

# The Discerner

the voice of... **Religion Analysis Service**

A QUARTERLY EXPOSING  
UNBIBLICAL TEACHING & MOVEMENTS

Volume 43, Number 4

October November December 2023

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*"Hereby know we the spirit of truth  
and the spirit of error" 1 John 4:6*  
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## **The Discerner**

A Christian Apologetics & Counter-  
Cult Ministry

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## WITH THIS ISSUE

*To our discerning readers...*

In this issue of *The Discerner*, you are going to find articles of varied interests—everything from false groups to false ideas about Jesus to false weather beliefs!

Our first article is a timely piece written by Freddy Davis of MarketFaith Ministries. By exposing one of the great deceptions in America today and beyond, Davis examines a ploy being used by atheists to stir up the Christian community and gain major media attention for themselves. The ploy is that these atheists are using the cloak of Satanism. Davis seeks to warn Christians to correctly react against this threat.

Our second article deals with a subject that has often perplexed Bible readers. Specifically, concerning the ministry of Jesus in the New Testament gospels, why does Jesus sometimes seem to downplay His role as the long-awaited Messiah? In the field of biblical studies, this has become known as the Messianic Secret issue. Accordingly, this article seeks to provide a theologically conservative response to the gospel phenomenon in order to counter liberally-biased claims against the Majestic Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our final article is written by Jefferey Becker, who makes it very clear that God is in control of all weather—a much-needed revelation in today's world.

So if you enjoy reading and furthering your understanding of God's Truth as contained in His inerrant and infallible Word, we trust that you'll enjoy the above topics as well as our concluding Bible Quiz—which this time is centered on the biblical book of Genesis.

Religion Analysis Service holds to the fundamentals of the faith and seeks to proclaim biblical truth to our generation. We are a fully independent faith ministry and depend solely on the gifts of our supporters to maintain this ministry in defense of God's Word.

Thank you and on behalf of the entire RAS Board,

*Douglas Steiner and Steve Lagoon*

## **WHEN SATAN ISN'T SATAN**

By Freddy Davis

From April 28–30 [2023], a Satancon [Satan Convention] was put on by The Satanic Temple in Boston, Massachusetts. This satanic convention has been touted as the “largest satanic gathering in history.”

It was hosted at the Marriott Copley Place in Boston to mark the Satanic Temple’s 10-year anniversary. The Temple dedicated the event to Boston’s Democrat Mayor Michelle Wu. While most dedications of this type are done as a gesture to honor someone, this one was actually a slap at Wu for her refusal to allow a satanic invocation at a City Council meeting in 2021.

The convention kicked off with a formal ceremony renouncing “symbols of oppression.” This ceremony involved ripping up a Bible and a “Thin Blue Line” flag representing the police. Obviously they see the Christian faith and the police as oppressive entities.

Now before we go any further, we need to clear up one thing about The Satanic Temple—we wouldn’t want you get the wrong idea. Because of its name, most people think that The Satanic Temple is a group that worships Satan. That would be a false assumption.

In fact, the people who are members of this organization don’t even believe in Satan. They are actually a bunch of Atheists. They chose their name as a way to amp up publicity—and their ploy has been hugely successful.

Christians, in particular, have denounced the group because of their ties to Satan, and in their denunciations have helped generate massive publicity—which is exactly what these folks were after. Of course, there is every reason for Christians to denounce the organization as they are unequivocally anti-Christian. However, when doing the denouncing, Christians at least ought to know what they are denouncing. Without that, they end up saying things that are not true, and losing any possibility of sharing a credible and understandable witness for Christ.

The Satanic Temple touts itself as a nontheistic organization—that is, they do not worship, nor even believe in, a personal God or Satan. The stated goal of their organization is to “encourage benevolence and empathy, reject tyrannical authority, advocate practical common sense, oppose injustice, and undertake noble pursuits.”

Their “noble pursuits” were voiced at the conference by speakers who spoke on topics such as “Satanism and Self-Pleasure, Reclaiming the Trans Body, and Hellbillies: Visible Satanism in Rural America.” *You might also be interested to know that this is the same organization that has been trying to organize Satan Clubs as after school programs around the country.*

Obviously, their methods are very provocative. They put on these high-profile events, like SatanCon and after school Satan Clubs, as a means of getting massive publicity, and are particularly focused on provoking a visceral reaction from Christians. And in most cases, they have been very successful.

So as Christians, exactly how should we respond?

First, it is okay, [to] react viscerally. That said, *the visceral reaction does need to be carefully focused.* It is not okay to merely lash out emotionally. These people are not literally Satanists—they are Atheists who are trying to provoke a reaction.

So react, but be sure you know what you are reacting against and are doing it in a way that is appropriate for the situation. If you are reacting against Satanists, you are not reacting to the people who are doing the provoking. They are militant Atheists, not Satanists.

As such, it is critical to tailor your reaction to who they really are. The group is satanic for sure, but they are not devil worshipers. They are Atheists, and you must address their Atheism, not their faux Satanism.

So what is the best way to do that? You do it by understanding the core beliefs of Atheism (a Naturalistic worldview belief) and addressing why their beliefs cannot possibly be true. With that, you are in a position to ask questions that make them defend their faith.

There are a lot of dialogues that I have had with people of other religions (many of them Atheists) where I have done exactly that. Check some of them out at <http://www.marketfaith.org/worldview-dialogs> to see how I have done it<sup>1</sup>. Then take that principle and share the truth about Christ to those who so desperately need it.

