

PARACLETE

ADVOCATING FOR THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH



FaithSearch International exists to extend the Gospel with evidence to all peoples everywhere. *FaithSearch* International is not denominationally affiliated.

Volume 6, Issue 2

March 2023

What's In A Name? (Part 2)

By Dr. Don Bierle, *FaithSearch* President

In the January issue of the *Paraclete* I wrote about the name “Emmanuel” given to Christ by way of announcement by the angel Gabriel (Matthew 1:23). Its meaning, “*God with us*,” solved the world’s age-old question of **WHO God is**. God revealed His identity in history – the incarnation of the Christ 2,000 years ago. We celebrate that at Christmas.

But the world’s religions still struggled with the nature of God, particularly His holiness. God revealed in the Bible that “*You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!*” (Exodus 33:20). In contrast, all humans have sinned and consequently earned death (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Most religions agree that sinful humans are separated from whatever god they serve by an insurmountable gulf. **How do they propose that we bridge that gulf?**

Counterfeit Plans

1. Compromise

My family once lived a couple of miles from the Temple of Eck in Chanhassen, MN, headquarters for an Eastern cult called Eckankar. Their god has a dual identity: “hu” is his righteous side, “kal” his evil side. Since god is both good and evil, we can be accepted that way as well. They compromised holiness to bridge the gulf. Likewise, Islam requires only a majority of good deeds to get into paradise (51% righteous?), thus holiness is again compromised.

2. Performance

Most religions promote certain self-induced teachings and practices (works) in an effort to attain holiness and overcome death. In their view, humans are self-perfectible.

Performance is promoted in Buddhism by the requirements to achieve the Four



Christianity is unique among all religions of the world.

Noble Truths, the Eight-Fold Path, and the Four Degrees of Meditation. Their holy book, the Tripitaka, is 1,460 pages long of needed works (which no one could possibly achieve). Earning salvation by good works never ends. It cannot lead to assurance because you never know when you have done enough!

Good works are obligatory in Islam to attempt holiness – identified as Five Pillars. Reciting the Shahadah, seventeen cycles of prayer, fasting, giving alms, and a pilgrimage to Mecca are required, but once again these works cannot lead to any certainty of acceptance by god or the achievement of heaven. Holiness remains elusive.

Is there another way to solve the difficulty of attaining God’s holiness? YES!

The Genuine Plan: The Cross of Jesus

There is no “holiness” problem separating sinful Christians from their holy God... because of Easter! The Bible says, “*And she will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:21). The apostle Peter adds, “*And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed*” (1 Peter 3:24).

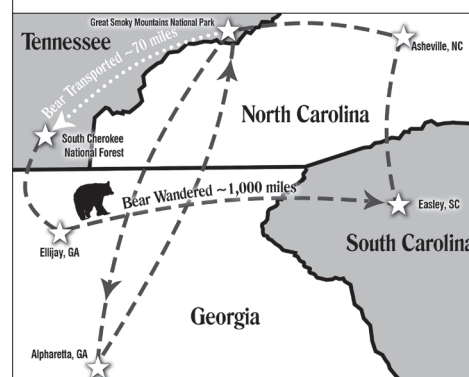
Jesus took my sin and gifted me His holiness. He took my death and gifted me His eternal life. The apostle Paul summed this up: “*Therefore, there is now no con-*
continued on page 2

IN THE NEWS

Have Black Bear/ German Shepherd – Will Travel

A female black bear was misbehaving at Great Smoky Mountains National Park (invading camp sites to steal food). Dubbed “Bear 609,” she was trapped and relocated to the South Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee, about 70 miles away.

The bear was tagged so she could be tracked. Four states and **1,000 miles later**, within six months, the bear had returned to the very same campsite where she had been captured. She continued her journey, too, before finally returning again to the area from which she was originally removed. Obviously, she was **smarter than the average bear!**



Bear 609 wandered 1,000 miles through four states, over the course of six months, averaging some 5.5 miles per day.

Another journey-seeking animal showed up on radar recently, so to speak. **Zeppelin**, a German shepherd mix, had been prone to leaving Sandra O’Neill’s residence in West Sacramento, California. He would explore the neighborhood, but he always came back.

