

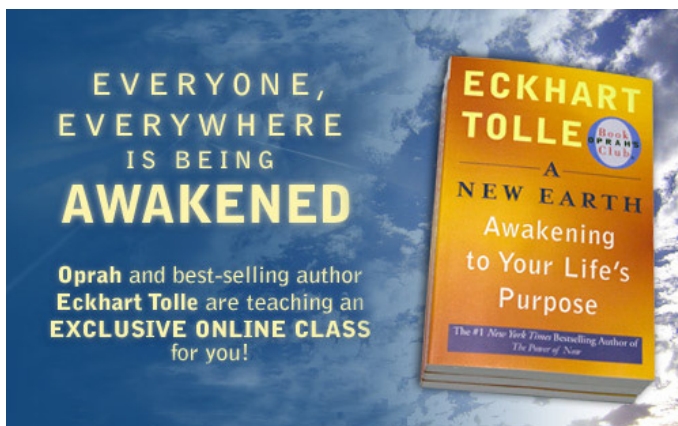


ZWTF

SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2013 Zapping-you Whenever Thoughts Flow

SPECIAL REPORT: Exposing New Age Religion

A critique of Eckhart Tolle's, *A New Earth*, by Martin Zender



There was some discussion on Facebook not long ago about the book, *A New Earth*, by Eckhart Tolle. The comments centered around whether it was appropriate for a believer—or anyone else—to wade through a book full of pagan philosophy to find one or two kernels of truth the author somehow stumbled upon and managed to intelligently articulate. The Word of God clearly answers this question, and I would like to explore this with you today. Along the way, I will expose many facets of New Age religion, all of which oppose Pauline truth. This article will also help safeguard you against the “spiritualization” of God’s Word (which is merely another crafty way to disbelieve it), and Satan’s lie of “Unity now! Unity at all costs!” (The battle cry of many Christian churches.)

THE TEACHINGS OF ECKHART TOLLE

Eckhart Tolle is a self-proclaimed “spiritual teacher,” aligning himself with the New Age Movement. New Age is a religion of Monism. Monism proposes that everything

in the universe is reducible to one substance or reality, and therefore the fundamental character of the universe is unity. What this means is that, God is not *there* while you are *here*. Rather, you *are* God. In other words, Monism denies the existence of a Being separate from you Who grants life and takes it away. Rather, you *are* life, and therefore can never lose your essence. It follows that the keynote teaching of Monism must necessarily be the Immortality of the Soul. This teaching, we know, was first uttered by Satan; it was the inaugural lie proffered to Adam and Eve in Eden by one who would turn them (and us) from God: “You shall not surely die.”

The following is from pages 127-28 of *A New Earth*, by Eckhart Tolle, under the heading: INCONTROVERTIBLE PROOF OF IMMORTALITY:

The moment you say or think, “my life” and believe in what you are saying ... you have entered the realm of delusion. If there is such a thing as “my life,” it follows that I and life are two separate things, and so I can also lose my life, my imaginary treasured possession. Death becomes a seeming reality and a threat.

We could even say that the notion “my life” is the original delusion of separateness, the source of ego. If I and life are two, if I am separate from life, then I am separate from all things, all beings, all people. But how could I be separate from life? What “I” could there be apart from life, apart from Being? It is utterly impossible. So there is no such thing as “my life,” and I don’t have a life. I *am* life. I and life are one. It cannot be otherwise. So how could I lose my life? How can I lose something that I don’t have in the first place? How can I lose something that I Am? It is impossible.



We know from Scripture that God breathed life into an inert form, Adam, and Adam became a living soul. Life came from without (from God) and is therefore a treasured possession; Tolle calls this possession, “imaginary,” as does every other New Age teacher. For life to be a possession, one would have to receive it. To receive a thing, that thing must be given; a given thing implies a Giver, a notion repulsive to New Agers like Tolle. If life can be given, it can also be taken away—also known as death. This proposition (that is, the reality of death) is too humbling for most humans to entertain, which explains Satan’s first lie: “You shall not surely die.” The Deceiver knew how desperately humans crave immortality. Humans prefer to believe they *are* life, and will despise any teaching denying it.

On the topic of death, you can see how closely Christian teaching aligns with New Age teaching. Both groups believe Satan’s first lie.

Above all, humans fear death. Christ came to deliver us from death, a force affecting all of us. Deliverance from death (that is, resurrection), is the expectation of every believer. One can either embrace this Scriptural viewpoint and take one’s place as a creature of the Creator (looking outside him or herself to a Rescuer), or believe Satan’s lie that death is illusory, and thereby looking within for one’s sustenance. Tolle’s job (he is but the latest in a long line

of satanic messengers bent on popularizing our Adversary’s premier deception) is to awaken men and women to their inner Deity. You do not need Christ or the resurrection, says the Deceiver, along with Tolle, his messenger. Death is a non-existent enemy, a “seeming threat,” making resurrection a superfluous want. Why look to Christ? Nothing can be taken that was never given. Stop looking without for life; you *are* Life.

