133

<http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/willis_e_elliott/2009/12/islamophobia_is_there_nothing_to_fear_but_fear_itself.html>

**Islamophobia: Is there nothing to fear but fear itself?**

*What's your reaction to Sunday's decision by voters in Switzerland to ban construction of minarets, the slender towers from which Muslims are called to daily prayers?*

1.....Politically correct ideologues hate referenda: the people may vote wrong. In the U.S., the people in 31 of our states have voted to protect the word "marriage" from homosexual expansion, and "*homophobia*" is the loser's explanation of their loss. In Switzerland, the people have voted to protect the Swiss skyline and culture from creeping Islam, and "*islamophobia*" is the losers' explanation of their loss. Since phobias are irrational fears, people who have them are sick in the head: people who (according to the losers of referenda) don't vote right are mental cases, and society should be protected from their morals and their politics.

3.....Thirty-seven years ago, a world-prominent Muslim banker came to my Manhattan office (I was a dean of a Christian graduate school) in hope of getting my signature in support of the project of building a huge Muslim center in central Manhattan. His pitch was multiculturalism, the expansion of diversity in New York City. Though he failed, we had a polite and, I think, mutually enlightening conversation.  
Shortly thereafter, I discovered that he was a representative of the Muslim Brotherhood, whose creed has been clear from its 1928 origin: "Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The Qur'an is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope."

4.....Cut to Switzerland 40 years ago. I was lecturing in Geneva, and took occasion to interview foreign workers in a huge dormitory. They complained that they could not have their families with them (the government fearing non-Swiss births, "natives") and could not remain in Switzerland for a full year (the government fearing non-Swiss "citizens").  
While I sympathized with their lot in life, I was not a multicultural ideologue: I believe in a people's *right to maintain their culture* on their land (as in Japan, Scandinavia, Israel, and the U.S.).

5.....The U.S.? Until Congress in 1965 widened the immigration door under pressure from the ideology of multiculturalism, we Americans maintained our culture byassimilating immigrants: no citizenship without (1) English-language competence and (2) commitment to the political values and structures of the American way of life. But assimilation works only if the people and government of a nation believe in the adequacy of their culture's digestive juices. For almost two generations, our public schools have been diluting those juices, and our will to convert immigrants to our way of life has been weakening: multiculturalism has displaced*acculturation*, and we have come to tolerate even such an obvious native-born enemy as the Fort Hood mass-murdering jihadist. We are in no condition to recommend to the European nations that they assimilate their resident Muslims.

6.....Do "human rights" include the right of a people to maintain their culture among world-cultures and against both multiculturalism and human-rights-denying invasive cultures? In the name of both community and diversity, I say a qualified yes. Hypocritically, invasive Islamists claim human rights which they intend, upon coming to power, to deny to others. Such a culture is toxic to other cultures and should so be identified, as President Obama did last evening in his speech on Afghanistan.

7.....While "Islamophobia" is a smear neologism of recent vintage, *fear of speaking realistically about Islam* is not irrational, bigoted, prejudiced, discriminatory. INTERNAL fear: what will the politically correct do to me if I say anything critical about anybody's religion (except Christianity)? EXTERNAL fears based on the fact that Islam is doctrinally and actually the world's most violent religion: (1) What will "they" do to me if I criticize anything Islamic or try to convert a Muslim? (2) What happens to a Muslim who converts out of Islam? (3) What will happen to Christians in Muslim nations if the West does anything Muslims consider disrespectful to Islam?

8.....Against the will of the Swiss people, the Swiss government - remembering the painful sanctions of the Muslim world against Denmark over the Muhammad-cartoons flap - was quick to assure the world that it disagreed with its own people. But it should factor in a fear that the minaret flap signaled: the fear of European Islamization from the low European birth-rate, the high Muslim birth-rate, and conversions to Islam. And one more fear: that Europe's POST-Christian mentality will be swamped by Islam's PRE-sharia enthusiasm.

9....Not one but two dangers are to be avoided by the West:  
Irrational fear (islamophobia)  
Irrational fearlessness (Trojan-Horse indifference and islamophilia).

10.....While the West is decreasingly Christian in religious praxis, it continues strongly to affirm an emergent in Christian civilization, namely, the sense of the human being as individual, as PERSON. Steadily though imperfectly, the West will continue to war for this cultural artifact, whose enemy - for the foreseeable future - will be Islamism.*Moderate* Islam will accommodate to the West's idea of the person (including "human rights"). And the West's nations will continue to explore, internally and externally, toward the least costly (in blood and treasure) and safest engagement with pro-sharia Islam.

**BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT  |  DECEMBER 2, 2009; 2:25 PM ET**

**Comments**

**Please report offensive comments below.**

peter, pam,  
this thread has got to be just about to expire. let's go here  
[**http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/robert\_parham/2009/12/more\_war\_to\_end\_war\_is\_no\_just\_war.html**](http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/panelists/robert_parham/2009/12/more_war_to_end_war_is_no_just_war.html)   
once it does.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 16, 2009 10:17 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786758&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786758%26blog_id=618)

test

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 16, 2009 10:13 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786757&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786757%26blog_id=618)

peter, you said,  
*"I believed that God allowed slavery for a purpose Pam, for a good purpose, to bring people to a saving knowledge...blah blah blah..."*

ugh...i can only shake my head.

and puleeze: it's not the metaphorical "slave to sin" part that bothers us, it's the ACTUAL slave to people part...

do you know that you sound like a 19th century (or eatrlier) slave owner theying to rationalize slavery?

essentially:  
1)it's ok since god didn't say it's not ok.  
2)it provides a "teaching moment", perhaps about submission or something.  
3)they're better off being slaves.  
4)if christian, they get heaven afterwards.

ugh...

i suppose it's the standard apology (in two senses of the word...), but a better tack might be something like,

"that's just the way things were back then. god was just working with what he had, speaking to us in terms we could understand. jesus at least told slave owners to be a bit nicer to their slaves. with god's guidance, over the years, our morals have improved. by the time of renaissance-enlightenment we were ready for god to instill the "no slavery" idea."

i don't know, not very convincing either, i guess. it's a pickle, peter. in a way, i feel for you. kind of like i do for "yasser", this muslim i'm conversing with elsewhere. his most recent posts were to defend the "wife-beating" verse(4:34) in the koran and the several follow-up verses in the hadith.

he talked about all the "good" that can come from it (the man gets his way), and how there are rules about how a man is to beat his wife... the bible slavery verses come off sounding like those islamic beating verses.

anyway, according to the ever-shifting morals of humanism, these bible and koran verses about slavery and beating are shameful.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 16, 2009 3:48 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786712&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786712%26blog_id=618)

**BAH!** (Sound of head exploding)

Peter, to the extent that you can actually believe all that garbage that you wrote to me, I can only conclude that you are clinically insane.

Maybe that's too harsh, but you are surely brainwashed to a degree that I find difficult to even imagine.

I'll get to a rebuttal later, but if I were to write it now, it would be pure sarcasm - I'd like to do better than that.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 16, 2009 1:59 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786702&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786702%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter (December 16, 2009 12:20 AM ),

WALTER: "peter,  
ok, so 2400 flood."

Somewhere around there??

WALTER: "to paraphrase myself from earlier:

1chr1:19 says the "confusion" (of languages at babel) happened during the life of peleg. gen11 puts peleg's birth 101 yrs after the flood and his lifespan at 240 yrs. if we split the difference, and say the "confusion" happened when peleg was a middle-aged 100 yrs old, we can say the "confusion"....

Agreed to this point.

WALTER: " - essentially, the beginning of all human civilization, all culture, all language and all genes outside babel - is 2200"

Two points,  
1) I don't know if there were any gaps in the genealogies, as discussed in earlier posts, and,  
2) Human civilization or at least culture and language were around before the Flood, just not confused and dispersed into different cultures and languages, for everyone spoke the same language.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 16, 2009 5:38 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786593&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786593%26blog_id=618)

Pam, Part 2,

PAM: "Or do you think that it’s wrong, and is illegal in all civilized countries for a reason?"

There are times when slavery and the kind you are talking about is justifiable, and not by an individual but by an institution. For the Christian I feel it is wrong that he would willingly subject another individual to the kind of bondage and harsh treatment that you are talking about, unless it was to restrain someone from doing further harm to another/others.

Yes, we no longer live in OT times. Christ has made a new and living and eternal covenant by the shedding of His blood, by the laying down of His human life for the sake of the elect.

PAM: "And if you think it’s just plain wrong, as do I, how did you come by this opinion? Not from God."

Precisely from God. As Christians we are to love our neighbor and do good to those who persecute and harm us, even going the extra mile for our enemies. The Old Covenant was an object lesson leading to Christ; the New Covenant is an object lesson in mercy and grace found in Christ. The first was necessary in order to show man his futility in living outside of God's goodness, outside of His righteousness. Without that objective, absolute ultimate standard and measure whose are we going to follow and why?