Freddy Davis is with MarketFaith Ministries. Learn more by visiting <http://www.marketfaith.org>

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<sup>1</sup> For print subscribers, please contact RAS directly so we can forward past articles on Atheism your way!

# THE MESSIANIC SECRET MOTIF, PART 1 OF 2

By Steve Lagoon

## Introduction

Readers of the New Testament gospels will eventually encounter a perplexing feature regarding the accounts of the life and the ministry of Jesus Christ. I am referring to those occasions in which Jesus attempted to publicly suppress His Messianic identity. Hence, this feature has come to be known as the Messianic Secret. Catherine Cory explained:

“In Mark’s gospel, the reader is . . . soon troubled by the narrator’s repeated references to Jesus’ demand that people not tell anyone about him . . . Biblical scholars call this phenomenon the Messianic Secret. Does Jesus not want people to know that he is the Messiah or the Christ. . . If not, why not?”<sup>1</sup>

The Messianic Secret is most pronounced in the gospel of Mark, “although the phenomenon also appears to a lesser degree in Matthew and Luke.”<sup>2</sup>

This feature was given prominence among biblical scholarship with the publication in 1901 of the book *The Messianic Secret* by William Wrede (1859–1906), a German Lutheran Bible scholar.

In this article (part 1 of 2), we will first examine the biblical basis for the Messianic Secret Motif. Then we will critique William Wrede’s theory concerning the Messianic Secret.

In part 2 (next *Discerner* issue), we will look at the history of false messiahs in the time before and after Christ, to put His ministry in historical context. Finally, we will consider what we can learn about God’s purposes related to the Messianic Secret.

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Cory, *Jesus and the Gospels*, chapter in *The Christian Theological Tradition*, General Editors: Catherine A. Cory & David T. Landry, University of St. Thomas, Theology Department, Needham MA (Pearson Custom Publishing, 1996) 88.

<sup>2</sup> W. Randolph Tate, *Interpreting the Bible: A Handbook of Terms and Methods*, Peabody MA (Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2006) 211.

## **The Biblical Basis For The Messianic Secret**

We will specifically examine the New Testament gospels to build the case that Christ Jesus carefully suppressed the proclamation of his Messianic identity.

This fact probably runs contrary to the popular imagination in which Christ is openly proclaiming his Messianic identity throughout His ministry and encouraging His disciples to do the same. It comes as quite a surprise to many when it is learned that the popular idea isn't really supported by the gospel texts.

### **Five Ways Christ Suppressed His Messianic Identity**

We can categorize five essential ways that Christ restricted the knowledge of His Messianic Identity. The first was in the way He taught through *parables and enigmatic statements*. The second is seen in *Christ's healing ministry*, in which He sometimes commanded those who had been healed to keep quiet. Third, it is seen in Jesus' deliverance ministry in which Christ *silenced demons* who testified to His identity. Fourth, it is seen in *Christ's command to His disciples to remain silent concerning his identity*, at least till after the resurrection. Finally, it is seen in those times when Christ Himself carefully orchestrated events to suppress the knowledge of His Messianic identity. Let us consider each of these in turn.

#### **1. Teaching In Parables**

One of Jesus' primary methods of teaching was through the use of parables and enigmatic statements. One important value of this type of teaching is that it draws the listener in and forces them to really engage in the lesson being taught. And once one gets the point of the parable, it is burned into their memory.

Another purpose in Jesus' use of parables was its sifting effect, in which those who love truth made the effort to understand while the rest refused to make the same effort, therefore identifying themselves as rejecting the move of God. Indeed, Jesus explained this purpose in Mark's gospel:

*"When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, 'The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!'"* ([Mark 4:11-13](#))

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, in his groundbreaking book on *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, asked:

“Why does Jesus in [Mark 4:10–12](#) speak of the parabolic form of discourse as designed to conceal the mystery of the kingdom of God, whereas the explanation which he proceeds to give to the disciples has nothing mysterious about it?”<sup>3</sup>

It’s a good question. Indeed, for those who have shown their commitment to the truth, Jesus spoke openly in private, but denied the same to those who refused to take the effort to show their sincerity toward Him:

*“With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything”* ([Mark 4:33–34](#)).

## 2. Silence Concerning Healings

Another way that Jesus suppressed the knowledge of His Messianic identity was in the way He sometimes asked those He healed to keep the news to themselves, so to speak. This was because a healing ministry is one of the signs that would identify the Messiah ([Matthew 8:16–17](#); [Luke 4:18](#)). Here are some examples of this feature in the gospels:

*“A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ‘See that you don’t tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.’ Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere”* ([Mark 1:40–45](#)).

*“Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat”* ([Mark 5:42–43](#)).

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<sup>3</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Minneapolis MN (Fortress Press, 1901, First Fortress Press edition 2001) 299.



*“Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. People were overwhelmed with amazement. ‘He has done everything well,’ they said. ‘He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak’”* ([Mark 7:36–37](#)).

Jesus knew that greater public awareness of these healings would impede the free exercise of His ministry plans.

### **3. Silencing Demonic Testimonies Of His Identity**

Another way that Jesus suppressed His Messianic identity was by silencing demons who were publicly identifying Him as the Son of God and Messiah during exorcisms. It is true that Jesus didn’t need or desire the support of demons, nor wish to be identified with them in any way. But it is also true, that by silencing the demonic testimony, Christ further suppressed His Messianic identity. Here are some biblical examples:

*“They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!’ ‘Be quiet!’ said Jesus sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.’ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee”* ([Mark 1:21–28](#)).

