

*"...having the eyes of your heart enlightened..." Ephesians 1:18*

## Think About It

"UNBELIEF IS AS much of a choice as belief is. What makes it in many ways more appealing is that whereas to believe in something requires some measure of understanding and effort, not to believe doesn't require much of anything at all. *Fred Buechner, Whistling in the Dark*"

## Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The five elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate. Thank You**

## Schedule

### The Lord's Day

9:30 AM – Classes

Auditorium: The Gospel

13/14: Jesus in the Gospel of John

10:30 AM – Assembly

Speaking today: David Posey

2 PM Class at the Building

Room 13/14

Minor Prophets

5 PM (building)

Proverbs

Weekly Young Adults Class

Class at Posey's: 5 PM

Tuesday Class: 10 AM at the Building

I Thessalonians

Wednesday, 7 PM

Auditorium: The Gospel

13/14: Jesus in the Gospel of John

Men's Saturday Morning Meeting

7 AM, second Saturday of the month (see Tyler Wade)

## Information

### Website & Online Presence

Visit our website at [www.folsomchurch.com](http://www.folsomchurch.com) for updates and material on current and past classes, and recorded sermons and classes. You will also find a directory of churches on page one. If you are a member of the church here at Folsom, see one of the deacons or elders to inquire about access to the password-protected members section. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/folsomchurch>

### Children's Classes

We have classes for children from 18 months and up. Please see the map in the hallway or ask any of the members which room is appropriate for you and/or your child. There are several Bible studies in progress on Sunday afternoon and evening. Check with David Posey if you have questions.

### Restrooms

There are two sets of restrooms: one off the first hallway to the right of the lobby and another at the end of the first hallway to the left. Ask anyone and they'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

### For Small Children

There is a special room for nursing mothers and a separate "cry room" at the rear of the auditorium. You enter them from the first hallway to the right, across from the restrooms.

### View & Junior View

Be sure to pick up a copy of the View and Junior View; both are sent out weekly to our member list and hard copies are printed on Sundays and available in the foyer.

# The Best of Intentions

BY ZACH MCGINNIS

Most Christians are familiar with the plight of Job. He is held up in the Christian community as the poster child for endurance and patience in suffering. Even God, Himself, holds Job in high esteem when he asks Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” As we know, God allows Satan to put Job’s formidable reputation to the test by stripping him of considerable property, his children, and even his health. When the dust settles, the only fragment of Job’s life that remains is his understandably frustrated wife and his three friends. We are introduced to these three friends of Job at the end of chapter two of the book as they come to comfort and support their devastated companion. We learn this in Job 2:11-13, when the author writes,

Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him. And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

My initial reaction to this scripture is to marvel at the level of love and friendship exhibited by these three men. What an inspiring display of camaraderie and humility! If one of my friends was experiencing a crisis, I would certainly want to show love and support for that individual but I’m not sure I would ever sit in silence for a full week, let alone tear my clothes and cover myself in ashes. My approach to “helping” is always to offer advice or provide some sort of solution to overcome adverse circumstances, and yet these men of integrity were willing to wait silently until Job was ready to speak. I find myself wishing Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were my friends. But then Job opens his mouth to elaborate on his misery, and when his friends break their silence in response, the dialogue seems to turn sour fairly quickly.

Eliphaz takes chapters four and five to tell Job that God allows innocent people to prosper and God is clearly disciplining Job for some sin he must atone for. In Job 5:8-9 Eliphaz advises, “As for me I would seek God, and to God would I commit my cause, who does great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without number.” In response, Job tells him he would certainly atone if he was aware of something he needed to atone for.

Then Bildad chimes in in chapter eight, by telling Job he really needs to repent of whatever atrocity he has committed in the eyes of God, basically making the same argument as Eliphaz only in different words. In Job 8:5-6 he says, “If you will seek God and plead with the Almighty for mercy, if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore your rightful habitation.” And again Job must defend himself against the word of his friend.

Finally, in chapter eleven, it is Zophar’s turn to reprimand Job and he does not disappoint. Perhaps the most scathing of all, Zophar tells Job that because of his

insolence towards the Almighty, Job actually deserves worse punishment than what he has already received. In Job 11:11-12 Zophar says, “For he knows worthless men; when he sees iniquity, will he not consider it? But a stupid man will get understanding when a wild donkey’s colt is born a man!” I’m not 100% sure I follow exactly what’s being said here, but it sounds like a pretty cruel critique.

