

Geocentrism and Inconsistent Logic

In a lecture entitled “Geocentricity,” Gerardus D. Bouw, author of *With Every Wind of Doctrine: Biblical, Historical and Scientific Perspectives of Geocentricity* (Tychonian Society, 1984), tries to refute a person who is not, according to him, “consistent” in interpreting the Bible.

He quotes two passages of Scripture (Genesis 19:23 and Mark 16:9) and notes the English translation of the phrase “was risen.”

“The sun *was risen* upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar” (Genesis 19:23).

To Bouw, if those who think the phrase “The sun was risen” is *not* literally true (in a cosmological sense; i.e., the Earth is motionless and the Sun is in motion), then an insurmountable problem “arises.”

“Now when *Jesus was risen* early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils” (Mark 16:9).

Bouw observes that the same phrase, *was risen*, is used in both verses. If the reader believes that the Genesis 19 passage is *not* literally true, then, *to be consistent*, the Mark 16 passage is *not* literally true. Hence, Jesus did *not* physically rise from the dead.

Bouw goes further to imply that a disbelief in what the Bible says about Geocentrism *must lead one to deny a basic tenet of the Christian faith*, i.e., the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Hence, by implication, Geocentrism must become, for all believers, *a basic tenet of the Christian faith*. Why? If one does not believe in Geocentrism, then one is forced to deny the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ.

How about that logic?

In over four decades of my Christian walk, I’ve seen people mishandle the Bible in many ways and what Bouw is doing is just one further example.

I propose that Bouw’s inference, i.e., if one does not believe in Geocentrism, then one is forced to deny the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, is false.

Why? I have a question for him. First, he is comparing these verses in their English translation, the King James Version, a version that he has said elsewhere is the only truly inspired version of the Bible. Has he taken the time to look at these phrases in the Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament)?

In the Genesis 19 passage, the Hebrew is pronounced *yaw-tsaw*’ and it means “to go out or come in.” It is often used in the Old Testament to refer to astronomical objects “coming forth” in the sky. It is also used in other contexts. In the Mark 16 passage, the Greek is transliterated *anistemi* and it means “to stand.” It is used in the New Testament both as a literal “rising” or “standing up” and

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metaphorically. Two *different words* with two *different meanings* (in two *different contexts* for two *different purposes*) are both translated in the KJV version as “is risen.”

So, who is *not* being consistent in their interpretation of Scripture? Is it Bouw’s assumed reader or Bouw himself? By Bouw’s reasoning, the KJV version trumps the original language. *You cannot soundly interpret the Bible given this premise* because you run into all kinds of exegetical difficulties. Although Bouw thinks he is being consistent, his reasoning is really unveiling his inconsistency. He is committing, in the extreme because he is only looking at an English translation, a word-study fallacy.¹

Sound interpretation always considers meaning of words and context. A Biblical Christian therefore interprets the Mark 16 passage as referring to the *literal* and physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead because there are a host of other New Testament passages that affirm this truth (cf. John 2:22, 21:14; Acts 2:31, 4:2, 17:32, 23:6; Romans 1:4; I Corinthians 15:12-13; I Peter 1:3). Regarding the Genesis 19 passage, a Biblical Christian would not apply “is rising” in an absolute, literal, i.e., cosmological sense. The sense of the passage is common sense perception of matters as one, positioned on the Earth, would see them. When I look toward the east in the morning, I *literally* see the Sun rising (i.e., coming forth). This observation is not a figment of my imagination; i.e., my eyes are not fooling me. However true this observation is, it does not address (in terms of the physics of a cosmology) *what actually causes this motion*.² And it is not the Bible’s intent, contrary to Bouw, to do that.

If we are going to relate the Christian faith to science, we first need to embrace sound principles of exegesis as the starting point. *The fallacious reasoning of Bouw is an example of how much we need Christians who know these principles and can apply them.*

¹ See D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984).

² God, I believe, has left it to man to figure that out using reason and experiments; it is one of those concealed things; i.e., treasures, that God has left to man to explore. Proverbs 25:2, “It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out.” Searching things out (taking them apart and figuring out what makes them work) is the heart-beat of operational science. Consider the wonders concealed in the peanut, wonders George Washington Carver (1864-1943) discovered by “searching it out.”