*“That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was”* ([Mark 1:32–34](#)).

*“Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, ‘You are the Son of God.’ But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him”* ([Mark 3:11–12](#)).

*“Moreover, Demons came out of many people, shouting, ‘You are the Son of God!’ But he rebuked them and would not*

*allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah”*  
([Mark 4:41](#)).

Indeed, it seems backwards. The demons want to announce the arrival of the Messiah and the Messiah wants the truth suppressed. Thus Messianic Secret is steeped in irony.

#### **4. Silencing His Own Disciples Concerning His Identity**

It may come as a further surprise that Jesus restricted His own disciples from revealing His Messianic identity. Consider, for instance, what Jesus commanded to the inner three—Peter, James, and John—following the Transfiguration:

*“As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what ‘rising from the dead’ meant”*  
([Mark 9:9–10](#)).

But probably the most shocking example follows Christ’s acknowledgement of His Messianic identity to the Twelve:

*“Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’ Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah”* ([Matthew 16:16–20](#)).

Peter makes the penultimate confession of Christ’s Messianic identity in the gospel of Matthew, and Jesus praises Peter, noting that his pronouncement was made by divine revelation. Then, having made this extraordinary confession, Christ commands His disciples to not share this fact publicly. This command seems so counterintuitive to the progress of Christ’s ministry and leaves us feeling bewildered! What is the meaning of all this?

#### **5. Jesus’ Own Silence As To His Messianic Identity**

Let us consider a couple of passages, when Christ himself carefully manages public awareness of His person:

*“After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, Jesus’ brothers said to him, ‘Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.’ For even his own brothers did not believe in him. Therefore Jesus told them, ‘My time is not yet here; for you any time will do’” (John 7:1–6).*

Already, in this seventh chapter of John, it is easy to discern Jesus’ careful management of His ministry, and the revelation of His person in His own timing. We see the same thing in the following passage from the tenth chapter of John’s gospel too:

*“Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon’s Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, ‘How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered, ‘I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me’” (John 10:22–25).*

Where we might expect a clear affirmation of His Messianic calling, Jesus spoke rather enigmatically. The truth was there, but yet, He stopped short of the clear indisputable claim to be the Messiah.

## **William Wrede’s Messianic Secret**

We have considered the biblical evidence that supports the idea that during Christ’s ministry, He took purposeful action to suppress the public knowledge of His Messianic identity. And so, the natural question to ask is, “Why?”

As we have seen, William Wrede<sup>4</sup> was the first modern scholar to raise the profile of this question with his groundbreaking book, *The Messianic Secret in the Gospels*<sup>5</sup> published in 1901.

Wrede challenged the historic assumption that the New Testament gospels provided accurate historical accounts regarding the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, he argued, the gospels reflect the reconstruction of Christ’s life by Christian communities that created

<sup>4</sup> His full name was Georg Friedrich Eduard William Wrede (1859–1906). A short unofficial biography is available reading [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Wrede](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Wrede).

<sup>5</sup> William Wrede, *Messianic Secret in the Gospels*, J. C. G. Greig, Translator, Wheaton IL (James Clark & C.O, 1901, 1971).

them a full generation later. Biblical scholars refer to this by the term *Sitz im Leben*, the idea that the gospels are *more reflective of the experiences of the authors*—and the current challenges and struggles of the communities that produced them—and *less about the actual events of Christ's life*.

In this theological context, Robert Stein briefly described Wrede's Messianic Secret theory:

“Wrede . . . [argued] that Mark was not an objective historical biography of Jesus at all. On the contrary, Mark was a theologian who wrote with a particular theological bias and emphasis. Wrede argued in fact that the ‘messianic secret’ in Mark (Jesus’ desire for secrecy) was a Markan theological emphasis rather than an actual pattern in the life of the historical Jesus.”<sup>6</sup>

Hans Rollman agreed:

“Wrede’s skepticism toward doctrinal or literary features as being historical was new, as was his rigorous exclusion of any supernatural features in the narrative as comprehensible from the life of Jesus.”<sup>7</sup>

In other words, Wrede believed that the author of Mark’s gospel invented, made up, those previous passages we have considered that form the basis of the Messianic Secret.

Bart Ehrman provided more detail concerning Wrede’s theory:

“How does one explain this ironic feature of Mark’s gospel, that Jesus is the Son of God, the messiah, but that he does not want anyone to know? This puzzle has been called the ‘messianic secret’ since the earlier part of this century, when a German scholar named William Wrede propounded a now famous solution—that the historical Jesus himself never urged secrecy at all because he did not actually see himself as the messiah. After his death, however, Jesus’ followers began to proclaim that he had been the Messiah. How could it be that Jesus was thought to be the messiah when he had made no such claim for himself? Wrede’s explanation was that the early Christian community invented the idea that Jesus tried to keep his identity under wraps. They then fabricated the stories of

<sup>6</sup> Robert H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction*, Grand Rapids MI (Baker Book House, 1987) 140.

<sup>7</sup> Hans Rollmann, *William Wrede*, article in *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, Editor Donald K. McKim, Downers Grove IL (InterVarsity Press, 1998) 396.

Jesus' commands to silence to show that a messianic Jesus did not proclaim himself to be the messiah."<sup>8</sup>

Key in Ehrman's explanation is the claim that *the Jesus of history never claimed or thought of himself as the Messiah, and as such was only a post-resurrection development of the early church* leading up to the writing of the gospels.

