



The Caller

A Weekly Newsletter of the Elizabethtown church of Christ
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Confidence Corner John F. Board

In this week's *Confidence Corner* we will examine the following question: "How does the Bible stack up against other claimed religious documents like the Quran and the Book of Mormon?" Many who have glanced

at all three or have heard of the Bible, the Quran, and the Book of Mormon would claim they are all lofty documents. I would say there is no comparison; this is not based simply upon a leap in the dark but upon solid evidence.

You say, "Hang on for a minute. The Bible may be a great religious book, but what about other books that claim a divine origin? What about books on Eastern religions?" Professor M. Montiero Williams was the Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford University during the latter half of the nineteenth century. He spent forty-two years studying Eastern religious books. Comparing them to the Bible, he said:

Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table; but place your own Holy Bible on the right side—all by itself, all alone—and with a wide gap between them. For there is a gulf between it and the so-called sacred books of the East, which severs the one from the other utterly, hopelessly, and forever ... a veritable gulf which cannot be bridged over by any science or religious thought.

The Bible is preeminent. There is no book on the face of the earth that comes anywhere close. Saying that any book, anywhere, written by anyone, could on any level compare to the Bible would be a statement of ignorance (I am using this not in a derogatory way but in a way that conveys a lack of knowledge). A knowing person, a studied person, a person who has examined the subject objectively and carefully could never say such! Poets give credit to the Bible as containing the greatest poetry ever written. Along those lines Victor Hugo noted that if he could keep only one book in the world, it would be the book of Job.

We are so blessed to have the Bible available to us today! May we ever realize how amazing our revelation from God is! And may we respond accordingly through reading and study.

jfb

Anyone who knows me knows that I love baseball. They also know that I am a huge St. Louis Cardinals fan, and I have been my whole life. As a fan I expect a certain level of greatness from an organization as rich in history with winning as the Cardinals have. The St. Louis Cardinals are known for having one of the best fan-bases in the game. A person, who roots for a ball club that has a history of winning and greatness, expects greatness and the best from their club. The past few years have been rough as a Cardinal fan, but I know that it's only a matter of time before my team is back at the top again. Why, because I expect the best.

As we all expect the very best from our sports teams, what does God expect from us? What should God expect from us? Are we living our lives to the extent that God expects our best everyday, or is God still waiting for our best? How often do we achieve spiritual excellence or at least strive for it? Is He getting the very best I can possibly give or is he only getting highlights here and there? When God sees my life I want him to see a dependable disciple that never takes a play off. I want him to expect greatness, not on a seasonal or day-to-day basis, but on an every day basis.

Your coach, director, or instructor expects the best from you. If you don't bring your "A" game to every practice, game, or performance, you may find yourself in an unwanted position or situation. Why do we work so hard to obtain a certain goal in sports or extracurricular activity, but we can't even bring our best to God? Your coach didn't send his son to the world to die for you. The sport you work so much to be successful at did nothing to show how much it loved you. God sent His only Son to die for you and me. Why can't we bring our best to Him? If I don't bring my best to God, I may find myself disappointed with the outcome.

Mitchell's Weekly Manna Mitchell Lockhart

Sunday's Sermons:

**A.M. — What Must We Do to be Saved?
 Acts 2:37-38**

P.M. — 5th Sunday Night Singing

Sin

Sin—it makes me sick! How can three seemingly small letters bring such devastation to the world? The ruined lives that sin has left in its wake—the destruction of families—the separation from God! We used some examples Sunday night in the sermon to show the lives that were ruined when people give into temptation and sin.

It seems to be safe to write that of those reading this article, most all if not all despise sin. Yet not a one of us has overcome sin completely. Sure we try and battle temptation but at some point we fall prey to the wiles of the Devil. We cannot say as Christians that we have no sin (1 John 1:8). But we can be thankful that as Christians we have the hope through the blood of Christ that keeps on cleansing us from all sin (1 John 1:7).

I guess though that God has been very clear to us that sin is real and it is a real part of our lives. Consider the following information from Bible.org regarding the number of words used in the Greek NT to convey the concept of sin to mankind:

“The thirty-three words for sin consider sin from every angle, even different forms of the same root word not being used exactly with the same emphasis. One of the most important words is ἁμαρτία and its kindred forms, in which sin is viewed as *missing the mark*, “coming short of the glory of God.” In παραβαίνω, we see sin as *transgression*, characterizing sin as *a breaking of moral law* and *a turning from the perfect will of God*. In παράπτωμα, sin is viewed as a *fall*. In παρακούω there is a picture of sin in the light of *failing to listen* to God, with open and flagrant disobedience being the result of this failure. The verb ἀδικέω and its kindred words point to sin as *being unrighteous, unjust, void of God’s approval, and contrary to the holy character of God*. Ἄσεβέω defines sin as *rebelling against God, open and active sinning in defiance of God and His judgment*. Another word for sin, not found in verb form, is ἀνομία, which considers sin as being *lawless, in spite of and contrary to law*. Ἄγνοέω traces sin as springing from ignorance as well as the resulting blindness to spiritual truth, combined in the definition, *to err*. ἠττάω views sin as a defeat, and when used in the passive means *to be defeated, overcome*, pointing to the need of the power of God for victory. Finally, πονηρία pictures sin as *utter corruption, depravity, iniquity*, which is to be subjected to the righteous judgment of God.”

God has definitely provided information, and even much more, has warned mankind about sin.

One last thought that I would like to consider to make us soberly think about sin is the price that was paid for sin. The only One who kept law perfectly—Who lived without sin impacting His life, is the very One who paid the price for sin. Jesus bore our sin in His body on the tree (cross). Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!

John F. Board

Elizabethtown, KY