PAM: "So what, then, becomes of your “objective, unchanging standard”? Does God still think it’s OK?"

As I said before; it was OK for the purposes that He allowed it to bring about greater good.

You may not have noticed this, but God is a God of grace and mercy who, in becoming Man, showed His servants heart in suffering the harm inflicted upon Him by sinful man in order to work out His plan and purpose of greater good to those who would believe in Him. To the rest, they get what they deserve according to the law - justice.

PAM: "And if it has something to do with the “Fall,” as you opined above, how is it that fallen man has come to this conclusion (that it’s reprehensible) all on his own?"

Well, not all have for there is still all kinds of slavery in this world, including the trafficking and selling of women and children as sex-objects for the perversions of sinful men. There are all kinds of men (and women) who take great delight, I'm sure, and great pride in their arrogant mistreating and power over those whom they have subjected to their will. The Communist system is one such example.

Yes, all the corruption in this world is a result of the Fall, and man, created  
in the image and likeness of God, knows what is good - God - he just suppresses that truth. Since we are all created in His image and likeness we "should" think of one another as being worthy of honor and dignity and respect. Again, sin has a funny way (and not funny in the ha, ha way) of blurring that image and deserving treatment of others.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 16, 2009 5:22 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786591&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786591%26blog_id=618)

Hi once again Pam ( December 15, 2009 7:08 PM),

PH: “And the pure form of slavery is where you are willing to sacrifice yourself, your welfare, your life, your possessions for the good of others. It is called servanthood. It is a willingness to go the extra mile for another even though it will create hardship for you. It is service to and for your fellow human being, of putting them above yourself in first importance.  
‘Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus...’"

PAM: "No, no, no, Peter. You’re not getting away with this one! Slavery isn’t voluntary! There is a huge difference between voluntary servitude and slavery."

Not the kind of slavery you're in Pam. It is your nature to be a slave (Ephesians 2:1-3).

A Christian, on the other hand, willingly goes through hardships because of the love of God. He knows and trusts that God is working in the long run for his benefit. He knows that his submissive attitude to the one who is mistreating him harshly may lead to that persons eventual salvation, and just as Christ endured the ridicule and harsh treatment of sinful man, he is also willing to do the very same thing, for the life of Christ is in Him. Christ is making His appeal through him.

Showing kindness and love to someone who constantly abuses you is similar to laying down your life for another in that it is a great sacrifice, that they may benefit. The secret of the Christian life is that Christ lives it, not you. How could I or any other Christian, of my own ability or merit do anything that is useful to God. No, "Greater is He that is in me than he who is in the world" is what John said. Why would I want to live by the standards of this world. Look around you.

PAM: "So please answer the question: Do you, Peter, believe that slavery is OK (assuming that you follow God’s “guidelines”)?"

It is OK if God says it is OK and that only for a purpose and time-frame, that greater good would arise from it.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 16, 2009 5:21 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786590&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786590%26blog_id=618)

Pam - Part 2

PAM: "Do you have slaves yourself?"

Rhetorical question for you know I don't.

PAM: "Do you think it’s OK for God to give “moral guidelines” for slavery, rather than condemning it outright?"

If it servers His purpose, which is always working for the good of those who love Him and who have been called according to that purpose then the end justifies the means. And He does condemn the kind of slavery that is bad, not the kind of slaving that works for the good of others.

PAM: "Are you planning to sell your daughter(s) - or have you already done so?"

Those particular laws were intended for a specific period of history. A Christian lives in freedom from those bondages, although there are principles that are learned from them. If I was a slave to someone, I should not think of myself as such, but as a slave unto Jesus Christ, and He is a gentle Master who always looks out for my eternal good. Any situation of slavery imposed by sinful man is temporary; it will soon be passing, so it should not be a bondage, but a willingness to serve, in as much as I live in obedience to God's ways above those of man's.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 16, 2009 4:26 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786589&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786589%26blog_id=618)

Hi Pam (December 15, 2009 7:07 PM),

PH: “Slavery is a lesson to be learned. Human slavery as practiced in many parts of this world is not God's ideal. It is a result of the Fall and of man's inhumanity to man, nevertheless, the Bible gives moral guidelines for slavery and the treating of people that are indebted to others.”

What? “As practiced” it isn’t God’s “ideal”??

Not the kind of slavery you are talking about. As I mentioned from 2 Peter before, A man is a slave to whatever has mastery over him. God gave us object lessons as to the mess we are in outside of Christ.

PAM: "Really? So as long as we do it by God’s rules and let the men (but not the women) go free after six years, and don’t beat them so badly that they can’t get up within two days, and drive awls through their ears into the doorpost, it’s perfectly OK to have slaves – sexual and otherwise? Really??"

First off, who are you or who am I to determine how God carries out His justice on sinful man? If He chooses to permit sinful man, who is always in rebellion against His Word, to do something harsh in your eyes that good may result from it, what right do you or I have to question it? Are you above your Creator? Why "should" your determination be the standard that we judge by, unless you can show me that it is not subjective after all? (Romans 9:20)

PAM: "Do you honestly believe this, Peter?"

I believed that God allowed slavery for a purpose Pam, for a good purpose, to bring people to a saving knowledge of His Son through the injustice of what man does to his fellow man and through the object lesson that is slavery. As Christians God has called us to a higher standard than the standards of this world, and that higher standard is met in Christ.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 16, 2009 4:25 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786588&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786588%26blog_id=618)

Pam - Part 4

PAM: "And do you think it's OK to beat someone who is in your employ, or lower ranking, somehow? Do you really? If so, I'm glad I don't work for you."

No, I know a better way and that better way is found in Christ. As a Christian I am told by God in His Word to treat everyone with respect and dignity, but also to stand up against evil and what is wrong.

That is the weakness of your (unbelievers) system of thought, not that it can't differentiate between evil, but it chooses not to so that it can satisfy its own greedy, lustful self. It is, Go for the gusto, Eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die and with that death all meaning is buried with you, so grab what you can now.

It has no objective, ultimate, absolute standard, and hence no steady foundation to point to. Your foundation is always shifting. All I have to do is cite abortion or same-sex marriage as an example of a shifting foundation. And you look over the cultures and written history of the world and you see a constant oscillation as to the standard of right and goodness depending on whom is in power and to what their floating/shifting standard happens to be. It has nothing foundational to justify itself by. Its feet are planted in mid-air. Your "do unto others" is only justifiable if there is a God to whom we will give account, and I'm thankful there is. (Judges 21:25 or Duet. 12:8)

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 16, 2009 3:55 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786586&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786586%26blog_id=618)

Hi Pam,

PAM: "Peter, I’d like to revisit your idea that God offers an unchanging standard of moral truth:

PAM: "To my question about why you consider slavery wrong, when it is not considered wrong by the bible, you wrote:

“When you are indebted to someone it is their rules that you must follow. To constantly go against the wishes of someone greater than you in power, position, authority would be anarchy unless there was discipline for doing so. Can you imaging a society were everyone did as they saw fit. It has happened, and continues to happen to some degree in every society. Without laws, without consequences what is there to stop someone from doing anything they so please? Thirty-nine lashes got the point home quickly.”

PAM: "Excuse me, but the bible wasn’t talking about indentured servants who were paying off a debt – it was talking about plain, old-fashioned, slavery."

It talks of both Pam, but slavery as you think of it was not what God established in the Garden, but an historical lesson God uses that teaches what bondage is, of suppressing the knowledge of God. A person is in bondage to whatever controls them or has mastery over them. For someone who is addicted to nicotine they are in bondage or servitude to that habit, that drug. No matter how hard they try they can't stop doing it without some very painful consequences, but the very habit so often is what kills them. It is a cruel taskmaster, just as sin has brought death to the world.

There are two Greek words for slavery, one implying subjection and bondage to someone else in a dominating way (douleuo), and the other suggesting helping or aiding another person (diakoneo).

But Jesus made it clear, in the first sense, that "everyone who sins is a slave to sin" and that "a slave has no permanent place in a family, but a son belongs to it forever." (John 8:34)

And the only way that you can be set free from your bondage or slavery is if the Son sets you free. Other than that you will still be at the cruel taskmaster of your own sinful nature. You need a new nature in order to be set free from sin. That is only something God can do and does through His Son.

Over and over God gives us the lesson through examples in history of how much we are really in bondage to whatever controls us, and for the non-Christian that is his sinful nature. He can't escape it. It requires the mercy and grace of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, that points to the Son, to set you free.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 16, 2009 3:54 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786585&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786585%26blog_id=618)

Pam - Part 3

PAM: "It dictates where slaves may be obtained (spoils of war, bought from other countries…), it discusses selling one’s daughters into slavery. These things are from Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy – these are God’s, rules."

Again, they are a schoolteacher to lead people to Christ, for until we are set free by Him we are a slave to evil. We do things that are evil and we deny the standard that is good.

