

Torturing Christ

2 Peter 3:16 *Which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*

The air waves, both radio and TV, are filled with speakers presenting some strange things under the banner of Christianity. Not only the air waves, but the shelves of Christian book stores are covered with books under the banner of Christianity that promote ideas and theories that are clearly contrary to the total of the Word of God.

The question we shall consider is, “What should be the Christian's response to those who clearly change the context of the Word of God to make it say what they want it to say, or who change the Word of God to make points that are obviously contrary to the Law, Psalms and the Prophets?”

We must include those who are proud of their higher education in theology. When they deal with theological issues, it is obvious that they are making their passage say something that, according to its Old and New Testament context, it does not say. Does their high level of education give them license to make those changes?

I mentioned to a friend some time ago that I did not feel a Christian should receive instruction from those who profess to be Christians yet openly corrupt the Word of God. His reply to me was that we can either learn to eat fish and spit bones or not eat fish at all. Now, spiting bones makes for a good fish dinner, but it is not Scriptural. God presents false doctrines and false teachers as poison, and it is normally impossible for a new believer to separate the 1% poison from the 99% carrier of that poison.

Notice we are not referring to “experts” outside of theology which is the study of God. We must commonly seek their expertise in various areas. We are referring to wolves in sheep's clothing: “experts” claiming to believe God's Word as they offer “life-giving” advice.

My pastor used to refer to a "theological sieve.” That is, run everything we hear through the word of God in order to filter out the trash of misused ideas and doctrines.

2 Peter 3:16: *As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

Though the context refers to the doctrine of last things, Peter's warning includes all Bible doctrine with the words, *also the other scriptures*. The key word is *wrest*, and it is only used this one time in the Word of God:

1828 Webster:

WREST, verb transitive [G., to wrest to snatch or pull, to burst, to tear.]

1. To twist or extort by violence; to pull or force from by violent wringing or twisting; as, to wrest an instrument from another's hands.

2. To take or force from by violence. The enemy made a great effort, and wrested the victory from our hands.

But fate has wrested the confession from me. (Sadly, it seems that the Republicans do not put up a united front against the Marxists who are determined to destroy this nation. Thus, the Marxists easily wrest the victory from the conservatives. As Rush Limbaugh used to say, "The Republicans snatched defeat out of victory.")

3. To distort; to turn from truth or twist from its natural meaning by violence; to pervert.

Exodus 23:2 *Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of the poor.* (That is, bend justice out of shape to favor a particular group or person.)

Strong: Wrest. pervert, twist, stretch or **torture as on a rack.** That is, torture language to give it a false sense or meaning.

Torture as on a rack as in "Princess Bride."

In other words, a passage is ripped from its context in order to make it say something it does not say.

I have sat under more than a few dispensationalist, and even some self-proclaimed Orthodox teachers, who are experts in this method of exegesis. **That is,** they wrest scripture to justify a point they are trying to make. I often wrested scripture, but I try to tell the hearer that I am using the passage out of its context. I cannot sit under preachers-teachers who *wrest* the Word of God.

What do we have here?

"Torturing" the written Word of God actually "tortures" the incarnate Word of God to make HIM say something He did not say. **Will God hold the perpetrators guiltless? How about the first-century** believers: Would they have allowed those who tortured the Saviour just before His death instruct them on how to treat one another? (Repentance and Conversion changes things. Paul was one who "tortured" the Word of God.)

Why do Christians allow modern "experts" who "torture" God's Word, including the gospel, instruct them in truth.

"Ask Jesus into Your Heart," which is based on Revelation 3:20 is no doubt the most serious example of torturing Christ in common use today. These speakers have **put Christ on the rack,** and have tortured The Word of God beyond any recognition.

We must insert a comment here: No doubt, a great portion of the false doctrine being

promoted is simply what that person was taught, and they trust their teachers. They see no need, nor do they have a desire to search the scriptures (Old Testament) to seek the truth of what they were taught.

Some years ago, I spoke with a close pastor friend, and I called his attention to a scripture he was using apart from its Old Testament context. The context was quite contrary to what he was saying, and he knew it. When I challenged him on its use, he told me “That was the way I was taught by men I respect, and that is what I have taught. I am not going to change now.” Though that was probably 30 years ago, I will never forget his response—he knew the truth, and he would not change now. Was it his pride? I had worked with him several years previously, and we were both big promoters of Arminian Dispensationalism. I do not know that he ever “saw the light” in that area.

Obviously, those who torture the Word of God to make Him say what they want Him to say will face some very serious results. Peter tells us that **THEY TORTURE THE WORD OF GOD TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION**. He thus warns the Child of God to avoid those who torture the Word of God, or they will also be partakers in the torturer’s destruction. The Spirit speaks loud and clear concerning the Christians' response to men of corrupt minds who wrest language:

Matthew 7:15 *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

The Lord told us that false teachers are known by their false doctrines concerning His Word. Though they may appear as good teachers and able to attract a large following, they are at heart ravening wolves. Their false doctrines concerning the Word of God reveal the truth.

Though the teachers may appear as “*angels of light*” in “non-Biblical” areas of one's concern, their false doctrines in “Biblical” areas show that they are thorns, thistles and corrupt trees. The Lord Himself said that those who corrupt His Word will devour the innocent.