Standard Christian teaching on death also leads to this horrible lie.

Tolle not only believes that each human being is eternally self-sustaining, but that each human comprises the “I Am.” In other words, each of us is God. Needing a God is the old way of thinking, according to Tolle. No one needs a God, who is a God.

From page 71 of *The New Earth*:

The Truth is inseparable from who you are. Yes, you *are* the Truth. If you look for it elsewhere, you will be deceived every time. The very Being that you are is Truth. Jesus tried to convey that when he said, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” These words uttered by Jesus are one of the most powerful and direct pointers to the Truth, if understood correctly. If misinterpreted, however, they become a great obstacle. Jesus speaks of the innermost I Am, the essence identity of every man and woman, every life-form, in fact. He speaks of the life that you are.

According to Tolle, we who look outside ourselves for truth (to Jesus, for instance) are deceived. Tolle audaciously quotes Christ, warning against misinterpreting His words, then proceeds to misinterpret them himself. What Jesus meant to say, insists Tolle, is that *everyone* is the way, the truth, and the life. Everyone is “I Am.” None of us were created; we existed eternally. We always were, and always shall be. This is the essence of “I Am.” Only the lost need a Savior, and none of us were ever lost. Our only need is the “enlightenment,” “awakening,” and “awareness” of how “found” we have always been. Jesus Christ showed us the way of awareness. He, along with notable Buddhists and Hindus, demonstrated the perfect consciousness of inner Godhood that inheres in all of us. Or, I should say, “in all of Us.”

THE DEATH OF THINKING

In order to sell Satan’s original lie to a new audience of willing consumers, Tolle must remove his readers from Scripture. This, he does.

From pages 17-19 of *A New Earth*:

The more you make your thoughts (beliefs) into your identity, the more cut off you are from the spiritual dimension within yourself. Many “religious” people are stuck at that level. They equate truth with thought, and as they

are completely identified with thought (their mind), they claim to be in sole possession of the truth in an unconscious attempt to protect their identity. They don't realize the limitations of thought.

The new spirituality, the transformation of consciousness, is arising to a large extent outside of the structures of the existing institutionalized religions. There were always pockets of spirituality even in mind-dominated religions ... A growing number of followers of traditional religions realize that how "spiritual" you are has nothing to do with what you believe but everything to do with your state of consciousness ... Those unable to look beyond form become even more deeply entrenched in their beliefs, that is to say, in their mind.

And this, from page 70:

You won't find absolute truth if you look for it where it cannot be found: in doctrines, ideologies, sets of rules, or stories.

So much for Scripture, then. So much for belief and faith. What is there to believe if doctrines (that is, "teachings") do not exist?

God exhorts us, through His chosen messengers, to believe things. ("Doctrine" is simply a synonym for "teaching;" how ironic that Tolle himself eschews teaching in a book full of teaching; apparently, Tolle's teaching is the last we will ever need.) God carefully tells us what we must believe. For this, He uses words. Paul's gospel, for instance, is known as "the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). We cannot know these Words, written by God, apart from the mind. For this, God gave us brains. Paul encourages the believer, therefore, to be "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2)—not the removal of it.

Tolle, being a stereotypical New Ager, hates doctrine (words) and ideology (beliefs)

for the same reason most Pentecostals and emotional Christians (sorry for the redundancy) hate these same things: they divide people. Tolle writes on pages 70-71:

If you believe only your religion is the Truth, you are using it in the service of the ego. Used in such a way, religion becomes ideology and creates an illusory sense of superiority as well as division and conflict between people.

In other words, no one is right or wrong. If you insist on being right (when you are right), it proves only that you are wrong, that is, unenlightened. Enlightened ones accept

everything; all is one; one is all. There is no absolute truth; truth depends on individual perception. Thus, no one can be wrong; people merely perceive differently. "The ego creates separation, and separation creates suffering" (pg. 112). Oh, no. Not suffering. According to Tolle, the source of suffering is not God ("I create evil," Isaiah 45:7), but rather egos insisting upon knowing things. (The enlightened mind knows nothing; it merely exists.) Absolute truth separates people; blissful ignorance makes everyone happy. Tolerance and "acceptance of all," therefore, is seen by New Agers as the highest form of spiritual accomplishment.

Again, there are many parallels here within Christianity, especially the Pentecostal movement, where feeling and unity take precedence over correct teaching.

THE LIE OF "UNITY NOW"

Jesus did not come to bring peace, He said, but a sword (Matthew 10:34). God continually divides. The Word, itself, divides. This is the way God wants it—for now. "It must be that there are sects among you," writes the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 11:19), "that those who are qualified may be becoming apparent among you." God invented this

"Today, unity is misplaced truth. Being misplaced truth, it is a lie."