Both testaments teach that principle that a master is to be merciful to his slaves, just as a slave is to serve his master wholeheartedly as though serving the Lord. (Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22)

Here are some of the reasons provided for slavery in the OT - war (Num. 31:7-9), stealing (Ex. 21:4), unable to pay a debt and therefore selling of self or family (Ex. 21:7; Lev. 25:39-53), etc. But if that person was chosen of God (Israelite), that person was to be set free after six years, unless that person chose to stay with the master because he considered himself better off with the master, and in that case he had a hole put through his ear as a symbol of that decision and loyalty.

Through all of this God was teaching the Israelites and His church important lessons. Original sin has made us a slave, and by that very nature we live like slaves, lying, stealing, coveting, hating, murdering, backbiting and slandering others, becoming vile and course in our language and customs, sexually immoral, selfish and self-satisfying, selling ourselves over and over again to that sinful nature that has no escape outside of Christ. The war or victory is God and is won in Christ. In Christ, as sons and daughters adopted into God's family we have been set free, just like in the sixth year or the Year of Jubilee - they were a type or picture or symbolic of Christ, as is the whole of God's word in the OT, as well as it being a history of the Jews and of God's dealing with mankind.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 16, 2009 3:51 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786584&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786584%26blog_id=618)

Continuing Pam - Part 2

So, as in everything God has set us an example that we can learn by, IF we hear His voice, for after all, Jesus constantly said things to the effect of, "Blessed is he who hears the Word and believes" or "to him who has ears, let him hear" to paraphrase (eg. Matthew 11:15; 13:9, 43, or the classical parable of the sower and the seed).

You can't hear, because in your rebellion you are shouting above the quite voice of the Son of God that says,

"All things have been committed to Me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.  
'Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.'" (John 11:27-30)

And as young Christians we battle against the slavery that Jesus has set us free from for we do not understand our position in Christ, our freedom that sets us above the law of sin and death. He has fulfilled the law on our behalf, He has paid the debt, in full, that we could not pay and that kept us in slavery by our constantly trying to merit or earn favor with a good, pure, holy, just God, which is impossible as soon as we have broken but one of His laws. He also exchanged our temporal life for His eternal life by dying the death we deserved and sharing His life with us. He has given us a new nature that is no longer a slave to sin, but we are slow to learn this as Christians, because we fail to apply His Word and let it wash us and cleanse us and bring us to that understanding. But His word is liberating when we hear it and do what it says and believe and trust and rely on Him who says it.

Depraved people are always promising the world freedom. As Peter says in 2 Peter 2:19, "They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity - FOR A MAN IS A SLAVE TO WHATEVER HAS MASTERED HIM."

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 16, 2009 3:49 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786582&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786582%26blog_id=618)

Hi Pam,

PAM: "Peter, I’d like to revisit your idea that God offers an unchanging standard of moral truth:

PAM: "To my question about why you consider slavery wrong, when it is not considered wrong by the bible, you wrote:

“When you are indebted to someone it is their rules that you must follow. To constantly go against the wishes of someone greater than you in power, position, authority would be anarchy unless there was discipline for doing so. Can you imaging a society were everyone did as they saw fit. It has happened, and continues to happen to some degree in every society. Without laws, without consequences what is there to stop someone from doing anything they so please? Thirty-nine lashes got the point home quickly.”

PAM: "Excuse me, but the bible wasn’t talking about indentured servants who were paying off a debt – it was talking about plain, old-fashioned, slavery."

It talks of both Pam, but slavery as you think of it was not what God established in the Garden, but an historical lesson God uses that teaches what bondage is, of suppressing the knowledge of God. A person is in bondage to whatever controls them or has mastery over them. For someone who is addicted to nicotine they are in bondage or servitude to that habit, that drug. No matter how hard they try they can't stop doing it without some very painful consequences, but the very habit so often is what kills them. It is a cruel taskmaster, just as sin has brought death to the world.

There are two Greek words for slavery, one implying subjection and bondage to someone else in a dominating way (douleuo), and the other suggesting helping or aiding another person (diakoneo).

But Jesus made it clear, in the first sense, that "everyone who sins is a slave to sin" and that "a slave has no permanent place in a family, but a son belongs to it forever." (John 8:34)

And the only way that you can be set free from your bondage or slavery is if the Son sets you free. Other than that you will still be at the cruel taskmaster of your own sinful nature. You need a new nature in order to be set free from sin. That is only something God can do and does through His Son.

Over and over God gives us the lesson through examples in history of how much we are really in bondage to whatever controls us, and for the non-Christian that is his sinful nature. He can't escape it. It requires the mercy and grace of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, that points to the Son, to set you free.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 16, 2009 3:46 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786581&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786581%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
ok, so 2400 flood.

to paraphrase myself from earlier:

1chr1:19 says the "confusion" (of languages at babel) happened during the life of peleg. gen11 puts peleg's birth 101 yrs after the flood and his lifespan at 240 yrs. if we split the difference, and say the "confusion" happened when peleg was a middle-aged 100 yrs old, we can say the "confusion" - essentially, the beginning of all human civilization, all culture, all language and all genes outside babel - is 2200.

agreed?

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 16, 2009 12:20 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786566&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786566%26blog_id=618)

Three

PH: *“And the pure form of slavery is where you are willing to sacrifice yourself, your welfare, your life, your possessions for the good of others. It is called servanthood. It is a willingness to go the extra mile for another even though it will create hardship for you. It is service to and for your fellow human being, of putting them above yourself in first importance.  
‘Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus...’"*

No, no, no, Peter. You’re not getting away with this one! Slavery isn’t voluntary! There is a **huge difference between voluntary servitude and slavery.**

So please answer the question: Do you, Peter, believe that slavery is OK (assuming that you follow God’s “guidelines”)? Or do you think that it’s wrong, and is illegal in all civilized countries for a reason?

And if you think it’s just plain wrong, as do I, how did you come by this opinion? Not from God. So what, then, becomes of your “objective, unchanging standard”? Does God still think it’s OK? And if it has something to do with the “Fall,” as you opined above, how is it that fallen man has come to this conclusion (that it’s reprehensible) all on his own?

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 15, 2009 7:08 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786504&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786504%26blog_id=618)

Two

PH: *“Slavery is a lesson to be learned. Human slavery as practiced in many parts of this world is not God's ideal. It is a result of the Fall and of man's inhumanity to man, nevertheless, the Bible gives moral guidelines for slavery and the treating of people that are indebted to others.”*

What? “As practiced” it isn’t God’s “ideal”?? Really? So as long as we do it by God’s rules and let the men (but not the women) go free after six years, and don’t beat them so badly that they can’t get up within two days, and drive awls through their ears into the doorpost, it’s perfectly OK to have slaves – sexual and otherwise? Really??

Do you honestly believe this, Peter? Do you have slaves yourself? Do you think it’s OK for God to give “moral guidelines” for slavery, rather than condemning it outright? Are you planning to sell your daughter(s) - or have you already done so?

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 15, 2009 7:07 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786503&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786503%26blog_id=618)

Peter,  
I’d like to revisit your idea that God offers an unchanging standard of moral truth:

To my question about why you consider slavery wrong, when it is not considered wrong by the bible, you wrote:

*“When you are indebted to someone it is their rules that you must follow. To constantly go against the wishes of someone greater than you in power, position, authority would be anarchy unless there was disciple for doing so. Can you imaging a society were everyone did as they saw fit. It has happened, and continues to happen to some degree in every society. Without laws, without consequences what is there to stop someone from doing anything they so please? Thirty-nine lashes got the point home quickly.”*

Excuse me, but the bible wasn’t talking about indentured servants who were paying off a debt – it was talking about plain, old-fashioned, slavery. It dictates where slaves may be obtained (spoils of war, bought from other countries…), it discusses selling one’s daughters into slavery. These things are from Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy – these are **God’s,** rules.

And do you think it's OK to beat someone who is in your employ, or lower ranking, somehow? Do you really? If so, I'm glad I don't work for you.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 15, 2009 7:06 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786502&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786502%26blog_id=618)

test

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 15, 2009 3:42 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786470&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786470%26blog_id=618)

PS. Pam, I have Firefox up and running again, thank goodness!

Walter, those two sites I gave you were just two examples of a young earth view of things that varied. I think the dates would be closer to 2300-2500 BC for the Flood, but when you consider that when so and so begot so and so it does not give the exact age of the person, just the number rounded off in years, not years and months. Also, some of the genealogies may have been omitted because they were not relevant. Was a generation the same back then as it is now, since people lived to be 900 plus years of age? I noticed three decreases in life expectancy mentioned in the Bible, the first starting after the Flood.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 15, 2009 1:38 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786390&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786390%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter, Pam,

WALTER:   
"[W]hen people thought the Earth was flat, they were wrong. When people thought the Earth was spherical they were wrong. But if you think that thinking the Earth is spherical is just as wrong as thinking the Earth is flat, then your view is wronger than both of them put together."  
-Isaac Asimov

WALTER: "scientific knowledge is improving, not jumping around randomly."