Jesus Christ said that the standard by which everything must be measured is the Law, Psalms and the Prophets:

John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

One might say, “But those things they offer in non-theological areas are excellent!” The Divine Word of God said it is impossible to gather grapes, figs and good fruit from false teachers, from

those who commonly wrest Scripture. **Paul warned Timothy:**

1 Timothy 1:4 *Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.*

The Geneva Bible defines the words used to torture the Word of God as “**vain and curious speculations**” and “**declaration and utterances of which can help our faith in no way.**”

God not only forbids listening to foolish, wicked fables and endless genealogies, but He also commands Christians to withdraw from those who develop and defend fables that are not supported by the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets. **GET OUT OF THOSE CHURCHES. THEY ARE SUGAR COATED POISON:**

1 Timothy 6:3 *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.*

The context refers primarily to undermining the proper servant-master relationships, yet the application is equally obvious: Those who seek to add their corrupt words, ideas and views of history to the sacred Word of God are proud men, setting themselves above God. They weary both themselves and others with vain questions and speculations because they do not content themselves with Christ's clearly revealed doctrine from His Word.

This is a harsh saying, but those who “torture” the Word of God to fit within their theories, including theories of the gospel, are lying deceivers; they are mad men because they trouble themselves in matters of nothing; they corrupt men's minds; they abuse the Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ; they are vain babblers and foolish talkers; they are men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth; they are perverse and corrupt frauds. TRUTH is not in them. GET AWAY FROM THEM, FOR THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM.

Isaiah 8:20 *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

Those who commonly *wrest* the Word of God are blind leaders of the blind. What will happen if God's people allow those blind leaders to lead them? Will they not both fall into the ditch? There are many warnings in the Word of God about false teachers. In the context of this message, we are speaking about leaders who for whatever reason corrupt the Word of God to present a message more to their liking. Simply adding one *wrested* word to a text can easily change the meaning of that text, and the average listener will not recognize the change.

2 Timothy 3:1 *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be*

lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

The Lord warns His people about men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. The **Reformers warn us in the Geneva notes:** There will be a “great abundance of the most wicked men even in the very bosom of the Church;” they will “make a show and countenance of great holiness, and charity,” but they “resist the truth not from simple ignorance, but from a perverse mind.” God's people “must not tarry with” such men, but “turn away from them.” [Geneva] They “torture” God's Word to make HIM say something He did not say. The Spirit commands, from such turn away. The warning is thorough and throughout Scripture, *e.g.*, **2 Peter 2:1-5, 12, 13,**

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly... But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you...

Obviously, the Church of Christ, that is the New Israel of God, has **more confused and false** prophets in it than did the Old Israel of God.

Not only are there many heresies and promoters of heresy in the church, but there are as many in the New Israel of God who gladly welcome these teachers as there were in the Old Israel of God.

2 Timothy 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

God promises to deliver His Elect from the errors of the false teachers if they will properly respond as commanded by the Word when confronted with the TRUTH:

Romans 16:17, 18 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

Paul did not name the ones to be marked and thus avoided. On the contrary, their **evil, false doctrines obtained by “torturing” the Word of God clearly identifies them.** The “torturers” did not die out, so **today they must be diligently sought as one would watch for his enemies from a tower.**

Note Paul's words: When identified by their corrupt teachings contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, they are to be marked for a specific reason: **not so one can sift out the “experts’ truth from his fiction, but so the “experts” can be AVOIDED.** Identify them according to the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets, and avoid them.

In Deuteronomy 3:1-15, the Law of God is dogmatic, as it **required death to those who subverted the word of God:**

Deuteronomy 3:1-5 *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.*

Any preaching or worship of the Lord God that is not according to the Word of God is service to a false god. Prayer to the Father apart from the intercession of Christ is prayer to a false god.

Note that the subverter of the Law was from within the congregation of the Lord, and the Law required his death:

Deuteronomy 18:20 *But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*

V. 20 is quite stronger than **Deuteronomy 13:1-5** for it requires capital punishment against all who offer answers for life apart from the Word of God. We may hear of desires to enforce the

“Law of God,” but **where are the desires to enforce these laws against those who "torture" God's Word?** They abound in Orthodox churches, non-Orthodox churches as well as in liberal churches.

We must conclude, therefore, that those who, knowingly or unknowingly, “torture” God's Word to uphold their supposed Biblical theories are embodiments of the spirit of the antichrist as defined in 1 & 2 John.

Deuteronomy 3 and Matthew 24:24 tell us that the corrupters are God's enemies, and they are sent by God to test and deceive the very Elect if possible. Though their numbers are legion, their purpose is one: draw the Elect away from the real issues of life that provide genuine solutions, *viz.* the advancement of the Kingdom of God on earth. That advancement can only be through the honest preaching of the gospel, teaching all nations the Word of God and teaching the proper application of His command-word to all areas of life and thought.

We freely use **Psalms 1:1** (*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*), yet not really believing what it says. **The Lord did not say, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the ungodly counsel of men.”** Rather, He said, *in the counsel of the ungodly*. In other words, the Lord's blessings are upon those who **do not seek** life-giving counsel from the ungodly. Who can be more ungodly than those who "torture" the Word of God in order to support a doctrine or theory that fits within their view of Scripture, **such as** Arminianism and dispensationalism, neither of which are taught in Scripture

Why would a child of God willfully and intentionally spurn the blessings of the God he claims to love and serve? Those who seek, or sit in the counsel of the ungodly depart from God's blessings.

God's people are clearly instructed by the Spirit to avoid those who wrest, “torture,” God's Word, and who refuse correction by the Word. They are corrupters of God's Word. Consequently, they are corrupters of men's minds as they speak concerning the *issues of life*. Their “sheep's clothing” cannot change the fact that they are, knowingly or unknowingly, at heart ravening wolves with only devouring poison for God's people no matter how good they may sound.

2 Kings 4:40 *O thou man of God, there is death in the pot.*