That is, until October, 2021, when he didn’t. Workers in an animal clinic

continued on page 2

What's In A Name?

continued from page 1

demnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2, NIV). The result is that "...He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, **in order to present you before God holy and blameless...**" (Colossians 1:22, **emphasis** added).

The holiness problem was solved for Christians... because of Easter! Grace, love, forgiveness, and victory over death (the true meaning of Good Friday and Easter) are absent from other religions. Thus, in vain they attempt to atone for their own sins through human effort and they have no solution to death's triumph. **The genuine atonement, accomplished on the cross by Jesus, bridged the holiness gulf.** In His own words, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life*" (John 5:24, **emphasis** added).

His NAMES Mean Everything!

Emmanuel (His "Christmas" name) = God with us. I can know who God is; I can know God in relationship!

Jesus (His "Easter" name) = Savior. My sins are forgiven; I am declared holy; I am adopted into God's family; I have eternal life after death with God!

No wonder it is said of Jesus: "*Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the NAME which is above every name, that at the NAME of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" (Philippians 2:9-11, **EMPHASIS** added).

Our Response

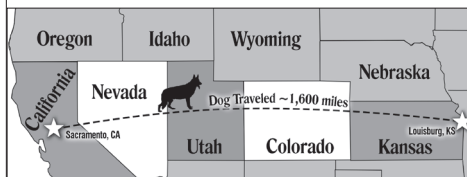
We are blessed to have a heritage which includes an understanding of these names. Our first response is to repent of our sin and confess faith in Jesus as our "Emmanuel" and our "Savior" (Romans 10:8-10). Just before Jesus ascended back to heaven, He identified our second response: "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*" (Acts 1:8 NLT, **emphasis** added).

IN THE NEWS

Travel

continued from page 1

ic in **Louisburg, Kansas**, scanned the microchip of a stray dog in their care and discovered it was none other than Zeppelin. That was December, 2022, and 1,600 miles from his home. They reunited the dog with Sandra. She has no idea how Zeppelin made it so far from home.



Zeppelin left his home in Sacramento, CA, and was found in Louisburg, KS, some 1,600 miles away.

The book of Genesis doesn't say this, but it seems God *may* have put a divine GPS in His created animals!?

Source: World Magazine, January 28, 2023, pages 22-23

An Analogy from Nature

The Dragonfly Gospel

As a biologist and a Christian, Dr. Don Bierle found an analogy about dragonflies particularly meaningful in an article by Lynn Vincent, executive editor for World Magazine.



Dragonflies begin their life as "nymphs" (bug-like and wingless) underwater, usually for one or two years. One day, an unknown stimulus prompts them to climb out of the water and begin to breathe. What follows is truly a molecular marvel, as she described:

The nymph attaches itself to a reed, splits its larval skin, and unfolds a new thorax – twice the length of the old one... Next, the nymph pushes out a dragonfly head and legs, along with two gossamer wings, which grow... quickly... be-

fore your eyes. After a 30-minute break to let its legs harden, this new creature warms up its wings and launches on its maiden flight.

The entire process takes just three hours.

There is not even a pupal stage providing for an extended transformation process of the entirely new self that emerges.



(By contrast, think of a caterpillar metamorphosing inside its cocoon.)

How do evolutionists explain this with only chance as a means? When Vincent asked **Michael Behe**, a Lehigh University biochemist, this question, Behe referred to the answer given in a 2019 research paper: "We propose that the final moult, and consequent hemimetabolous metamorphosis, is a monophyletic innovation." What?! Vincent interpreted the language of the research as saying, "When your theory is weak, dazzle 'em with jargon." Dr. Behe also commented on this: "*Propose* means they don't know, and that nobody before them knew either."

Vincent calls this the "dragonfly gospel." She wrote,

This is what you were, God seems to be saying: hiding, crawling around in the dark. And this is what you are: a new creation soaring in the light, beautiful in My sight.

This looks and sounds more like **Intelligent Design** than chance! Dr. Bierle said he was reminded of what the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*" (2 Corinthians 5:17). That is definitely Good News!

Source: World Magazine, "The dragonfly gospel," Lynn Vincent, October 8, 2022, page 24

The **FaithSearch** Paraclete is published by **FaithSearch** International, an interdenominational, donor-supported, 501(c)(3) organization, based in Edina, MN, USA.

FaithSearch is a member in good standing of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