A faulty basis for belief doesn't hold the answers to life and ultimate meaning. I have no qualms about science, just evolutionary science that has its start in the irrational.

You fail to receive God's blessings because you fail to recognize God's reality and see the facts as He made them and He interprets them for us. You have an intellectual knowledge of Christianity, but it is only the work of the Spirit in relation to the Word that produces faith, and faith in God is not an irrational leap in the dark. An irrational leap in the dark is believing that knowledge came from a process without knowledge, for "there is no knowledge without a knower." (The Doctrine of the knowledge of God, p.149)

God's Spirit and His word work hand in hand. Without applying Scripture you won't understand its meaning. Without a living relationship with Christ you will never know God with anything more than a faulty intellectual misunderstanding (Colossians 2:3-10)

But the question boils down to, What is the highest authority you can appeal to? If it is another subjective man or subjective group of men there is always that uncertainty, that sense and uneasiness that you might be wrong. You'll always look at the evidence through that clouded lens of skepticism. Your facts are not understood apart from the framework that you interpret them under. But when you take that framework to its utter conclusion and ultimate beginning presuppostions your framework has no answers.

It cannot make sense of beginnings, objectivity, knowledge, reason, logic, truth, life, design, information, an objective ethical base, for your reasons are swimming around in a sea of irrationality, from a process that has no ultimate meaning or purpose, and a process that no one has any idea of how it could even start without a Mind, a process that without Mind had to have started haphazardly, randomly, by chance.

The Christian finds rest in God as the highest and final authority and certainty in any matter of dispute.

Sorry, I'll catch up with your posts later on this weekend. If this thread runs out see you at Susan's!

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 15, 2009 1:20 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786385&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786385%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
i saw this and thought of you and your saying things like "scientists have been wrong before, so how can we trust them now" and "the ever-changing "truths" of science".

*"[W]hen people thought the Earth was flat, they were wrong. When people thought the Earth was spherical they were wrong. But if you think that thinking the Earth is spherical is just as wrong as thinking the Earth is flat, then your view is wronger than both of them put together."*  
-Isaac Asimov

scientific knowledge is improving, not jumping around randomly.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 14, 2009 10:07 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786174&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786174%26blog_id=618)

pam,  
you might find these amusing/irritating:

*"River Deltas Begin Forming Worldwide About 3000 BC*  
*One more important point needs to be mentioned. There was only one event in the history of man which was such a stupendous catastrophe as to make it possible for****rivers worldwide to all begin flowing at about the same time -- 3000 BC.****That event was the worldwide Flood in the time of Noah. When the waters on the landmass finally subsided into the deepened oceans, and rain began to fall, the rivers could commence to flow and begin depositing the sediments which now form their deltas."*

and

*"When literary documents are present to date an event, these must have precedence over and control scientific observations and dating which conflicts with the literary evidence. This is so in that ancient documents are eyewitness observations of the events recorded. And****isn't this what science is all about?"***

(from peter's "ancient days" link)

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 14, 2009 8:42 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786153&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786153%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
i hope we haven't "lost" you. this thread will "time out" in a day or two. we'll follow our usual procedure: whoever notices it's timed out, go to susan's newest thread and pick a place for us to go.  
------------------------------------

peter,  
please pick a flood date - you can't say soemwhere between 2300 and 7000 BC!

for one thing, time only goes back to 4004 BC, right? it's pretty simple to follow the genealogies from adam to noah and see the flood happened around 1650 years after the beginning of time.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 14, 2009 8:25 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204786149&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4786149%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
you said,  
*"Others see problems which don't fit the 2300 BC date but not beyond 7000 BC,"*

well, of course there are problems with every date you pick - that's actually my point. but for the purposes of our conversation, are you saying 2300-2400? it's important that we choose a date so we can "come at it from the other end".

do you agree with the idea that merneptah (~1212BC) meant "israel" when he wrote the merneptah stelle?

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 11, 2009 7:48 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785580&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785580%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

ME: "I never gave a date [for the flood]."

WALTER: "would you give a date? i think literalists generaly put it btwn 2500 & 2300 b.c.. for the purposes of this discussion, you can pick the date, but it's important that we "fix" something - youknow, to have an objective reference point... for this calculation i'll set it at 2400. you can correct it if you think it's otherwise."

Between 2300-???? BC, without a whole lot of research, although the exact date, I believe, is not possible to determine although there are some who have determined it pretty closely,

[**http://www.abiblestudy.com/part1.html**](http://www.abiblestudy.com/part1.html)

Others see problems which don't fit the 2300 BC date but not beyond 7000 BC,

[**http://www.ancientdays.net/flooddate.htm**](http://www.ancientdays.net/flooddate.htm)

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 10, 2009 11:56 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785555&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785555%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter (DECEMBER 3, 2009 10:45 AM ),

WALTER: "peter, i said,  
"...god contradicts himself on this elsewhere: in some places he says the visits the inequities on sons and in other places he says he doesn't. i suppose it really doesn't matter what he says, because he DOES still visits us with the consequences of adam's sin, right?"

WALTER: "there are many verses that say he does "visit inequities on sons", but only a few saying he doesn't.  
deut24:16 hints at it...2ki14:6 is similar, as is jer31:30....ezek18:20

[**http://www.tektonics.org/lp/paydaddy.html**](http://www.tektonics.org/lp/paydaddy.html)

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 10, 2009 9:53 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785534&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785534%26blog_id=618)

Hi Pam (December 8, 2009 1:10 PM),

PAM: "I do want to say that the bible document preservation is not all that great. There are NO originals. All we have are copies, of copies of copies - many times over. And among the various copies, there are many discrepancies."

I think that the number of manuscripts speaks volumes for trusting the Word of God. The more copies the greater the accuracy on what the originals said. And the greater the range of dates, and more varied the places in which these were found, the more sure that the copies have not been sugnificantly altered over the course of years. Ron Rhodes explains it well, including the discrepancies,

[**http://home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/Manuscript.html**](http://home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/Manuscript.html)

PAM: "According to Bart Ehrman, there are more discrepancies among copies of NT writings, than there are words in the NT!"

Most of these are spelling errors, and considering the volume of manuscripts, minuscules, papyri and uncials found it is not amazing at all. How many times doubled 150,000 errors would all this words on all these texts represent? And try coping twenty pages of text, let alone the whole NT and see how many you come up with.

PAM: "Of course, to be fair, some are merely obvious transcription errors, but there are plenty of substantial ones, too!  
And even though Peter claims that an actual "Mark" wrote Mark - and presumably likewise with the other Gospel names - in fact, no one knows who wrote any of them."

Why do you think the gospels were all named after someone? A good indictation that Mark wrote it would be to call it Mark's gospel by those who knew who wrote it and the tradition carried on. Do you not think that tradition could have got the gospel writers right? Do you not think that the source of these accounts would not have been known and circulated during the time of writing and after that?

PAM: "They have no authorship indications or dates. Names of disciples were assigned to them by RCC fathers long after their writing."

By "RCC" fathers?

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 10, 2009 6:20 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785496&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785496%26blog_id=618)

I should also note that one of the problems in translating the gospels is that the Greek of the day had no punctuation, and no spaces between words.

So, for instance, something like this:  
"womanwithouthermanisnothing"  
could be translated as, "woman, without her man, is nothing;" or as, "woman: without her, man is nothing."

Then, too, translators often fudge the meanings to make it more appealing. Some modern translations have "expanse of the sky" where the older ones have "firmament," to get past that troubling tin dome that divides the waters above from the waters below, with windows that God had to open to make it rain.

Most also eschew the word "slave" today, preferring "servant." But make no mistake, the Greek word they're translating means "slave," and these people certainly weren't hired help.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 10, 2009 5:26 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785485&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785485%26blog_id=618)

"why do "scholars" even think they were written in the first century?"

These copies and fragments are what survives today - but that doesn't mean that there weren't earlier copies. I think some church documents from the first half of the second century (100-150) quote from them and talk about them.

It was in about 180 that the names were assigned, possibly by Irenaeus of Lyon, who pushed for these four to be the canonical gospels. He thought four was the right number, to be the four pillars of the church, matching the four corners of the Earth and the four winds.

Of course, no one knows when they were written, any more than they know who wrote them. This is the job of textual criticism.

Apologetic scholars tend to think (unsurprisingly) that they were written earlier than non-apologetics do.

The temple destruction that Peter always cites to us is their main argument. But when you consider that these writings were evangelical, and written for the groups that they were meant to convince (each of the four giving Jesus a different personality suited to the audience), you have to concede that having Jesus "predict" something that all now know came to pass after his ascension, would have been good for the "wow-factor."

Like hearing after Kennedy's death that Jeane Dixon had predicted it. Only none of us heard it *before* then...