Albert Schweitzer agreed that this was Wrede's program:

"Jesus cannot, according to Wrede, have spoken of his messianic coming in the way which the Synoptists report. The messiahship of Jesus, as we find it in the Gospels, is a product of community theology correcting history according to its own conceptions."<sup>9</sup>

Hans Rollmann filled in the details of Wrede's theory:

"Consequently the messianic secret—especially the prohibitions to silence about Jesus' true nature but also the incomprehension of the disciples and the esoteric teaching in the parables as well the recognition of the demons of who Jesus was—were understood by Wrede not as historical facts of the life of Jesus but as components of a theological construct that attempted to reconcile a nonmessianic life of Jesus with a faith in his adoption as Messiah after Easter."<sup>10</sup>

So Wrede believed that what happened was the historical Jesus did not believe He was the Messiah. But following His resurrection from the dead, it became the widely-held belief that He was in fact the Messiah.

Wrede believed that by the time Mark set his pen to his gospel, he was faced with the dilemma of how to explain the current widespread acceptance of Christ as Messiah with the lack of this belief in the supposed earliest traditions. Mark's solution, which was really Wrede's solution, was that Mark wrote the whole Messianic Secret material into his gospel, retrojecting the acknowledgement that Jesus was the Messiah, but nevertheless, He attempted to keep it hush-hush.

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<sup>8</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, Second Edition, New York, Oxford University Press, 2000) 68.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Minneapolis MN (Fortress Press, 1901, First Fortress Press edition 2001) 303.

<sup>10</sup> Hans Rollmann, *William Wrede*, article in *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, Editor Donald K. McKim, Downers Grove IL (InterVarsity Press, 1998) 396.

And so Paul Achtemeier sums it up:

“Why does Jesus urge people not to speak of his messiahship to others? This, according to Wrede, is Mark’s way of smoothing over the fact that, during his lifetime, Jesus neither claimed to be the Messiah nor was recognized as the Messiah. Wrede proposed that Mark wove into his Gospel the notion that Jesus secretly revealed his messiahship to his closest followers, who would then make his identity clear to others following his departure.”<sup>11</sup>

### **The Response To Wrede’s Messianic Secret Theory**

Most reference sources say that Wrede’s theory received a fairly positive reception amongst scholars initially, but soon fell on hard times for some fairly difficult problems the theory didn’t explain.

Baptist Theologian Millard Erickson gets us going in a critique of the view:

“Some, for example, have maintained, that Jesus’ disciples, in rooting their faith in the event of Jesus’ life and death, were actually going beyond his intentions. According to this view, Jesus simply proclaimed a kingdom of God without making himself the object of belief. He did not conceive of himself as the Messiah. This theory, however, has proved itself unsustainable. Although William Wrede and Adolf Harnack reconstructed a Jesus without the messianic self-understanding, they did so by a careful selection of passages.”<sup>12</sup>

Erickson not only explained Wrede’s view but also quickly dismissed it for its cherry-picking of the gospel evidence. Albert Schweitzer, in his *Quest for the Historical Jesus*, was also scathing in his criticism of Wrede’s theory:

“But as soon as the ‘messianic secret’ theory is analyzed in detail it becomes evident that it is able to explain neither the special character of the Markan presentation nor the simplest facts of Jesus’ public life, nor even the rise and nature of primitive Christian belief.

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<sup>11</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green & Marianne Meye Thompson, *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology*, Grand Rapids MI (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001) 57.

<sup>12</sup> Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Second Edition, Grand Rapids MI (Baker Books, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1998) 121.

Thus it can satisfy us neither in literary nor in a historical sense.”<sup>13</sup>

## A Few Criticisms Of Wrede’s Messianic Secret

One of the most obvious problems to me is Wrede’s Markan solution itself. That is, if Mark (and/or his community) were perfectly willing to invent the large blocks of material that form the Messianic secret in order to save Jesus the embarrassment of not having claimed to be the Messiah in His lifetime, why not instead did Mark just make up material in which Jesus did claim to be the Messiah? Wouldn’t that have been a much easier, and straight-forward solution, and still have reached the same goal? This is where Ockham’s razor<sup>14</sup> is telling.

Much more alarming are the implications of Wrede’s radical scholarship. It flies in the face of two thousand years of biblical scholarship in which biblical inspiration was the belief of the Christian Church. How can we possibly accept that the Holy Spirit inspired Mark as he created out of whole-cloth, material for his gospel that was not true to the historical Jesus? *“Let God be true, and every human being a liar”* ([Romans 3:4](#)).

## The Secret Kept Oozing Out

Another major problem with the Messianic Secret theory is the way the secret kept oozing out. It is doubtful that Christ ever expected to completely contain His messianic secret. He surely knew that many would not obey His requests regarding secrecy. Consider once again this key passage in Mark:

*“A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, ‘If you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ‘See that you don’t tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.’ Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere”* ([Mark 1:40–45](#)).

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<sup>13</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Minneapolis MN (Fortress Press, 1901, First Fortress Press edition 2001) 314.

<sup>14</sup> Ockham’s razor is a philosophical expression meaning that ‘the simpler answer is often the correct one’.

Why would Wrede's Mark write this in his gospel? It goes against the entire grain of his theory. The same applies to these other Markan passages:

*“Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret”* ([Mark 7:24](#)).

*“Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it”* ([Mark 7:36](#)).