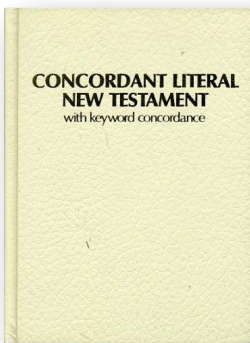
design for comparative purposes—to show the difference between good and evil. God is the One Who divided Eve from Adam, Who divided humanity at Babel, (at a time

when humanity preferred unity) and Who habitually favored and chose one person over another; He separated and chose Abel over Cain, Abraham over Haran, Jacob over Esau, Isaac over Ishmael, David over Saul, and so forth.

This truth is antithetical to Monism, which demands unity. Today, however, unity is misplaced truth. Being misplaced truth, it is a lie. God will eventually return everything to Himself (Romans 11:36), but not until the consummation of the eons (1 Corinthians 15:26-28). Until then, separation is the order of the day. What God has joined, let no one put asunder—yes. But what God has put asunder, let no one join.

2 Corinthians 6:14-19:

Do not become diversely yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness? Or what communion has light with darkness? Now what agreement has Christ with Belial? Or what part a believer with an unbeliever? Now what occurrence has a temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, according as God said, that I will be making My home and will be walking in them, and I will be their God, and



they shall be My people. Wherefore, Come out of their midst and be severed, the Lord is saying. And touch not the unclean, and I will admit you, and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.

God is not, presently, the Father of all. He is the God of all, but not the Father; Father speaks of relationship, and He is only Father to recipients of faith; He has yet to tender that (faith) to all. Therefore, the teaching of “The Fatherhood of God” is a doctrine of demons, as is, “The Brotherhood of Man.” We are not, at present, brothers with every living human. If this were so, why the above exhortation concerning severance from those still unclean? (Note: It is not I who call these people unclean, but God.)

Within the body of Christ, there is to be unity, yes. This unity, however, cannot now be extended to unbelievers. This is a teaching of exclusivity, I realize. So be it. Exclusivity—for the eons—is God’s idea, not mine. As I have said, it will not always be this way. God Himself created these distinctions, and they still apply. Those who attempt to prematurely unify, therefore, are fighting God. They are attempting illegally, now, what God will accomplish, eventually, through Christ.

They are enemies of truth.

“EVERYTHING LEADS TO GOD”

According to Eckhart Tolle in, *A New Earth*, since everyone and every thing is God, there is no need for a Revelator (except for Tolle, I guess). That is, there is no need for Jesus Christ. From pages 25-26 of, *A New Earth*:

Underneath the surface appearance, everything is not only connected with everything else, but also with the Source of all life out of which it came. Even a stone, and more easily a flower or a bird, could show you the way back to God, to the Source, to yourself.

Ignoring the perverted disclosure that “God,” “the Source” and “myself” are interchangeable terms, I thought only Jesus Christ, the living Word, could show us the way back to the Father. “No one can come to the Father, except by Me,” He said. If one is to believe Tolle (I don’t recommend it), Jesus Christ underwent much ado for nothing. He should have simply pointed out a boulder along the Sea of Galilee and said to His disciples, “Stare at that while I go to lunch. It is the way back to God.”

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE

Have you ever wondered what is the primary purpose of your life? Is it to glorify God? To understand Him? No. According to Eckhart Tolle:

Once you have had a glimpse of awareness or Presence, you know it firsthand. It is no longer just a concept in your mind. You can then make a conscious choice to be present rather than to indulge in useless thinking. You can invite Presence into your life, that is to say, make space ... Opening yourself to the emerging consciousness and bringing its light into this world then becomes the primary purpose of your life. “I want to know the mind of God,” Einstein said. “The rest are details.” What is the mind of God? Consciousness. What does it mean to know the mind of God? To be aware. What are the details? Your outer purpose, and whatever happens outwardly.

“Consciousness’ is another one of Tolle’s terms for “awakening.” Tolle defines awakening as, “consciousness without thought” (pg. 259). Thinking is the great enemy of consciousness, and the great enemy of thinking is the mind. The goal is to “destroy the ego” (pg. 260), which Tolle identifies as “thinking” (pg. 22). As you arrive at this point, you are to “look upon what you do and where you are as the main purpose of your life” (pg. 265). Tolle calls



this occupation with self, “enormously empowering” (pg. 265). “Once that foundation is there,” says Tolle, “your external purpose becomes charged with spiritual power because your aims and intentions will be one with the evolutionary impulse of the universe” (pg. 265).

In this “enlightened” state, all aims and intentions become completely free of personal want; everything exists for the good of the “totality.” There is no ego, and no desire for anything greater than one’s self, not even such greatness to which Paul refers in Philippians, chapter three: “Toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). It is only an evil ego that could even contemplate such a future reward in heaven. It is this very ego that must be destroyed. Future reward in heaven is impossible, anyway, for there is no “above,” and no God to distribute anything, let alone reward. There is no future at all, only present: “Whereas the notion of purpose before was always associated with future, there is now a deeper purpose that can only be found in the present, through the denial of time”

(pg. 269).