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 10, 2009 4:59 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785477&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785477%26blog_id=618)

pam, peter, willis (if i may...)  
so the "earliest fragment" is john from 125 at the earliest? the earliest for mark is 350!

why do "scholars" even think they were written in the first century?

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 10, 2009 10:25 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785367&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785367%26blog_id=618)

oops, in my post below @ December 8, 2009 11:28 PM , i meant to say,

...when plutarch writes about osiris, he’s not making things up. he **is** just reporting what the eqyptian myths are...

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 9, 2009 7:54 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785307&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785307%26blog_id=618)

"when are the earliest actual fragments dated? the earliest complete book?"

The earliest surviving complete copies date to the 4th century. Before that there were only fragments and quotations.

The gospels were assigned names c. 180 CE.

The earliest fragment is from John (125-160). The earliest fragments of the other gospels are Matthew (150-200), Luke (175-250), and Mark (350).

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 9, 2009 5:42 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785278&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785278%26blog_id=618)

you said,  
*”Let Yamauchi explain why there is very little to compare Jesus resurrection with any other "resurrection" of the ancient world.”*

he said,  
*”This leaves us with the figure of Osiris as the only god for whom there is clear and early evidence of a "resurrection." Our most complete version of the myth of his death and dismemberment by Seth and his twofold resuscitation by Isis is to be found in Plutarch, who wrote in the second century A.D. (cf. J. Gwyn Griffiths, Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride, 1970).****His account seems to accord with statements made in the early Egyptian texts.****After the New Kingdom (from 1570 B.C.. on) even ordinary men aspired to identification with Osiris as one who had triumphed over death.”*

first, by introducing plutarch he’s confusing things. when plutarch writes about osiris, he’s not making things up. he’s not he’s just reporting what the eqyptian myths are. it’s not like luke writing about jesus. plutarch has no “dog in the fight” in reporting the osiris myth – no reason to want to make it match jesus’s story.

and second, we don’t need plutarch to know about the osiris myth. i pointed out that "ikhernofret stele" from 1900 BC, and yamauchi mentions “middle kingdom” and so on.

yamauchi goes on to point out all the differences between osiris and jesus (a point i don't deny, but one that doesn’t negate the similarities). jesus is the same, but different. to paraphrase greg kane: jesus isn’t osiris – he’s a *new* god, like the first Honda accord was a new car....

then he quotes Roland de Vaux:   
*”What is meant of Osiris being "raised to life"? Simply that, thanks to the ministrations of Isis, he is able to lead a life beyond the tomb which is an almost perfect replica of earthly existence. But he will never again come among the living and will reign only over the dead.... This revived god is in reality a "mummy" god [The Bible and the Ancient Near East, 1971, p. 236].”*

and what does osiris the “mummy god” do? he offers ordinary souls life after death. he awaits your soul after death, sitting in judgement, sending it to either a good or bad place – pretty much like jesus, no?

also, we still have that pre-jesus "livy" retelling of romulus's being virgin born, resurrected, and taken to heaven.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 8, 2009 11:28 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785126&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785126%26blog_id=618)

pam,  
a great point you made is "NO originals". and in fact, we are only guessing at who wrote what when. we speculate over whether jesus's destruction of jerusalem "prophesies" were before or after the fact. the sad thing is luke (and everyone else), the supposed "great historian", were he a great historian would have began, "as i write this in the so-and-so year of so-and-so's rule..."

wiki puts the synoptic gospels after 70 AD:  
[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authors\_of\_the\_Bible**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authors_of_the_Bible)

and this one puts them before:  
[**http://www.straightdope.com/columns/read/1988/who-wrote-the-bible-part-4**](http://www.straightdope.com/columns/read/1988/who-wrote-the-bible-part-4)

and of course the real question is WHY SO LATE? (no need to write it down - the end was near...)

when are the earliest actual fragments dated? the earliest complete book?

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 8, 2009 10:42 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785122&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785122%26blog_id=618)

hi pam,  
wouldn't you condede that just about all of the n.t. was written by 100 BC? and most of it by 85 or 90? so that's at most 60-70 yrs after jesus. the o.t., especially the early parts (up to say king josiah) were written many 100s of yrs after the "fact". the o.t. has abraham visiting the non-existent phoenicians, joshua conquering a towns that wouldn't exist for 100s of years, and solomon ruling an empire on par with eqypt (but leaving no trace in the archaeological record). i don't think there are those kind of errors in the n.t.

king herod, pilate, jerusalem, bethlehem etc...really exist! hooray! we'd expect it to be more geographically accurate given that it's more recent and recorded somewhat closer to the facts. as we know that doesn't at all prove it's true.

as far as how accurate its transmission has been over the centuries, i guess i'm just going by what "everyone" says. are manuscripts really as different/wrong as ehrman says?!

i really don't see a need to argue "accuracy of transmission", when i don't even consider the texts to be accurate reflections of what happened. nor do i consider accuracy of transmission to have any bearing on factual accuracy.

as far as those who claim it's accuracy has somehow been divinely preserved, like god "spellchecks" the scribes, well, then in should be 100% accurate reproductions - which it ain't.

(i do find it funny that we have 50 different versions of the bible, just in english. relatedly, it's beyond funny that people claim to divine "bible codes" bansed on *english*letters.)

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 8, 2009 4:30 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785076&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785076%26blog_id=618)

I'm falling a bit behind here - just haven't had time for a long post - but too much to say to keep it pithy. Maybe tonight...

I do want to say that the bible document preservation is not all that great. There are NO originals. All we have are copies, of copies of copies - many times over. And among the various copies, there are many discrepancies. According to Bart Ehrman, there are more discrepancies among copies of NT writings, than there are words in the NT!

Of course, to be fair, some are merely obvious transcription errors, but there are plenty of substantial ones, too!

And even though Peter claims that an actual "Mark" wrote Mark - and presumably likewise with the other Gospel names - in fact, no one knows who wrote any of them. They have no authorship indications or dates. Names of disciples were assigned to them by RCC fathers long after their writing.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 8, 2009 1:10 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204785038&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4785038%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
re the accuracy of the biblical scribes:  
you said,  
*"It confirm its accuracy in many ways, by external historical, archaelogical and cultural finding, that confirm people, places, events did exist at the time of these writing."*

1)in terms of historical accuracy, the "farther back" you go in time, the more blatantly wrong the texts become - if you assume the literal fundamentalist biblical chronology is accurate. regular (i.e. non-biblical presuppositional) archaeologists and historians don't see much of israel until omri and ahab. they CAN'T FIND king solomon anywhere! the bible is pretty darn accurate if you assume 500-700s BC authorship for most of ot and first-century AD for nt.)

2)its "reproductive accuracy" does speak to how important it was to people. the time and effort of jewish and christian scribes was herculean. and they did a great job of copying and preserving the texts.

3)"historical accuracy" is an extremely dangerous and fruitless pursuit for inerrantists. it can only disprove inerrancy. naming the right people, places and mundane events CANNOT prove the truth of the supernatural claims - EVEN IF every single "historical" detail "checks out". but...if one contends the entire bible is literal, and literally inerrant....and there is an error, just ONE error, well...i can understand how that would be bad.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 8, 2009 11:20 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784996&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784996%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

WALTER: "peter,  
i warn you...i'm a little testy, as the redskins have just lost a seemingly unlosable game....man...they have skills...at losing unlosable games....."

I'll take it easy on you buddy. Well maybe not!

ME: "Now if you were to put these texts to the same scrutiny that the Bible texts have been put to it would be interesting to see how they hold up."

WALTER: "i will take this as a concession that yamauchi lied (or charitably, "accidentally mislead") you with his assurances of the uniqueness of jesus's resurrection stories."

Let Yamauchi explain why there is very little to compare Jesus resurrection with any other "resurrection" of the ancient world.

[**http://www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/yama.html**](http://www.leaderu.com/everystudent/easter/articles/yama.html)

WALTER: "really, this just reinforces my opinion of yamauchi and strobel as christian apologists, and NOT scholars."

His credentials are impressive regardless of how you "feel" about him Wlater,

[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin\_M.\_Yamauchi**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edwin_M._Yamauchi)

WALTER: "if it helps, i will also concede that the christian texts that eventually became the christian new testament, and the jewish old testament were EXTREMELY "well-preserved". congratulations. however, well-preservedness has nothing to do with accuracy (or originality)."

Actually, it helps in many ways, for if you have a multiplicity of manuscriptural evidence, scoping over hundreds of years, varying largely in just spelling errors, you can see its intergrity and accuracy has not changed to put it in question from early to later dates.

If a Book can be copied and recopied to the extent the Bible has, translatered into most languages spoken on earth today and still convey the purpose that God intended it to have, there is something remarkable about it, especially since so many have undertaken to destroy it from their cultures.

It confirm its accuracy in many ways, by external historical, archaelogical and cultural finding, that confirm people, places, events did exist at the time of these writing.

