

GENESIS ROAD PRESENTS...



a look at the picture of God  
in every chapter of  
the 61st book of the Bible

# Chapter 1

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## GOD DOES NOT CONTRADICT HIMSELF.

I've been hearing a lot of debates recently regarding the apparent differences between the Old and New Testaments. There are a lot of people who believe that Jesus' life and death contradicts much of what was said about God in the Old Testament, and *vice versa*.

And perhaps it's because I've been hearing these debates that I'm more attuned to seeing statements in Scripture that address this very issue. There was a very interesting one in today's chapter:

"For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes when he received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him, 'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.' *We ourselves heard that voice from heaven* when we were with him on the holy mountain. *Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets.* You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts." (vs 16-19)

This is a stunning declaration from Peter—one of the three who was present on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus. Here, he says that the testimony about God by the Old Testament authors

wasn't *nullified* by Jesus, but rather, it was *confirmed* by Him! All that Jesus said and did was in harmony with, not contradicted by, the Old Testament.

On the surface, that may not seem like the case. After all, there were certain instances where Jesus Himself seemed to contradict the Scriptures He read. For instance, He said, "You have heard that it used to be said 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' but I tell you, don't resist the man who wants to harm you. If a man hits your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well." (Matt 5:38-39)

At first, this could appear like Jesus was contradicting one of the commands given in the Old Testament. But Jesus never said that the command was a mistake or that it wasn't necessary at the time. Rather, He was explaining that it was time to move on from that.

When you tell your 11-year-old that he can't drive your car, you have a very good reason for that. Five years later, when he learns how to drive and you hand over the keys, have you "contradicted" yourself? Of course not! The circumstances have changed; thus, what is appropriate has also changed.

The wonderful thing about the Bible is that the message revealed there about God is consistent—throughout both Testaments. If we somehow think Jesus revealed a fundamentally different picture of

God than the one the Old Testament writers presented, we had better go back and read the Old Testament again.

God doesn't contradict Himself. That's why Peter said that his personal experience with Jesus only served to *confirm* what he had read in the Scriptures. He didn't see two different pictures, and neither should we.

## Chapter 2

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### GOD DOES NOT HAVE A NEUTRAL ZONE.

There is a very intriguing statement at the end of this chapter—one that sheds light on the very nature of salvation. Some say salvation is about what you do. Others say salvation is about what (or Who) you know. But Peter seems to have a slightly different perspective—one that includes both knowledge and actions, but not *only* knowledge and actions:

“Those who have been pulled out of the cesspool of worldly desires *through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus*, the Anointed One, yet have found themselves mired in it again are worse off than they were before. They would have been better off never knowing the way of righteousness than to have known it and then abandoned the sacred commandment they had previously received and *dived back into the muck!*” (vs 20-21)

Peter’s statement includes a reference to knowledge—that there are those who have overcome evil by getting to know Christ personally. And it also includes a reference to actions—that some of those people have eventually abandoned what they knew to go back to their evil ways.

Furthermore, in the midst of laying this all out is the curious statement that they would have been better off never knowing the way of righteousness at all! So, it would seem that an evil act done in ignorance is *not* as “bad” as the same evil act done in willfulness—that is, knowing better but choosing to do it anyway.

Why would that be? Because with greater revelation comes greater accountability. In other words, a person cannot receive a revelation about God *and remain neutral*. Being confronted with the revealed knowledge changes the game. If the person accepts what they have seen to be true, then their heart is changed for the better. If the person rejects what they have seen to be true, then their heart is changed for the worse.

Think back to Pharaoh and his experience during the plagues. Time after time, he witnessed the reality of the God of the Universe, and time after time, he refused to yield, *even after acknowledging that he knew God was right*. That kind of decision has a profound effect on the one who makes it. No wonder the Bible says his heart was repeatedly hardened!

God doesn’t have a neutral zone. He wants us to know Him, and He wants us to know the way to life, love, and happiness. So He comes to us in our darkness and shows us the light. He comes to us in our wickedness and shows us a better way.

Once He does that, we *cannot* remain neutral. We are certainly free to accept what we have seen and follow Him or reject what we have seen and pretend like it never happened. But either choice will have a profound effect on us.

For no matter what we decide, we cannot encounter the living God and remain the same. *Everyone* who sees Him will be changed.

## Chapter 3

### GOD HAS HIS OWN TIME ZONE.

Now that my little girl has started talking nearly non-stop, I know it's not going to be long before she learns to say those dreaded words in the car: Are we there yet? As a child myself, I remember long family car trips that seemed interminable—it was easy to feel like we should already “be there” after only 30 minutes of an 8-hour journey.

Kids just have a totally different perception of time than adults do.

And guess what? When it comes to God and us, Peter says we're just like kids: “Don't imagine, dear friends, that God's timetable is the same as ours; as the psalm says, for with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day. Now *the Lord is not slow* about enacting His promise—slow is how some people want to characterize it—no, He is not slow but patient and merciful to you, not wanting anyone to be destroyed, but wanting everyone to turn away from following his own path and to turn toward God's.” (vs 8-9)

I bet the folks in Peter's day would have been flabbergasted to think that we'd still be here (and reading Peter's letter to them) 2,000 years later. They were already chomping at the bit for God to come back. And it seems not much has changed.

I have many friends who sound just like Peter's audience. They wonder why we're still here and how much longer it's going to be and if there's anything we can do to speed it up and what is God

waiting for. Recently, I even heard a prominent church leader *scolding* his church members because, apparently, he thinks Jesus won't come back until they “get their act together.”

However, unless we are living unrepentant lives, we are not to blame for what others want to characterize as “God's delay.” Peter specifically states why God is waiting. It's not because He's slow or forgetful or upset. It's because He's merciful and patient. He is patient with His patients.

In fact, I wouldn't even categorize God's coming as “slow” or “postponed.” I think God has His own time zone, and from His perspective, I don't think there has been any delay at all. Just as Jesus became flesh and blood “in the fullness of time,” so God knows just when conditions will be right to wrap up things on this planet.

He's never early.

He's never late.

He's always right on time.

Maybe sometimes He wishes we'd just sit back and enjoy the ride.