Denial of time is also a key component of Preterism; God is doing everything at once; we are now, literally, seated among the celestials; “dead” people are already alive; God is now the Father of all; the universe is completed. Preterists mock those they call “Dispensationalists.” A so-called Dispensationalist simply believes God dispenses different things at different times.

The opposite of Dispensationalism is chaos.

A person’s highest goal, therefore (back to Tolle), is to be like a sapling, pushing its way through the soil. “The sapling doesn’t want anything,” says Tolle (pg. 268), “because it is at one with the totality, and the totality acts through it.”

With full consciousness, doing, rather than thinking, becomes the new reality. Under a section titled, AWAKENED DOING, Tolle writes:

Awakened doing is the outer aspect of the next stage in the evolution of consciousness on our planet. The closer we get to the end of our present evolutionary stage, the more dysfunctional the ego becomes, in the same way that a caterpillar becomes dysfunctional just before it transforms into a butterfly. But the new consciousness is arising even as the old dissolves. We are in the midst of a momentous event in the evolution of human consciousness.

To become fully conscious, one must lose not only the ego, but also the thinking and the rational mind. This leads to “awakened doing.” Such concepts can be very confusing to the unenlightened mind, so Tolle explains them (the death of the ego, the awakening of the conscience) using the simple illustration of a lion and a zebra. I will let the author himself enlighten you (pg. 292):

When the lion tears apart the body of the zebra, the consciousness that incarnated into the zebra-form detaches itself from the dissolving form and for a brief moment awakens to its essential immortal nature as consciousness;



“A new species is arising on the planet. It is arising now, and you are it.” -Eckhart Tolle, *A New Earth*

and then immediately falls back into sleep and reincarnates into another form. When the lion becomes old and cannot hunt anymore, as it draws its last breath, there is again the briefest of glimpses of an awakening, followed by another dream of form.

Does Tolle have a verse for that? He does not. Scripture (along with belief, faith, and the hope of resurrection and future reward) is the enemy of the destroyed ego, the awakened consciousness, the denial of time, and the new planet

What Jesus meant to say was, “The egoless shall inherit themselves.”

dreamed of by Eckhart Tolle and other New Agers. Because the Word of God smashes their inane (and insane) concepts, New Agers like Tolle must concoct scripture of their own. Along this line, Tolle tells us what Jesus really meant in the Sermon on the Mount. If you have been anticipating a literal, redeemed Earth and a blessed future, the following excerpt will disappoint you: the future comes, not from without, but

from within the collective consciousness; the planet becomes transformed, not by Christ, but by enlightened human beings who have managed (miraculously) to stop thinking:

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes a prediction that to this day few people have understood. He says, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” In modern versions of the Bible, “meek” is translated as humble. Who are the meek or the humble, and what does it mean that they shall inherit the earth?

The meek are egoless. They are those who have awakened to their essential true nature as consciousness and recognize that essence in all “others,” all life-forms. They live in the surrendered state and so feel their oneness with the whole and the Source. They embody the awakened consciousness that is changing all aspects of life on our planet, including nature, because life on earth is inseparable from the human consciousness that perceives and interacts with it. That is the sense in which the meek will inherit the earth. A new species is arising on the planet. It is arising now, and you are it (pg. 309).

The title of Tolle’s book is, *A New Earth*. This is not the new earth you and I expect. Neither is it the new earth described in the book of Revelation, wrought by God, onto which descends the New Jerusalem. No, that new earth entertains a future of peace, harmony and salvation, things considered “structural dysfunction” by Eckhart Tolle.

I have excerpted the following from pages 307-08 of, *A New Earth*. Substitute the word “resurrection” for “awaken-

ing” in the last paragraph to discover just how anti-Christ, anti-God, and anti-Scripture Tolle’s viewpoint truly is:

All utopian visions have this in common: the mental projection of a future time when all will be well, we will all be saved, there will be peace and harmony and the end of our problems. There have been many such utopian visions. Some ended in disappointment, others in disaster.

At the core of all utopian visions lies one of the main structural dysfunctions of the old consciousness: looking

“At the core of all utopian visions lies the main dysfunction: looking to the future for salvation.”

—Eckhart Tolle, *A New Earth*

ing to the future for salvation. The only existence the future actually has is as a thought form in your mind, so when you look to the future for salvation, you are unconsciously looking to your own mind for salvation. You are trapped in form, and that is ego.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth,” writes

the biblical prophet. The foundation for a new earth is a new heaven—the awakened consciousness. The earth—external reality—is only its outer reflection. The arising of a new heaven and by implication a new earth are not future events that are going to make us free. Nothing is going to make us free because only the present moment can make us free. That realization is the awakening. Awakening as a future event has no meaning because awakening is the realization of Presence. So the new heaven, the awakened consciousness, is not a future state to be achieved. A new heaven and a new earth are arising within you at this moment.