And so James D. G. Dunn argued persuasively:

“And why is it on several occasions after Jesus gives a strict command to silence that Mark immediately goes on to tell how the news was broadcast far and wide ([1:25–28; 43–45; 7:36f.](#)) If the Messianic secret motif was added to explain why Jesus was not recognized as Messiah, and part of that motif is the command to demons and men not to tell of their cures, I am at a loss to understand what Mark was trying to achieve by adding or at least retaining the publicity sequel. For the whole point of these passages is that the secret commanded was not kept. The command to silence failed, and so the so-called attempt to keep His Messianic secret also failed. If the Messianic secret was a Markan theory, then these publicity passages are the *reductio ad absurdum* of that theory.”<sup>15</sup>

## **Why Did Mark Leave The Account Of The Healing Of Blind Bartimaeus?**

Another problem for Wrede's theory is to explain why Mark included the account of the healing of blind Bartimaeus.

*“Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means ‘son of Timaeus’), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him.’ So they called to the blind man, ‘Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.’ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ Jesus asked*

<sup>15</sup> J.D.G. Dunn, *The Messianic Secret in Mark*, Tyndale Bulletin 21, (1970) 100. From web address [\(99+\) The Messianic Secret in Mark | Samuel Mpereh-Academia.edu](#) retrieved April 4, 2023.



*him. The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to see.' 'Go,' said Jesus, 'your faith has healed you.' Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road" ([Mark 10:46–52](#)).*

About this decisive passage, Dunn showed the weakness for Wrede's view:

*"To cite but one other instance, it is certainly remarkable, if we believe that the Messianic secret motif decisively shaped the material, that Bartimaeus should be allowed to be depicted as twice loudly hailing Jesus as Son of David—and Jesus neither rebukes him nor tells him to be silent ([10:46ff.](#))! In view of the Messianic significance of the title Son of David ([12:35–37a](#)) it is surely quite inadequate to dismiss this pericope as having nothing to do with the theory of the Messianic secret, as Wrede and those who follow him do."<sup>16</sup>*

### **Peter's Confession At Caesarea Philippi**

What are we to make of Peter's great confession of Christ as Messiah in Caesarea Philippi?

*"Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, 'Who do people say I am?' They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah'" ([Mark 8:27–30](#)).*

According to Wrede's theory, Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah. Therefore, Mark invented 'Peter's great confession of Christ as Messiah' to be in agreement with beliefs current among Christians in his day, along with Christ's enigmatic command to keep the great truth a secret.

But Wrede's theory was simply "too clever by half" as the expression goes. It would have been so much easier for Mark to simply invent a Jesus that claimed to be the Messiah, than to accept the very complicated theory put forward by Wrede.

The modern reader has a choice of accepting the gospel of Mark as an inspired work of the Holy Spirit reliably conveying the life of the historical Jesus of Nazareth. Or they can choose to accept Wrede's theory that the gospel of Mark is nothing but a deceptive invention

<sup>16</sup> J. D.G. Dunn, *The Messianic Secret in Mark*, Tyndale Bulletin 21, (1970) 100. From web address [\(99+\) The Messianic Secret in Mark | Samuel Mpereh—Academia.edu](#) retrieved April 4, 2023.

for the purpose of advancing a theological agenda divorced from the historical Jesus.<sup>17</sup> There is nothing in the evidence that compels such unbelief and every reason to have confidence that Mark's portrayal, although theological, still conveys the historical Jesus.

### **The Triumphal Entry**

Even more difficult than Peter's confession is for Wrede to explain Mark's purpose regarding the inclusion of Christ's Triumphal Entry, Mark's purpose to include the account of Christ's Triumphal entry, in which Jesus openly accepts, in a very public act, His role as Messiah of Israel.

If Mark was writing to show that Jesus suppressed the public awareness of His status as Messiah, it is incomprehensible that he included the Triumphal Entry which in no way, shape, or form, does anything to suppress the public proclamation of Jesus as Messiah.

*"As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.' They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, 'What are you doing, untying that colt?' They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna!' 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!' 'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'" ([Mark 11:1-8](#)).*

### **Jesus' Confession As Messiah Before The High Priest**

Again, troubling for Wrede's theory is to explain why Mark would include the open confession of Christ as to his identity as Messiah before the high priest in his gospel:

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<sup>17</sup> It is no help to suggest that 'the invention occurred in the tradition Mark adopted' rather than Mark's own invention(s), since we are still left to explain how the "Spirit of Truth" ([1 John 4:6](#)) could inspire deceptions about the very Son of God.

*“Again the high priest asked him, ‘Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?’ ‘I am,’ said Jesus. ‘And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven’”* ([Mark 14:61–62](#)).

This much should convince us that Wrede’s theory of the Messianic Secret does not stand up under scrutiny. This does not mean that he has not raised an important biblical issue, for surely he has.

### **Wrede’s Life And Change Of Heart**

It was most unfortunate that William Wrede, born and raised in the family of a Lutheran pastor with conservative theological leanings, instead rejected his biblical heritage and threw in his lot with the higher liberal German scholarship of the era. Perhaps echoes of this conservative heritage leaned on his mind in later years, and contributed toward Wrede’s change-of-view concerning his theory. Indeed, Hans Rollmann explained Wrede’s change of heart about the Messianic Secret late in his life:

“Shortly before his death, as documented in a letter to his old teacher and benefactor, Harnack, Wrede changed his mind about the messianic consciousness of Jesus, which he now considered much more likely.”<sup>18</sup>

### **When Did Jesus Understand His Messianic Identity?**

Wrede raised a perennial question about Jesus’ own self-consciousness of His identity. Did Jesus always understand that He was God? That He was the Messiah? Or were these growing areas of understanding and consciousness for Jesus? Here the theologian and the philosopher may speculate. But in the final analysis, the New Testament presents a Jesus who is at all times fully aware of His unique divine-human personality and His Messianic mission.