Once more an exasperated Job tries to justify himself to his closest friends by concluding that the only possible solution for his recent misfortune is that the hand of God must be responsible. In Job 12:4 Job says, “I am a laughingstock to my friends; I, who called to God and he answered me, a just and blameless man, am a laughingstock.”

These three men went from being commiserative and supportive to accusing Job and exacerbating his sorrows. In Job 16:2 he tells his friends, “I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are you all.” Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar thought they were in the right. They thought their collective rebuke of Job was in his best interest. They had good intentions in telling Job he needed to come clean and repent of his sins. But they were wrong.

I can’t help but think similar situations manifest themselves in the church today. Our victims are not often Jobs, but rather those we identify as possibly struggling with their faith. We react as we suppose Christians ought to react to a brother or sister who misses a worship service or Bible study opportunity, or several in a row. We want to communicate to them our heartfelt desire to see them attending consistently. We feel a responsibility to “encourage” them to do the right thing, maybe even explain the error of their ways. We have the best of intentions. I’m not saying these are wrong. Of course we should be stirring each other up to love and good works. But perhaps there is a better option.

There was a time in my college years where my worship attendance became somewhat sporadic. I attended most Sundays at my small, home congregation but I also slept through the morning occasionally and often showed up late to Sunday morning service. There were reasons for this departure from punctuality. They weren’t good reasons, mind you, but they were reasons. I was working full time, I was going to school full time, I was in a serious relationship, I had a forty-minute drive to the church building, and I would frequently work late on Saturday nights. I was hard on myself about my church tardiness, but so were my parents. I could tell they were worried about me, and not only did they vocalize that sentiment frequently but also enlisted the help of several other church community members to express that to me. It was an ineffective strategy at best and only served to embarrass me further. I knew my parents meant well, but there were no positive effects that came from their efforts. The only real accomplishment was piling stress on to my already overfilled plate.

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“If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

*John 15:19*

### Climate Change Hysteria

Regardless of where you stand on climate change, I'm sure we all agree that we should not eat our children. Yet, in a town hall orchestrated by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a young woman donned a t-shirt encouraging the eating of babies and yelled “We've got to start eating babies! We don't have enough time! ... We have to get rid of the babies! ... We need to eat the babies!” (As a side note, Ocasio-Cortez did not refute the woman's rant; she just responded with “thank you.”).

Later, Ocasio-Cortez tweeted that the woman was “in crisis,” but most feel it was a prank. One writer said this was obvious to anyone familiar with Jonathan Swift's famous 1729 parody, “A Modest Proposal.” Swift satirically suggested that hungry Irish people should sell their children as food to the rich. He did so in order to mock what he viewed was British heartlessness toward the poor generally and the Irish specifically.

But how many climate change extremists have viewed this from the perspective of the poor? One hundred years later, the 19th-century British economist, Thomas Malthus, made similar arguments to Swift's, *but in all seriousness*. Malthus thought that there were too many poor people, particularly poor Irish people, and that the ethical thing to do was let them die. He wrote, “Instead of recommending cleanliness to the poor, we should encourage contrary habits, and court the return of the plague. The poor consequently must live much worse, and many of them be reduced to severe distress.... The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man, that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race.”

As is common in almost all extreme opinions (including extreme *religious* opinion) climate change extremists wildly overstate the case. When I was in high school in 1965, my history teacher repeatedly warned that in 25 years or less, we would all have only 3 ½ square feet of space. He was a population extremist and couldn't

have been more wrong (I don't remember learning much history from him, either. I had quite a few teachers who majored in fomenting their opinions while ignoring their job of teaching their subject (preachers do that sometimes, too)).

The hysterical predictions about climate change by some politicians are not only overstated, they are hurting people. There have been several reports of suicides by young people lately that are attributed to the fear of the inevitability of climate change.

Ocasio-Cortez and others are weaponizing it. They claim we've only got 12 years to live on this planet if we don't make radical changes — and life will be terrible even before we get to that 12 year point. They are even using sad-faced, scared young children to make the case, to garner sympathy for their views.

But for Bible believing Christians, the extreme statements are as nonsensical as my history teacher's predictions; it's nonsense.

The Bible says that God is the one who will bring an end to the earth and everything in it, not climate change:

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

*II Peter 3:10 (NASB)*

Let's not forget, too, that the earth — like everything else — belongs to God:

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein... *Psalms 24:1*

Furthermore, the earth is under God's control; always has been, always will. It was created to be inhabited (by humans and others).

For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty; he formed it to be inhabited!): “I am the Lord, and there is no other. *Isaiah 45:18*

By all means, we should take care of the environment. But I am more than content with letting God determine the time when the earth “burns up.”

**dp**