THE MEANS TO YOUR PURPOSE

To discover your purpose in life, outlined by Eckhart Tolle, you must empty your mind and stop thinking. This is called “consciousness without thought” (pg. 259). Three ways to accomplish this are:

- ▶ “invite Presence into your life” (pg. 261)
- ▶ “live in the surrendered state” (pg. 309)
- ▶ “open yourself to the emerging consciousness” (pg. 261)

These are three of the most dangerous things a human can do. An open, surrendered mind becomes a red carpet for demonic possession. This is what happened to Eckhart Tolle. “But Eckhart Tolle is a nice man,” you say. “And Oprah Winfrey, who promotes Eckhart Tolle and popular-



ized his book through her famous book club, is a wonderful person.” No matter. Demon possession can be, and often is, pleasing to the soul. It produces fine television shows, slick magazines, and New York Times bestsellers. It is pleasing, not only to the souls of the possessed—those who imagine themselves enlightened—but also to those souls receiving the teaching. Satan is, today, “being transfigured into a messenger of light. It is no great thing, then, if his servants also are being transfigured as dispensers of righteousness” (1 Corinthians 11:14-15).

In the back of *A New Earth*, a promotion for Tolle’s website reads: “The work of Eckhart Teachings responds to the urgent need of our times: the transformation of consciousness and the arising of a more enlightened humanity.”

Ah. The enlightenment of humanity apart from Christ; Satan’s playground.

In an article appearing in my newsletter, *The Clanging Gong News*, titled, “Be Wary of Full Surrender” (Volume 1, Issue 39, November 28, 2009), I wrote:

Few phrases sound so religious and right as the phrase “full surrender.” Everyone wants to walk in accord with the will of God, but the way to do that is not to let go of your mind and “become one” with the divine spirit. This is dangerous, demonic, New Age talk. We acquaint ourselves with God’s will through the study of Scripture. This makes us intelligent. Don’t fear intelligence! Scriptural intelligence is the safeguard against demonic influence. Becoming intelligent allows one to act upon God’s revealed exhortations. Only the spirit of God can cause a person to do this. Do not surrender your mind! Do not “invite God in.” You are not a vacuum. God already lives



in you. A neutral, Word-vacated mind is Satan's red carpet. The remedy to this? "Let the Word of God dwell in you richly!" (Colossians 3:16).

Watch how the apostle Paul combats empty minds engaged only with self-occupation (an oxymoron, I know—"empty minds engaged"—but this is Tolle's way: teaching against teaching, and setting forth doctrines denying doctrine):

If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested with Him in glory. —Colossians 3:1-4.

In one swipe, Paul demolishes every axiom of Eckhart Tolle's, *A New Earth*. We are not to be focused on "the Now," but rather to be seeking that which is above, where Christ is. We are not to be disposed to our own consciousness, on earth, but rather to that which is above earth. Our purpose in this life is not to discover how we *are* life, but to realize how we figuratively died with Christ (Romans 6:8), and how our life (the life given us by God) is now hid together with Christ, in God. We are not to "find our meaning only in the present," considering future glory and reward so much "structural dysfunction," but are rather to anticipate the manifestation of Christ, at which time we shall be manifested together with Him in glory.

IS THAT SO?

Before addressing my main point, that is, whether or not it is appropriate for believers (or anyone else, for that matter) to wade through a book full of pagan philosophy to find one small kernel of truth the author somehow stumbled upon and managed to intelligently articulate, I must share with you what I consider a most inane anecdote from *A New Earth*, forwarded by Eckhart Tolle as an example of the kind of mental state we should all strive for.

Tolle writes of a Zen Master, Hakuin, living in a small town in Japan. The man was held in high regard and many people came to him for spiritual teaching. One day, the teenage daughter of Hakuin's next-door neighbor became pregnant. Her angry parents sought the identity of the father, and the girl said, "It was Hakuin, the Zen Master." Naturally, the parents rushed over to Hakuin's house and gave him the what-for. "You impregnated our daughter!" they accused. Hakuin's response was: "Is that so?"

News of the scandal spread throughout the town, and

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Hakuin lost his reputation as a wise man. No one came to see him anymore. Hakuin remained unmoved. When the child was born, the parents brought the baby to Hakuin. "You are the father, so you look after

him," they said. The Master took loving care of the child. A year later, the mother confessed to her parents that the real father was a young man who worked at the local butcher shop. Distressed, the parents rushed over to Hakuin's house to apologize and ask forgiveness. "Our daughter confessed that you are not the father!" they said. Hakuin's response was: "Is that so?" He handed over the baby and went his merry, holy way.





Scripture teaches us to hold loosely to this world, to the extent that, “those lamenting may be as not lamenting, and those rejoicing as not rejoicing” (1 Corinthians 7:29-30). Paul’s overall point is that this era is ending (verse 28), and we ought to modify our responses to life’s circumstances (the highs not so high, the lows not so low), applying the saved energy toward undistracted service to the Lord (verse 35).

This, however (“Is that so?”) is absurd. Tolle so endorses the annihilation of ego that he sets forth Zen Master Hakuin’s unfeeling, robotic response as the height of spiritual awakening.