### **The Divine Purpose For The Messianic Secret Motif**

Moving on from Wrede’s theory, but wishing to make sense of the genuine New Testament evidence that Jesus did in fact suppress public knowledge of His Messianic identity, we shall attempt to put it all in biblical and historical perspective.

What I shall attempt to show is that the historical background will explain Jesus’ actions. Specifically, I will make the case that *to openly proclaim one’s messianic identity during the times in which Jesus lived*

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<sup>18</sup> Hans Rollmann, *William Wrede*, article in *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, Editor Donald K. McKim, Downers Grove IL (InterVarsity Press, 1998) 397.

*was a revolutionary act, quickly to bring the wrath of Rome against anyone making such claims.*

I argue that Christ indeed attempted to tamp down on public acknowledgements of His Messianic identity. There were certainly exceptions. In Samaria, He openly acknowledged His Messiahship to the woman at the well ([John 4:26](#)). But generally, Christ kept His identity as Messiah quiet until He was ready to make the decisive acknowledgement at the Triumphal Entry and throughout holy week; thus leading to His arrest and crucifixion for claiming to be the Messianic King of the Jews.

### **The Typical Jewish Expectation Of The Coming Messiah**

Bart Ehrman described a typical Messianic expectation among Jews within the Second Temple period:

“God would remember his promise. And so an anointed one was still to come—a future king like David, one of his descendants, who would reestablish the Davidic kingdom and make Israel once more a great and glorious independent state . . . This future anointed one—the messiah—would be like his greatest ancestor, a mighty warrior and skilled politician. He would overthrow the oppressors who had taken over the promised land and reestablish both the monarchy and the nation. It would be a glorious time. It appears that some Jews who had this expectation of the future messiah saw him [Jesus Christ] in political terms: as a great and powerful king who would bring about a restored kingdom through military force, taking up the sword to dispose of his enemies.”<sup>19</sup>

### **The Charged Political Atmosphere**

J. R. Porter starts us off:

“He avoided the public use of the title ‘Messiah’ because of its nationalistic and revolutionary implications. In the volatile political climate of Roman Palestine, anyone suspected of claiming to be the Messiah was unlikely to survive long, and so it proved with Jesus: the inscription affixed to his cross, which all four gospels record.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee*, New York (HarperCollins Publishers, 2014) 115.

<sup>20</sup> J. R. Porter, *Jesus Christ: The Jesus of History, The Christ of Faith*, New York (Oxford University Press, 1999, 2007) 165.

Robert Stein provided further insight into how Christ managed His ministry in the face of the constant danger poised against him in those tumultuous times:

“A message on the coming of the kingdom of God could easily be misunderstood or misused by his opponents. By his use of parables Jesus made it more difficult for his opponents to bring such accusations against him. It is probable that Jesus preferred the title ‘Son of man’ over that of Christ (Messiah) for a similar reason. For the latter title had many political and militaristic connotations and was thus liable to be misunderstood, whereas this was not the case with the title ‘Son of man’ . . . As a result, Jesus frequently used parables to protect himself from such misunderstandings by ‘those outside.’”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Robert H. Stein, *The Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings*, Philadelphia PA (The Westminster Press, 1978) 41.

## WEATHER: UNDER GOD'S CONTROL

By Jefferey Becker

The weather is part of our lives, no matter where we live or when we were born. Every day we must factor the weather into our thinking—whether we like it or not. Ultimately, weather is not just a topic of daily consideration, nor is it a random circumstance that people, animals, and plants passively endure. Rather, weather is an active intervention that the [Our] sovereign God providentially orchestrates and that we constantly . . . weather.

### Weather Through The Lens Of Psalm 104

Our ancestors saw supernatural agency behind natural occurrences. In his book *Remarkable Providences*, Increase Mather records numerous occasions in which, he believed, God worked through the weather to accomplish His will.

Today this belief would be labeled “theological meteorology” and derided as seeking to re-enchant our thoroughly secularized modern world. Our culture largely subscribes to what has been called the butterfly effect: “the notion that a butterfly stirring the air today in Peking can transform storm systems next month in New York” ( James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science*). This notion seems scientific and educated but godless.

Removing the Lord from the weather has not enabled society to escape the perils of the climate. Almost daily around the world people are exposed to catastrophic events that our predecessors called Acts of God: floods, hurricanes, lightning, drought.

*The climate and weather, the Bible teaches, are ultimately under God's full control.* In that sense, God is central to the weather we experience every day. Not one person who has ever lived on earth has been able to escape the presence of the Almighty as God has displayed Himself to us through the weather.

Psalm 104 demonstrates how weather pictures God. The psalmist glowingly portrays water, the sky, land, rain, and all weather as coming from the hand of our benevolent Creator. Recognizing this should cause tremendous exultation in God's people! May our consideration of Psalm 104 produce the same result in our souls and lives as it did for the

psalmist: “O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all” ([v. 24](#)).

### **Chaos Theory vs Bible Theology ([Psalm 104:1–9](#))**

Chaos theory indicates that weather may fall into observable patterns sufficient to generate forecasts but that weather overall is governed by random chance. Following the thinking of evolution, that the design observed in nature is illusory and imposed by humans seeking order, modern meteorology stipulates that no one can be sure that a certain level of chaos does not underlie our weather systems. In other words, butterflies and grasshoppers flapping their wings may produce major storms (Bernard Mergen, *Weather Matters*).

