time during which life ceases and then restarts—thus, the inescapable conclusion that the new life begins at conception. In humans, life does not “begin” after the first trimester, or when the fetus could survive outside the womb. The only defensible, logical position is that it begins at conception. The cessation of that life must be called death, and its willful death constitutes murder.

Creationists additionally recognize human life as “the image of God,” to be valued and protected. To destroy purposefully the image of God reveals an underlying attitude toward God Himself. Humans, healthy or unhealthy, young or old, born or unborn, deserve this protection.

Thus the question, “Should the stem cells of an unborn human be harvested to save the life of an ill human?” is fraught with difficult decisions. Should one life be valued over another?

While Christian/creationists can hardly support murder, we do support medical research and treatment of the infirm. Surely there must be a better, less destructive way. An analogy might help put the issue in perspective. Hopefully, all reasonable people would oppose “harvesting” the healthy heart of a living but unwilling individual to save the life of one in need of a heart transplant. Is this any different from harvesting an unborn’s cells to save another? I think not.

There’s a better alternative. In adult humans there remains the possibility of triggering certain cells to return to their stem cell capabilities. Likewise, umbilical cords retain much of this versatility. Who knows what other options are present? Let’s look for them rather than focusing on killing the unborn.

Much of this destructive impulse derives from possible huge profits as well as personal pride. But I think the issue goes deeper for many. Evolution has often been exposed on these pages as the anti-God religion. It has justified untold brutality and death throughout the millennia, including racism, the holocaust, abortion, etc. Could we not conclude that hatred for the “image of God in man” is a major doctrine of this religion, and destruction of that “image” its sacrament? Nothing else explains the fervor with which it is demanded and the unwillingness to consider options. 



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