No spiritually-enlightened person in the Bible ever acted in such a way. The men and women of God were full of emotion. None of them over-emoted, but neither were they zombies of Zen. I speak even of our Lord. When Jesus’ message was rejected by Israel, He did not say, “Is that so?” Instead, he lamented over the city so near His heart: “Jerusalem! Jerusalem! who art killing the prophets and pelting with stones those who have been dispatched to her! How many times do I want to assemble your children in the manner a hen is assembling her brood under her wings—and you will not! (Matthew 23:37).” When Lazarus’ sister Mary met Jesus on the road and told Him her brother and His dear friend Lazarus had died, Scripture says, “Jesus wept”

(John 11:35). It is a shame our Lord had not read Eckhart Tolle’s, *A New Earth*. He could have looked his dear friend in the eye and said, “Is that so?”

David was a man who lamented bitterly at the treachery of his son Absalom, and rejoiced with leaping and dancing at the return of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. If David was so spiritual, how did he miss the opportunity for a couple of well-placed “Is that so’s?”

When Paul and Barnabas disagreed as to whether or not Barnabas’ cousin Mark should accompany them on a missionary trip (Barnabas wanted him, Paul didn’t), Scripture says, “they became so incensed as to recoil from one another” (Acts 15:39). I have searched the entire context for an, “Is that so?”, and have failed to find it.

The spirit-filled men and women of Scripture reacted to life-events with unfeigned emotion. This is the way of the human, of the *true* human. The takeaway here, for me, is that the so-called “enlightened ones” of New Age transcendence—people like Tolle and his ilk; those who arrive at some mystical plane of “awareness” where nothing is good, nothing is bad, no one is right, no one is wrong, where there is no future or past, only the sacred “Now”—are in fact some of the most unnatural, unspiritual people on the planet.

HOW GOOD IS THE WELL?

In John, chapter 11, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a Sanhedrin (a session of the chiefs, scribes, and elders of the temple) to discuss the case of Jesus of Nazareth. One of them said, “What are we doing, seeing that this man is doing many signs? If we should be leaving him thus, all will be believing in him, and the Romans will come and take away our place as well as our nation.”

Verses 49-51:

Now a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being the chief priest of that year, said to them, “You are not aware of anything, neither are you reckoning that it is expedient for us that one man should be dying for the sake of the people and not the whole nation should perish.” Now this he said, not from himself, but, being the chief priest of that year, he prophesies that Jesus was about to be dying for the sake of the nation, and not for the nation only, but that He may be gathering the scattered children of God also into one.

Caiaphas, not meaning to, stated a truth. When he said, “It is expedient for us that one man should be dying for the sake of the people and not that the whole nation should perish,” what he meant was, “If we, the temple leaders, do not kill Jesus, the people will make him king and the Roman backlash will devastate Israel’s ruling class,

namely, us.” And yet the priest’s spoken words, taken from a higher, God-intended perspective, predicted the nation’s ultimate salvation via the pre-ordained death of the Man the Sanhedrin was about to murder.

Caiaphas “got it right.” Do we now attend his weekly Sanhedrin sessions, hoping for more truthful tidbits concerning the Messiah of Israel? No, we do not. His prophecy was unconscious; the man was evil as ever, unaware of his own utterance. God tweaked him for the briefest moment, and he “hit the lottery.” Did he ever hit it again? I doubt it.

In *A New Earth*, Eckhart Tolle hits some valuable truth:

- ▶ “Just be yourself” is good advice” (pg. 108)
- ▶ “Any negative emotion that is not fully faced and seen for what it is in the moment it arises does not completely dissolve. It leaves behind a remnant of pain” (pg. 141).
- ▶ “Nobody can tell you who you are” (pg. 189).
- ▶ “You don’t need to own anything to feel abundant” (pg. 191).
- ▶ “Most people define themselves through the content of their lives” (pg. 193).
- ▶ “Unhappiness or negativity is a disease on our planet” (pg. 213).

Do these truthful statements mean we attend the Eckhart Tolle School of Random Good Advice Woven into a Tapestry of Demonism? No. The well is poisoned. Even a poisoned well may, at rare intervals, produce an ounce of good water. But we do not trust it for our general drinking needs.

Scripture is sufficient teaching for all areas of life. Consider the above points in light of the gospel of grace, according to Paul:

- ▶ Paul answers Tolle’s “Just be yourself” quote with 1 Corinthians 15:10: “I am what I am by the grace of God.”
- ▶ Paul answers Tolle’s “negative emotion leaving behind pain” quote with Philippians 3:13, “Forgetting, indeed, those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front, toward the goal am I pursuing.”
- ▶ Paul answers Tolle’s “nobody can tell you who you are” quote with 1 Corinthians 4:3: “Now to me it is the least trifle that I may be being examined by you. But neither am I examining myself. He Who is examining me is the Lord.”
- ▶ Paul answers Tolle’s “you don’t need to own anything to feel abundant” quote with 1 Timothy 6:6-7: “Now devoutness with contentment is great capital; for nothing do we carry into the world, and it is evident that neither can we carry anything out.”