When we open Scripture, we enter another world. We see that God makes and balances the clouds ([Psalm 104:3](#); [Job 37:16](#)). The National Weather Service estimates that a typical fair-weather cumulus cloud weighs about 1 billion 400 million pounds, yet the Lord effortlessly balances each one. God also controls the waters ([Psalm 104:6–9](#)). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration states that “Earth is the only known planet (or moon) to have consistent, stable bodies of liquid water on its surface.”

Every cloud we see scudding across the sky and every drop of water we drink should prompt us to worship the Lord.

### **Weather As A Sacred Event ([Psalm 104:10–15](#))**

Continuing his emphasis on water, the psalmist says that God waters the hills from His chambers ([Psalm 104:13](#)). Have you (like most people) ever said, “It rained”? Only God can make and give water. Consider the following verses:

- “[God] makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” ([Matthew 5:45 ESV](#)).
- “[God] . . . did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness” ([Acts 14:17 ESV](#)).
- “Are there any among the false gods of the nations that can bring rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are you not he, O Lord our God? We set our hope on you, for you do all these things” ([Jeremiah 14:22 ESV](#)).
- “[God] covers the heavens with clouds; he prepares rain for the earth; he makes grass grow on the hills” ([Psalm 147:8 ESV](#)).

- If Christians spoke Scripturally about something as ordinary as God producing rainfall, who knows what the Lord might be pleased to achieve through our obedience!

### **Humans As Sky People ([Psalm 104:16-26](#))**

In his study Bible, Henry Morris remarks that Psalm 104 speaks eloquently of God's providential care of all His creatures in this post-Flood world. Theologically, *providence* carries the meaning of God sustaining and guiding human destiny.

Christians should not be like crabs who crawl along the bottom of the sea, oblivious to what goes on above. Christians should not even be like fish in the ocean, accustomed to water and weather and therefore taking those for granted. Have you ever stopped to think that your everyday existence hinges upon your inhabiting an “ocean of air”? To seek the source of water and weather, look up, all the way up to God.

Psalm 104 also points out the centrality of the sun ([vv. 19, 22](#)). The design of our solar system places the sun at the center of the orbiting planets and moons. The sun is the greatest external entity influencing the earth's weather.

These natural concepts should guide *our realization that God is the greatest eternal entity influencing our weather and our lives*. Consider the following verses:

- “In Him we live and move and have our being” ([Acts 17:28](#)).
- “In Him all things hold together” ([Colossians 1:17 NASB](#)).
- “For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things” ([Romans 11:36](#)).
- “Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth!” ([Isaiah 45:22](#)).

If we spent less time looking passively at [our] screens and more time [actively] observing the clouds, the sun, the rain, [thus] weather [overall], might we [then] be more likely to see God and, in His providence, be drawn to think about Him?

### **Weather As Supernatural ([Psalm 104:27-29](#))**

Are farmers some of the few remaining Americans daily forced to reckon with their entire dependence upon God? Where do you believe your food originates: the supermarket, the food packager, or the Lord?



The psalmist strikingly depicts how our moment-by-moment existence is contingent upon God's gifts.

Everyday existence hinges upon God, whether we consider weather on a global scale, as dramatically portrayed in the Flood account of Genesis [chapters 6–8]; on a local scale, as in [Psalm 147:15–18](#), where the snow and wind and cold are directly attributed to God's commands; or on an immediate personal level, seen in [Matthew 14:22–33](#), when Jesus controlled the wind and waves and when Peter walked on water.

Truly, God's providence is His caring provision for His people as He guides them in their journey of faith through life, accomplishing His purpose in them, evidenced in these cases by the weather.

As part of God's providence, weather then becomes permeated and suffused with the presence of the Lord, which proves helpful in combating the relentless materialistic mindset of our postmodern culture.

### **Linger A Moment Over [Matthew 14:22–33](#)**

In this passage Jesus demonstrated His deity by controlling the wind and waves. Peter then demonstrated both his faith and his fickleness by initially trusting that Jesus could make him walk on water, only to plummet when the wind blew.

Peter illustrates us in the storms of life. *We can accomplish much for Christ only if we keep our eyes fastened on Him, not our circumstances.*

Jesus doesn't expect us to walk on water. The lessons we should learn from this incident are (1) that Jesus is God and (2) that even the best of us are vulnerable to the weather and our doubts. Peter, a human, couldn't keep himself afloat. We all are like Peter. Our best efforts won't keep our heads above water. Only Jesus can enable us to surmount the nasty waves that sin blows our way.

The universe and the weather are not best understood as either a machine cranking out events or a computer grinding through a program. *The world and the weather are better Biblically understood as personal in the deepest sense, designed by God for His glory and for our ultimate good.*

### **Weather Meant To Be Seen ([Psalm 104:30–32](#))**

[Psalm 104](#) tells us that the Lord renews “the face of the earth” and “looks on the earth” ([vv. 30, 32](#)). The words “face” and “looks” tell us that God intended earth to be observed.

Consider your own face: your face functions as part of God's image. The earth and its weather function as God's pictures, vividly portraying various aspects of God. Author Eric Sloane says, "I am convinced that the sky and its clouds are things designed for man's information and spiritual contentment. I am convinced that the sky was designed to be seen by man" (*Look at the Sky and Tell the Weather*).

