

KNOWING THE TIMES

7-4-2010 Helping believers know the times (2 Timothy 3:1, 1 Chronicles 12:32)

Miscellany

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John 14:6 for Dummies. Mike Adams writes at www.townhall.com that the Bible is pretty clear that Jesus is the only way of salvation (John 14:6, 10:7-9, Matthew 7:13-14). Prominent pastor Joel Osteen could not be as clear, however, in his interview with Larry King some time back. Adams offers two motives: first, Osteen "is getting rich from book sales and is concerned that telling the truth about the exclusive truth claims of Christianity would result in a loss of income"; and second, he might lose church members at his Lakewood Church. Granted, it is difficult to say for sure what someone's motives are with certainty. However, Adams goes on to offer two reasons why such weakness on the exclusivity of the gospel is wrong: 1) it reinforces the dangerous trend toward relativism, in which beliefs and truth are seen as synonymous; and 2) whenever a "Christian" denies John 14:6, they become an ex-Christian. Note "Christian" is in quotes, not suggesting a loss of true salvation.

John Piper on Creation. According to a simple reading of the Bible, the heavens and earth and all life forms were created relatively recently (6,000 to 10,000 years ago) in a total of six regular days. Many evangelical Christians, however, believe that the earth and mankind are ancient, on the order of billions and millions of years, respectively. This belief accommodates the modern scientific view of such questions. On www.desiringgod.org, John Piper takes a mediating position in which he believes man's creation was recent, but the earth may be much older. "So that has the advantage of saying that the earth is billions of years old if it wants to be—whatever science says it is, it is." The view he espouses is explained in more detail by John Sailhammer in his book *Genesis Unbound*.

Robert McCabe, professor of OT at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, responds: "I take it that the genealogies, when coupled with six literal days of creation, do say something about the age of the earth and not, as Piper does, simply about the age of man...In the final analysis, Piper shows what his a priori is...like Bruce Waltke and others, their a priori is that modern man's view about science is right."

Sharing the Gospel. Many Christians suffer with unnecessary fears about sharing their faith. Once they finally get a conversation turned to the subject of the Gospel, however, most believers find that they're able to manage quite well. Much of the time the biggest problem is simply moving a conversation from small talk to "big" talk, the biggest subject of all—the Gospel. Here's a list of questions that can help. Some of them aren't original with me, though I don't recall where years ago I first heard the ones I've borrowed. I've found that the last one opens

more doors for the Gospel in the widest variety of situations.

1. When you die, if God says to you, "Why should I let you into Heaven?", what would you say? Are you interested in what the Bible says about your answer?
2. If you were to die tonight, where do you think you would spend eternity? Why? Are you interested in what the Bible says about this?
3. Do you think much about spiritual things?
4. How is God involved in your life?
5. How important is your faith to you?
6. What has been your most meaningful spiritual experience?
7. Do you find that your religious heritage answers your questions about life?
8. Do you have any kind of spiritual beliefs? If what you believe were not true, would you want to know it? Well, the Bible says
9. To you, who is Jesus?
10. I often like to pray for people I meet; how can I pray for you?

By Donald S. Whitney, 2002, writing at www.biblicalspirituality.org.

Society

Feminism Kills. In "Yes, Abortion is Killing. But It's the Lesser Evil," writer Antonia Senior acknowledges that an unborn child at any stage is a human life. But she then proceeds to assert that feminism is more important than life, and that, when necessary, women must be willing to kill for the feminist cause even as they are willing to die for it.

Once, Senior had argued without reservation or moral qualms that the unborn child is not a baby, but merely a fetus — the standard argument of pro-abortion forces. "Then came a baby, and every-

thing changed," she relates. "Having a baby paints the world in an entirely different hue," she explains.

Indeed, the experience of having a child convinced Senior that the inhabitant of the womb is indeed a human life. Responding to a recent British medical report claiming that fetuses feel no pain before 24 weeks of gestation, she correctly observes that this has nothing to do with the fundamental issue at stake. "Either a fetus is life from conception, or it is not," she rightly asserts, "ability to feel pain is not, in itself, a defining factor."

She takes the pro-choice side of the argument to task for the moral evasion and dishonesty of arguing against the fact that the fetus is a human life. "Any other conclusion is a convenient lie that we on the pro-choice side of the debate tell ourselves to make us feel better about the action of taking a life."

Honesty of that caliber is rare enough. But what follows is nothing less than breathtaking. Just when she seems to be poised to deliver a clear affirmation of the value and dignity of that unborn human life, she veers into an absolutist argument for abortion rights. Yes, that fetus is a human life, she argues, but that life must yield to the inviolable feminist principle of abortion rights.

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KNOWING THE TIMES is a publication of Fellowship Bible Church
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