PAUL



▶ Paul answers Tolle’s “most people define themselves through the content of their lives” quote with 2 Corinthians 5:17: “So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!”

▶ Paul answers Tolle’s “unhappiness or negativity is a disease on our planet” quote by telling us about “the happy God” in 1 Timothy 1:11.

This is not to say that people can’t write books amplifying Scriptural truth; I do it for a living. But books like mine are Scripture-based. The well is pure. I may have the opposite problem as Tolle, in that the pure well may occasionally produce a bad ounce of water. But the spirit of God inside me—in addition to years of study of God’s Word—makes me a pretty good bet, truth-wise.

For the reader, it is a matter of spiritual discernment. Is God honored? Is His Word carefully considered in the original languages? Is humanity given its proper place as the creation of the Creator; clay in His hands? Then the writing will be a fair symphony, with only the occasional sour note.

On the other hand, is the human made out to be a God? Then watch out. Rather—*get* out.

PYTHON SPIRIT

In Acts, chapter 16, Paul, Silas, and Luke are teaching in Philippi. Luke writes:

Now it occurred, at our going to prayer, a certain maid, having a python spirit, meets us, who afforded a vast income to her masters, divining. She, following after Paul and us, cried, saying, “These men are slaves of God most high, who are announcing to you a way of salvation!” Now this she did on many days. Now Paul, being exasperated and turning about, said to the spirit, “I am charging you, in the name of Jesus Christ, to be coming out from her!” And it came out the same hour.



Why would Paul object to the free publicity of a woman touring Philippi, announcing to the citizenry at the top of her lungs the truth that Paul and his friends were “slaves of God most high ... announcing a way of salvation”? The woman spoke truth, yes, but the well was fouled; the truth sprung from demonic sources. A.E. Knoch writes in his *Concordant Commentary*:

Python is the name of Apollo in his character as an oracle. Those who were ventriloquists, speaking with their mouths closed, were called Pythons. It was a kind of demon possession, not at all uncommon in ancient Greece. Their ravings were highly esteemed by the superstitious idolaters. It was probably the enemy’s plan to discredit Paul’s message by a questionable commendation.

In *A New Earth*, Eckhart Tolle tells random truths, but the demonic source of even his brightest revelations begs us to question them.

A TIME TO SHUN

In 2 Timothy, chapter 3, Paul lists sinners who shall populate these last days, including those who will be selfish, fond of money, ostentatious, proud, calumniators, stubborn to parents, and so forth. The last breed of sinner in this nefarious list is the most damaging and deceiving, namely, those who are “fond of their own gratification rather than fond of God, having a form of devoutness yet denying its power.” Paul’s remedy? “These, also, shun.”

There is a religion today (one of many) imitating truth, though it be so far from it: the New Age religion. Having read, *A New Earth*, I can see that, as much as Eckhart Tolle claims a fondness of God, he is instead fond of his own gratification. He and all New Agers claim great spiritual enlightenment through ego-denying oneness with the universe, even as these very feats of mental prowess (utilized, ironically, to rid themselves of mental prowess) stroke the ego rather than destroy it. Proponents of the New Age religion become one, not with the universe, but with themselves. They have

a form of devoutness—via prayer, self-control, and the ever-popular “Is that so” mentality—at the same time denying its power. Occupation with the power of self blinds a person, every time, to the true power of God.

“These, also, shun.”

Paul does not say, “Give them a chance.” He does not say, “Wade through their garbage and look for something edible.” He does not say, “Every once in a while, these kinds of people hit on truth, so stick around to find it.” No. Rather, “These also, shun.” To put it in colloquial terms: *Get the hell out.*

BREAD IN A BLACK CAVE

What if there were a huge, black cave infested with thousands of poisonous spiders and snakes? Inside the cave, however—deep inside—is a piece of whole-wheat bread. Would you, in a hundred years, send anyone into the cave to find the bread? Of course not. There are much better sources of bread, readily had without spelunking into dens of iniquity.

THE SEDUCTION OF PHILOSOPHY

In Colossians, chapter 2, Paul writes:

Beware that no one shall be despoiling you through philosophy and empty seduction, in accord with human tradition, in accord with the elements of the world, and not in accord with Christ, for in Him the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily. And you are complete in Him.

The philosophy of Eckhart Tolle and the New Age religion is far from harmless. It is not passive deception occasionally producing truth. It is not a case of a broken clock that is right twice a day. A clock is passive. The teachings of Tolle and the New Age religion actively attract members of our race. It is hard for people to resist the lie of inherent immortality. This inaugural lie of Satan has never stopped seducing and deluding people.

It is hard to study Scripture; it is hard to be an “unashamed worker who correctly cuts the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). It is easy, however, to sit outside and stare at a rock. Or a flower. Or a bird. Who would not gravitate toward a religion that 1) makes you God, 2) relieves you of death, and 3) offers you effortless enlightenment?