### **Weather As A Divine Script ([Psalm 104:33-35](#))**

God controls our history providentially through weather. God controls our weather providentially throughout history. Weather matters because God matters. God changed all of human history through the Flood. After the Flood, God made a promise: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease" ([Genesis 8:22](#)).

The regularity of the seasons and the structure of the climate derive from this promise. And since all of God's promises are "Yes" and "Amen" ([2 Corinthians 1:20](#)), and since God is the creator and sustainer of all things ([Colossians 1:17](#)), we can rightly proclaim that Jesus is the reason for the seasons!

### **Weather Matters Because God Matters**

Now let's ponder prophecy in Revelation. Many of the end-time phenomena detailed in [chapters 6-19](#) involve weather: the sun is darkened; water turns to blood; objects plummet from the sky.

Two witnesses in [Revelation 11:6](#) are given control over rainfall and weather (control that, by contrast, Jesus did not give to the apostles). In the providence of God, prophecy is the history of the future.

Since humans tend to notice severe unusual weather, God is pleased to use unprecedented weather events in the future to secure the attention of otherwise blithe, godless humanity.

In *Weather Matters*, Bernard Mergen understands "aimless weather" as a metaphor of the human condition: "achieving no proper history and leaving no result" (quoting *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by William James). Conversely, [Psalm 104:31](#) says, "May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in His works."

Weather matters in the past, present, and future because God has written a divine script for our reality by providentially controlling our weather ([Acts 15:18](#)).

## God Pictures Himself Through Weather

In Systematic Theology, Robert Duncan Culver includes an interesting section on [Psalm 104](#). He writes,

“The discerning believer . . . understands his dependence on God. . . . “Nature knows” or “Mother Nature” . . . are forms of statements utterly out of place in a Christian setting. . . . Streams, springs, wild animals, plants and the like, are directly dependent on Him. Our daily cycle of life is God’s order for us. . . . It is God’s personal knowledge that ensures nature’s . . . magnificent rhythms and cycles.”

## Conclusion

To constantly need the Lord angers and frustrates rebellious sinners ([Romans 1:21](#)). Being required to trust God for life and breath and all things ([Acts 17:25](#)) offends proud people who prefer to trust idols such as science and technology.

But every drop of water above us, every drop of water within us, every drop of water around us comes from and requires God. He providentially oversees and superintends the weather.

Our response to this truth should echo the psalmist’s: “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. May my meditation be sweet to Him; I will be glad in the Lord” ([Psalm 104:33–34](#)).

Since creation depends on the Creator, Psalm 104 presents a startling conclusion: “May sinners be consumed from the earth, and the wicked be no more” ([v. 35](#)).

May your life and your eternity be characterized by the last words of verse 35: “Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord!”

*Jefferey Becker is the former pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Gibson, Corning N.Y.*

## **BIBLE QUIZ: THE BOOK OF GENESIS**

1. Which is *not* true of the Book of Genesis?
  - a. It is the book of beginnings
  - b. It describes the origins of the universe
  - c. It has eleven “This is the generations or account of” (Toledot) sections
  - d. It describes the first account of parallel universes
  
2. Which is *not* true of the creation account in Genesis Chapter One?
  - a. It describes the creation of the entire universe
  - b. God created everything in six days and rested on the seventh
  - c. God created signs in the heavens to guide astrologers
  - d. God gave man dominion over His creation
  
3. Who was *not* a son of Adam and Eve?
  - a. Cain
  - b. Abel
  - c. Skip
  - d. Seth
  
4. Which is *not* true concerning man’s fall described in Genesis Chapter Three?
  - a. The Serpent deceived Adam
  - b. God placed a curse on the serpent
  - c. God placed a curse upon the earth and upon mankind
  - d. The Lord God provided garments of skin to clothe Adam and Eve
  
5. Which is *not* true of the Cain and Abel story in Genesis Chapter Four?
  - a. Cain was the older brother
  - b. Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd
  - c. Cain murdered his brother
  - d. Cain hung himself because he felt remorse

6. Which is *not* true of the flood described in Genesis Six through Eight?
- a. God determined to destroy all mankind because of continual evil
  - b. God told Noah to build an Ark to save his family and representative animal life
  - c. Noah offered swimming lessons to those interested
  - d. Noah preached about God's impending judgment
7. After the flood, God announced the rainbow as a sign (Genesis 9:12–16) meaning:
- a. Every rainbow proves the power of Noah's leadership
  - b. Demonstrates God's approval of all sexual expressions
  - c. God will never again destroy the earth with a worldwide flood
  - d. Double and triple rainbows increase God's promise
8. In Genesis 11:1–9, why did God oppose the building of the Tower of Babel?
- a. God wants people living in small towns rather than in cities
  - b. Such a tower clearly violated Babylonian building codes
  - c. The tower was being built to promote false religion and worship
  - d. God knew the tower would become a tourist trap
9. Which is *not* true of the patriarch Abraham (Genesis 11–25)?
- a. As an infant, he was hidden in a basket in the Nile River
  - b. He entered into covenant with God and was promised land, seed, and blessing
  - c. He left the city 'Ur of the Chaldeans' and migrated to the Promised Land
  - d. At God's command he prepared to slay his son Isaac
10. Which is *not* true of the relationship between Isaac's sons Esau and Jacob?
- a. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a pot of stew
  - b. Jacob deceived his aging father into giving him Esau's blessing
  - c. Jacob fled from Esau fearing his brother was planning to kill him
  - d. Jacob and Esau eventually opened a chain of Mexican restaurants together

Answers:

Id 2c 3c 4a 5d 6c 7c 8c 9a 10d

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