Walter, I'll reply to your December 3rd post soon.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 8, 2009 9:56 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784977&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784977%26blog_id=618)

willis elliott,

i think it's great that you read and respond occasionally to comments on your blog. sometimes i wonder if authors read comments.

i asked this earlier, but we got sidetracked with the jesus precedents thing. do you have anything to say about literalism historically? specifically,

1)was the bible written to be taken literally (except where it's explicitly couched as "parable" and so forth)?

2)has the bible historically (say until the 1600s or 1700s) been taken literally? i understand for instance that galileo and kepler "calculated" ages of the earth on the order of 6000 yrs. they probably also thought there was a real, literal global flood too.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 7, 2009 3:29 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784765&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784765%26blog_id=618)

peter, when you have a chance, i'd,like you to address my dec.3, 2:09 pm post re post-flood human migrations.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 7, 2009 3:08 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784758&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784758%26blog_id=618)

"I read all the comments on my OnFaith entries, & occasionally comment. Indeed, I almost always comment when I read in a comment something BLANTANTLY UNTRUE.  
INSTANCE:   
'Jesus even tells you how many stripes (lashes) to give an unruly slave.' "

Mr. Elliott, see Luke 12:45-48

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 7, 2009 12:11 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784701&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784701%26blog_id=618)

I read all the comments on my OnFaith entries, & occasionally comment. Indeed, I almost always comment when I read in a comment something BLANTANTLY UNTRUE.  
INSTANCE:   
"Jesus even tells you how many stripes (lashes) to give an unruly slave."

**POSTED BY: ELLIOTTWL | DECEMBER 6, 2009 9:14 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20elliottwl%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784695&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784695%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
i warn you...i'm a little testy, as the redskins have just lost a seemingly unlosable game....man...they have skills...at losing unlosable games.....  
so, you said,  
*"Now if you were to put these texts to the same scrutiny that the Bible texts have been put to it would be interesting to see how they hold up."*

i will take this as a concession that yamauchi lied (or charitably, "accidentally mislead") you with his assurances of the uniqueness of jesus's resurrection stories.

i don't need to worry about how reliably livy's works were preserved. i don't believe he was correct when he "reported" of romulus's resurrection. my point, about the prevalence of resurrected godmen has been made.

really, this just reinforces my opinion of yamauchi and strobel as christian apologists, and NOT scholars.

if it helps, i will also concede that the christian texts that eventually became the christian new testament, and the jewish old testament were EXTREMELY "well-preserved". congratulations. however, well-preservedness has nothing to do with accuracy (or originality).

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 6, 2009 5:18 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784672&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784672%26blog_id=618)

Part 3 (Longer than I thought)

PAM: “It gets a little better with every new discovery. Science isn’t going to tell us tomorrow, “oops, our mistake, the Sun goes around the Earth after all.” However, we might learn something new about, e.g., the shape of the Earth’s orbit.”

It can only get better if it is based on the correct set of premises, the correct conditions for something to happen, otherwise it is built on a lie.

PH: “I can be wrong, but God can't. Can you? I mean on the one issue that can mean the difference between eternal life and separation from God for eternity - the existence of the God of Christianity and the only means to Him - the Lord Jesus Christ.”

PAM: “Sure, I could be. But the preponderance of evidence leads me to think I’m not.”

In your limited understanding of anything and not seeing the facts as they are interrelated and connected in every circumstance, so it is just your belief that the evidence leads you to what the facts indeed really are.

PAM: “And you really should qualify “God can’t” with “in my opinion” because you don’t know there’s a God. There’s a bumper sticker that I’ve seen that says “Militant Agnostic: I don’t know, and neither do you!” And that’s correct. To the extent that we’re honest, we all have to admit to agnosticism, which treats knowledge, whereas theism/atheism speaks to belief. “

No, what I have said strands. He is necessary and He is relational and Christian’s experience Him through that relationship.

There again, you either take God at His word or you have no ultimate standard for anything, no ethical system of belief that does not contradict someone else, no ethical belief that is not subjective and subject to change, no source for truth because truth is absolute and objective, no grounds for uniformity in nature, for if there is no intent then things just happen randomly, there is nothing to originally organize or direct information, no purpose or meaning for it, no explanation for life or origins. It just all happens, no certainty for the future. You cannot base with certainty in your framework that the future will be like the past, just because in the past it has been this way.  
  
“To the Jews who had believed Him Jesus said, ‘If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will KNOW the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32)

Falsehood does not set us free Pam, it entangles and binds us to deception, to living a lie.

Now this is eternal life: that they may KNOW You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.” (John 17:3)

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 4:26 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784670&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784670%26blog_id=618)

Part 2,

PH: “That would include you too Pam for you are a believer. For any knowledge to take place you too Pam have to first believe something. You have to start on something, and what you start with builds the foundation. Your foundation rests on nothing objective. It could all change tomorrow.”

PAM: “I disagree with the first part. You don’t have to “believe” anything in order to follow the evidence. You form your opinions based on where the evidence takes you, but new evidence can alter those opinions, which speaks to the second part.”

In order to follow the evidence on a rational basis, which you are trying to do, you have to believe that the evidence is connected in a certain way.  
  
And opinions are beliefs.   
1. A belief or conclusion held with confidence but not substantiated by positive knowledge or proof: "The world is not run by thought, nor by imagination, but by opinion" (Elizabeth Drew).   
2. A judgment based on special knowledge and given by an expert: a medical opinion.   
3. A judgment or estimation of the merit of a person or thing: has a low opinion of braggarts.   
4. The prevailing view: public opinion.   
5. Law. A formal statement by a court or other adjudicative body of the legal reasons and principles for the conclusions of the court.  
[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin opīniō, opīniōn-, from opīnārī, to think.]  
SYNONYMS opinion, view, sentiment, feeling, belief, conviction, persuasion. These nouns signify something a person believes or accepts as being sound or true.

PAM: “That is a strength, not a weakness, of science. Science is objective, Peter.”

No it is not always Pam. If it can change then it is not objective but subjective – subject to change. It is only objective when it correctly identifies and explains what is real.

PAM: “But it never claims to have absolute truth.”

If it is not absolute then it is not true. Truth can never change or else it would not be true. It has to be universally so. Truth can be relative in the sense that it applies only to a fact about a certain person or time or place or event, but even there it is universally true that on such and such a date this person was at so and so, if indeed that person was actually there. Bill Clinton was president of the USA from so and so to such and such is either true or false depending on the dates given. He was only president of the USA during a specific or relative time frame, however.

PAM: “And the knowledge that comes from it doesn’t so much “change,” as it grows.”

No, it changes Pam as it grows.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 4:23 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784668&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784668%26blog_id=618)

Hi Pam, I'd better wrasp it up for a while with these last two interchages,

PH: “And until you see them they are not what they are supposed to be. You act in the place of God as the one determining what they are.”

PAM: “I’m not sure I understand this. It was in reference to my calling believers credulous, because that’s how I see them…?  
  
Yes, somewhat. I’m giving you some of your own medicine. Like it? You see a thing as you want it to be is what that statement you made suggests to me. It is like the umpire who says, “It isn’t a strike until I call it a strike.” So even if the ball in reality is clearly in or out of the strike zone it doesn’t matter. The umpire is going to play by his rules or how he sees the ball to be, regardless of how many others may argue with his call or how far in or out of the strike zone the ball happens to be.

PAM: “Ummm, yes, I guess. I’m the only one who can make that determination for myself, right or wrong.”

Yes, you are the only one who can make that determination for yourself, but is there a basis outside yourself that is objective, universal, absolute that can be appealed to for guidance and a correct interpretation? If not then we are ultimately faced with meaninglessness, for nothing really matters. It is no big deal whatever you determine without there being a true and living God. You are going to die and cease to exist. None of this will matter when you are dead in your world view, so why does it matter now? Why are you conscious of it mattering now? Eat drink and be merry! Don’t worry, be happy! Screw the opposition! It works in Canada just as well as it does in the USA.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 4:21 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784667&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784667%26blog_id=618)

PAM: "I’ll cop to having formed my opinion that there are no gods and that nothing is supernatural a good long while ago. But that doesn’t mean I’m not open to new evidence. That opinion hasn’t changed in all those years because nothing has come along to make it change. On the contrary, all the things I’ve learned in the intervening years have only served to confirm the opinion. Even so, if an eighty-foot tall man with a white beard were to step down out of the clouds tomorrow and start hurling thunderbolts at unbelievers, I might have to reassess."

Maybe, or dig your heels in all the more in defiance.

PAM: "But you keep talking about the “evolutionary worldview” that I supposedly screen things through, or build upon – where do you think that came from, Peter?"

From your rebellion to an authority that supersedes your own; from looking for a way to justify your self-sufficiency and independence from God; by elevating yourself to the arbiter who determines what will be and what will not be.

PAM: "I wasn’t taught it by my parents, or peers, or community. I wasn’t taught it in school. I was taught in school how to think and read critically – and that is what I used to aid me in making my own decisions."