Even a person who believes in Jesus Christ is one seductive phrase away from doubting Him. None of us think it could happen to us; it can. I have watched several of my closest friends abandon decades-long belief in the sovereignty of

“Even believers are one seductive phrase away from doubting Him.”

God through reading a single article by an articulate deceiver. Paul does not call philosophy “empty seduction” for nothing.

Faith is hard; one can see neither Christ nor God. Not only this, but God routinely disciplines those He loves (Hebrews, chapter 12). Growth in Christ takes a long time, too. Try defending the faith. That is, try “exposing, rebuking, and entreating” (2 Timothy 4:2). This is hard, oftentimes thankless work, routinely engendering hard feelings. Who among us doesn’t occasionally tire of these things? Who among us could not be tempted, on a bad day, to trade it all in for an easy religion advertising non-confrontation? Who wouldn’t want to sit on a meadow, stare at a daffodil, and congratulate him or herself for coming into a realization of truth?

Friends, human philosophy is mind candy. It is too risky even to dabble in. We, ourselves—members of Christ’s body—are susceptible to it. Even Paul guarded himself against it. If this is true of us—and of Paul—what can be said of the young in Christ, or those just considering Him? Should we risk sending them into the big, black cave for the tiniest nugget of truth? Why do that when the truth of God and Christ is so readily available, in draughts, through purer avenues?

PROTECTING OUR LOVED ONES

The apostle Paul continually fretted over his ecclesiastics, struggling both in prayer and in deed (writing, visiting, dispatching to them trusted men) to safeguard his believing family from deceptive influences. Listen to him in 2 Corinthians 11:2-5:

I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God. For I betroth you to one Man, to present a chaste virgin to Christ. Yet I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deludes Eve by its craftiness, your apprehensions should be corrupted from the singleness and pureness which is in Christ. For if, indeed, he who is coming is heralding another Jesus whom we do not herald, or you are obtaining a different spirit which you did not obtain, or a different evangel which you do now receive, you are bearing with him.

Paul compares the saints to a chaste virgin. He had presented the Corinthians to Christ, wanting more than anything their fidelity to his teaching. We have just discussed the seductive power of human philosophy. Philosophy itself began with Satan in Eden. From Eve’s perspective, what was so bad about a brief, innocent chat with one of God’s lovely creatures? Yet the serpent’s craftiness deluded Adam’s complement, driving God’s warning from her mind.

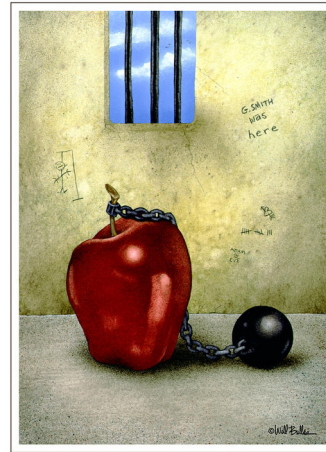
The word “craftiness” is the Concordant Version’s translation of the Greek word *panourgia*, whose English

elements are, EVERY-ACTION. Our adversary never sat still; he continually moved, flattered, and mesmerized his quarry. He denied Eve even a moment’s respite to catch her breath and think critically. He corrupted her apprehensions.

A single antagonist visited Corinth—likely a law-loving Circumcisionist—heralding another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different evangel than the one brought by Paul. For what does Paul berate the Corinthians? For receiving the foreign message?

For rejecting his evangel? Merely this: “You are *bearing* with him.”

The word translated “bearing” is the Greek word, *anechomai*. The *Concordant Literal New Testament* twice translated this word, “tolerate.” The definition of “tolerate” is: “to endure without repugnance; put up with” (www.dictionary.com). The thought of the Corinthians merely tolerating this deceiver—considering him, listening to him, giving him the floor—was



one bad apple

enough to animate Paul’s pen. The apostle—a paragon of spiritual discernment—so grasped the lure of human-centered religion, he slammed the Corinthians, not for believing it, but for merely letting it in the door.

Eckhart Tolle, in *A New Earth*, brings us another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different evangel than that brought by Paul. Are we to bear with him? Give him a chance to explain himself, as Eve gave Satan? No. We are to shun him, slamming shut his book at the first hint of lie.

This is the opposite of tolerance.

For the sake of those we would betroth as chaste virgins to Christ, let us keep *A New Earth*—and other books of its kind—far from the doors of their minds.

THE BEGINNING AND THE END

Eckhart Tolle’s book, *A New Earth*, begins with an account of evolution (pages 1 through 5) and ends with the universe returning to “the unmanifested, the inconceivable nothingness out of which it came” (pg. 279). To Eckhart Tolle, the God of Scripture is “inconceivable nothingness”; only His creation can bring Him to life. The only God of the New Age religion is that God which is Us.

I thoroughly reject the New Age religion. With Paul, I rejoice in and embrace the God, “out of whom, through whom, and for whom is all” (Romans 11:36). It is my hope that you will embrace Him as well—and never let Him go.

—Martin Zender