John Donne said that no man [woman] is an island unto himself? Your critical thinking  
depends on the correct critical thinking and interpretation of others. You have chosen to put your bundle of eggs in the evolutionary basket, and even though it has a hole in the bottom it appeals ascetically to your senses. The fruit appealed to Eves senses as pleasant to the eye, so evolutionary philosophy is pleasing to your sense of reason.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 3:02 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784660&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784660%26blog_id=618)

Pam continued,

PH (quoting John Frame): "Often in philosophy, however, the "fact" is thought to be a kind of reality-in-itself, a reality totally devoid of any interpretation - divine or human - by which all attempts at interpretation are to be tested. In reply, (1) we must insist that there are no facts that are utterly devoid of interpretation; there are no "brute facts," to use Van Til's terminology. All facts have been interpreted by God, and since all things are what they are by virtue of God's eternal plan, we must say that "the interpretation of the facts precedes the facts" (Van Til)."

PAM: "Oh, Peter, that’s just silly. There are “brute facts,” and no evidence to suggest that anyone interpreted them, let alone God."

Pam, a brute fact would be an uninterrupted fact that stood alone, independent of any other, without reference/connection to any other. Do you know of any fact that stands by itself without connection to any other? A brute fact would be a chance fact "random and unconnected, having no rationale, no pre-established order, no intended pattern or preceding interpretation, no necessity...." Van Til's Apologetics p.377

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 2:39 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784658&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784658%26blog_id=618)

Good afternoon Pam!

PAM: "You only think that you’ve gotten this “objective standard.” And I don’t see how you can even think so."  
  
God is that necessary standard in order for there to be any objective truth or measure. Without Him everything is contingent, subjective and subject to change, unknowable for its definition is always changing; contrary to logic that states that A cannot be A and not A. A in your world view can be anything, just give it time, your magic ingredient.

PAM: "Slavery is hunky-dory according to both old and new testaments. Jesus even tells you how many stripes (lashes) to give an unruly slave. Why, then, do you think it’s wrong? Where does that standard come from?"

When you are indebted to someone it is their rules that you must follow. To constantly go against the wishes of someone greater than you in power, position, authority would be anarchy unless there was disciple for doing so. Can you imaging a society were everyone did as they saw fit. It has happened, and continues to happen to some degree in every society. Without laws, without consequences what is there to stop someone from doing anything they so please? Thirty-nine lashes got the point home quickly.

Slavery is a lesson to be learned. Human slavery as practiced in many parts of this world is not God's ideal. It is a result of the Fall and of man's inhumanity to man, nevertheless, the Bible gives moral guidelines for slavery and the treating of people that are indebted to others. And the pure form of slavery is where you are willing to sacrifice yourself, your welfare, your life, your possessions for the good of others. It is called servanthood. It is a willingness to go the extra mile for another even though it will create hardship for you. It is service to and for your fellow human being, of putting them above yourself in first importance.

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus..."   
  
The imagery is throughout the Bible and there are rules on how to treat a slave or servant justly in the Mosaic laws.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 2:38 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784657&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784657%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

WALTER: "now, i tried, but was not able to access the online scholarly journals that contain the actual texts written by livy, or the book by selincourt that gives this translation, but i have faith that they are there.

Now if you were to put these texts to the same scrutiny that the Bible texts have been put to it would be interesting to see how they hold up.   
1) What is the earliest copy we have of these texts?  
2) How many do we have?  
3) What is the likelihood that they have transmission errors in them from being copied down wrongly over the centuries?  
4) What are the chances that these texts were embellished after the Christian message to put Romulus on a more even footing with Jesus, if that were ever possible, which it is not?  
5) Why was the message not embrassed by the people and spread like the Christian message?  
6) How many eyewitness accounts or other source accounts are there to confirm any of this?  
7) What kind of message did this pagan god have that makes what is said of him believable?  
8) What internal verification is there in the text to confirm its validity in part or whole?

You could probably come up with a list many times longer than I have here of questions to test the claims.

WALTER: "also, i am not arguing for the truth of this crazy story - just for the fact that the legend of dying and resurected man"

No Walter, you only want to do that with the Christian source materials.

Christianity is unacceptable to you because it requires you to bend your knee to Someone who is greater than any other human. You prefer the illusion of you being in control and that makes it impossible for you to come to Him unless He draws you by His grace that is expressed in His word and revealed through His Spirit. You are rebelling against Him and your nature is set against Him. I understand that for God's word says as much. (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; Romans 1:18-25; 8:5-11; Ephesians 2:1-3 being four examples of many)

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 12:23 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784647&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784647%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
you asked,  
*"Well Walter, then can you document any written literature that can be traced before the birth of Jesus that is similar in nature to the resurrection account in Christianity that is not highly disputed, or for that matter the death of Jesus on a cross? I'm talking anything either written or carved in stone."*

this osiris legend is translated from a stone carving from around 1900 BC called the "Ikhernofret Stela"

"The First Day, The Procession of Wepwawet: A mock battle is enacted during which the enemies of Osiris are defeated. A procession is led by the god Wepwawet ("opener of the way").

The Second Day, The Great Procession of Osiris: The body of Osiris is taken from his temple to his tomb. The boat he is transported in, the "Neshmet" bark, has to be defended against his enemies.

The Third Day, Osiris is Mourned and the Enemies of the Land are Destroyed.

The Fourth Day, Night Vigil: Prayers and recitations are made and funeral rites performed.

The Fifth Day, Osiris is Reborn: Osiris is reborn at dawn and crowned with the crown of Ma'at. A statue of Osiris is brought to the temple."

go about 2/3 of the way down on this page:  
[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osiris**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osiris)

the "egyptian book of the dead" (from the 1200 BC, i believe) describes what orisis does up there, waiting for us in heaven. he judges us, and determines our eternal fate (either in a good place, with him, or in a bad place). sounds like jesus to me.  
[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\_of\_the\_Dead**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_the_Dead)

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 6, 2009 12:17 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784646&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784646%26blog_id=618)

Radical Islam: Terror in Its Own Words  
  
Part-3b [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCTTAR\_IeBA**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCTTAR_IeBA)   
Part-4 [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYWu2v\_FY\_4**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYWu2v_FY_4)   
Part-5 [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBgT35YO5dQ**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBgT35YO5dQ)

**POSTED BY: SHLOMOFISHER | DECEMBER 6, 2009 11:54 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20ShlomoFisher%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784639&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784639%26blog_id=618)

Radical Islam: Terror in Its Own Words  
Part-1 [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXFYH5ckDKQ**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXFYH5ckDKQ)   
Part-2 [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCUlslaXSzk**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCUlslaXSzk)   
Part-3a [**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYASn6oXkUc**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYASn6oXkUc)

**POSTED BY: SHLOMOFISHER | DECEMBER 6, 2009 11:54 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20ShlomoFisher%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784638&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784638%26blog_id=618)

peter, you asked,  
*"Well Walter, then can you document any written literature that can be traced before the birth of Jesus that is similar in nature to the resurrection account in Christianity that is not highly disputed, or for that matter the death of Jesus on a cross? I'm talking anything either written or carved in stone."*

roman historian livy lived from 64BC to 12AD. he wrote:

"Then a few voices began to proclaim Romulus's divinity; the cry was taken up, and at last every man present hailed him as a god and son of a god, and prayed to him to be forever gracious and to protect his children. However, even on this great occasion there were, I believe, a few dissenters who secretly maintained that the king had been torn to pieces by the senators. At all events the story got about, though in veiled terms; but it was not important, as awe, and admiration for Romulus's greatness, set the seal upon the other version of his end, which was, moreover, given further credit by the timely action of a certain Julius Proculus, a man, we are told, honored for his wise counsel on weighty matters. The loss of the king had left the people in an uneasy mood and suspicious of the senators, and Proculus, aware of the prevalent temper, conceived the shrewd idea of addressing the Assembly. **Romulus, he declared, the father of our city descended from heaven at dawn this morning and appeared to me.** In awe and reverence I stood before him, praying for permission to look upon his face without sin. "Go", he said, "and tell the Romans that by heaven's will my Rome shall be capital of the world. Let them learn to be soldiers. Let them know, and teach their children, that no power on earth can stand against Roman arms". **Having spoken these words, he was taken up again into the sky.**"  
(Livy, 1.16, trans. A. de Selincourt, The Early History of Rome, 34-35)  
[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romulus\_and\_Remus**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romulus_and_Remus)

now, i tried, but was not able to access the online scholarly journals that contain the actual texts written by livy, or the book by selincourt that gives this translation, but i have faith that they are there.

also, i am not arguing for the truth of this crazy story - just for the fact that the legend of dying and resurected man/gods existed before jesus came along. i really didn't think this was a controversial point, but, well, apparently it is for jesus fans.

the list of god/men who were divinely fathered is long, but includes dionysus, perseus, athena, apollo, artimis, hermes, persephone and many others. i'll dig up references for these if needed. again, i'm not saying these people WERE divinely fathered, just that historically, and specifally, in the time of jesus, people thought it was possible for people to be divinely fathered.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 6, 2009 9:53 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784618&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784618%26blog_id=618)

"Will it lose any new bookmarks that I have transferred over to Internet Explorer from Mozilla?"

No.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 6, 2009 3:11 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784608&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784608%26blog_id=618)

PH: “Pam, you talk about how open you are but I suspect that you closed your mind a long time ago. As I have said before, neutrality is a myth. You are so deeply entrenched in your world view that everything you think of is screened/processed through it.”

I’ll cop to having formed my opinion that there are no gods and that nothing is supernatural a good long while ago. But that doesn’t mean I’m not open to new evidence. That opinion hasn’t changed in all those years because nothing has come along to make it change. On the contrary, all the things I’ve learned in the intervening years have only served to confirm the opinion. Even so, if an eighty-foot tall man with a white beard were to step down out of the clouds tomorrow and start hurling thunderbolts at unbelievers, I might have to reassess.

But you keep talking about the “evolutionary worldview” that I supposedly screen things through, or build upon – where do you think that came from, Peter? I wasn’t taught it by my parents, or peers, or community. I wasn’t taught it in school. I *was* taught in school how to think and read critically – and that is what I used to aid me in making my *own* decisions.

PH: “The scary thing is that you have no objective base to place any of your beliefs on. Christians can know, on the other hand, because Someone outside themselves - God - has given them an objective standard to measure and justify what is true. That standard is His revelation - His holy Word, and it is confirmed through the union that comes from being in Christ. That is something you know nothing of.”

You only *think* that you’ve gotten this “objective standard.” And I don’t see how you can even think so. Slavery is hunky-dory according to both old and new testaments. Jesus even tells you how many stripes (lashes) to give an unruly slave. Why, then, do you think it’s wrong? Where does that standard come from?

PH (quoting John Frame): "Often in philosophy, however, the "fact" is thought to be a kind of reality-in-itself, a reality totally devoid of any interpretation - divine or human - by which all attempts at interpretation are to be tested. In reply, (1) we must insist that there are no facts that are utterly devoid of interpretation; there are no "brute facts," to use Van Til's terminology. All facts have been interpreted by God, and since all things are what they are by virtue of God's eternal plan, we must say that "the interpretation of the facts precedes the facts" (Van Til)."

Oh, Peter, that’s just silly. There *are* “brute facts,” and no evidence to suggest that anyone interpreted them, let alone God.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 6, 2009 3:06 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784606&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784606%26blog_id=618)

PH: “And until you see them they are not what they are supposed to be. You act in the place of God as the one determining what they are.”

I’m not sure I understand this. It was in reference to my calling believers credulous, because that’s how I see them…? Ummm, yes, I guess. I’m the only one who can make that determination for myself, right or wrong.

PH: “That would include you too Pam for you are a believer. For any knowledge to take place you too Pam have to first believe something. You have to start on something, and what you start with builds the foundation. Your foundation rests on nothing objective. It could all change tomorrow.”

I disagree with the first part. You don’t have to “believe” anything in order to follow the evidence. You form your opinions based on where the evidence takes you, but new evidence can alter those opinions, which speaks to the second part.

That is a strength, not a weakness, of science. Science is objective, Peter. But it never claims to have absolute truth. And the knowledge that comes from it doesn’t so much “change,” as it *grows*. It gets a little better with every new discovery. Science isn’t going to tell us tomorrow, “oops, our mistake, the Sun goes around the Earth after all.” However, we might learn something new about, e.g., the shape of the Earth’s orbit.

PH: “I can be wrong, but God can't. Can you? I mean on the one issue that can mean the difference between eternal life and separation from God for eternity - the existence of the God of Christianity and the only means to Him - the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Sure, I could be. But the preponderance of evidence leads me to think I’m not. And you really should qualify “God can’t” with “in my opinion” because you don’t *know* there’s a God. There’s a bumper sticker that I’ve seen that says “Militant Agnostic: I don’t know, *and neither do you!*” And that’s correct. To the extent that we’re honest, we all have to admit to agnosticism, which treats *knowledge*, whereas theism/atheism speaks to *belief*.

Richard Dawkins, in a recent debate, expressed his degree of certainty thus: He said that on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 was total, unquestioning belief, and 7 was absolute disbelief, he was a 6.5.  
I would make that fraction a bit higher for myself, but even I wouldn’t claim a seven.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 6, 2009 3:01 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784605&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784605%26blog_id=618)

Hi Pam,

I thought I would comment on your post to Dr. Elliott.

PAM: "I guess it does do it best, since it's the only source for the supposition that there is a God. You know there's a God because the bible says there is, and you know the bible is true because it's the word of God."

Yes, you go by your highest standard. If there was something that I placed above the Word of God it would no longer be that standard.

You go by evolutionary science because evolutionary scientists say that evolutionary science is the undisputable truth, only they are still investigating it and some of what was thought of as true may one day be false, but the basic premise is sound, at least in the minds of those who believe in it.

Thomas Kuhn's "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" promises to be an interesting book to read.

[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\_Structure\_of\_Scientific\_Revolutions**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Structure_of_Scientific_Revolutions)

John Frame comments in "The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, p. 117,

"...the instruments that scientists use interpose a great deal of human theoretical ingenuity between the observer and the things he observes. When he uses such instruments, the scientist is not only checking his theory with observations, he is also checking his observations by means of theory-dependent instruments (ii) Scientific work does not consist in just making and reporting observations but in alalyzing and evaluating data. (iii) Scientific theories do not merely report observational data; they go beyond it. Scientific laws are usually general; they claim to hold for the entire universe (iv) What we "see," "hear," "smell," "taste," and "feel" is influenced by our expectations. Those expectations do not come just from sense-experience but from theories, cultural experience, group loyalties, prejudice, religious commitments, and so forth. Thus there is no "purely empirical" inquiry. We never encounter "brute," that is, uninterpreted, facts. We only encounter facts that have been interpreted in terms of existing commitments. (v) Often, then, scientists do not recognize data that contradicts their theories. But even when they do, they do not immediately accept such data as refutations of the theory in question....Only when the problems multiply and alternative theories begin to look more promising will the scientist abandon his theory for another. For all of those reasons, the work of science is far more than mere "checking the facts." And if scientists are unable to separate theory from facts, non-scientists can hardly be expected to do so."

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 3:00 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784604&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784604%26blog_id=618)

Hi Pam,

PAM: "Setting it back won't delete any new files. It will undo any new applications or settings."

I didn't know that. Thanks again! Tomorrow afternoon I'll try it. Will it lose any new bookmarks that I have transferred over to Internet Explorer from Mozilla?

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 2:27 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784601&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784601%26blog_id=618)

WALTER: "what's wrong with the "knowledge of good and evil"? a thoughtful person might say you really can't have one without the other."

ME: "Who determines it? Without an objective standard it is subject (pardon the pun) to change."

WALTER: "so who determines the "objective" standard? christians? muslims? whatever religion happens to be in the majority?"

No, only God. And we as humans come to know it through His revelation, but also innately, deep down in that we are created in His image and likeness, but because of sin we see through a mirror dark.

WALTER: "the very fact that there are so so many religions/denominations/sects/cults etc... proves that you can't use religion as the objective standard."

God reveals His objective standard through His Word, Son and Spirit and indirectly through the Christian because the Christian is in union with God through Christ Jesus. Christ lives through us. He is our life, our eternal life - life that is without beginning or end can only be found in God (John 10:28; 17:3). But He also shows His standard to us in all He has made, even though it is marred by the Fall and we see it dimly.

All religion is is man's construction of a god in his own image, in rebellion against God. Man wants to choose what he will worship and bow down to, whether that be himself as the ultimate, self-sufficient being or something made out of his imagination Romans 1:18 onwards).

WALTER: "but, if you cull through all those religions i think you'll find that there ARE a few bits of accumulated wisdom that DO seem to be universal - and therefore possibly "objective". there aren't many."

Only one objective standard so it goes without saying that "religions" is man's attempt to make a god out of his imagination. The OT and NT is God's revelation to man.

WALTER: "basically they boil down to "don't steal". they can be enumerated as don't steal, don't murder (steal a life), don't lie (steal someones's trust) and so on. from this idea we can develop "higher level" morals like "don't discriminate" and "be fair" and "cooperate" and "be nice".

But when you talk about the God who is there it boils down to more than that, it boils down to a relationship with the Creator.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 2:22 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784600&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784600%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

WALTER: "peter, re original sin:  
i said,  
"like i said - not logical. knowledge of anything can't be passed on in fruit. are you sure this isn't figurative?"

ME: "The fruit was real. It REPRESENTED two choices open to Adam, to take the fruit and disobey God's wise council, or to listen and believe that God knew best. Man chose to make the decision that opened up the whole can of worms."

WALTER: "well, first it was ADAM not "mankind" who chose that. but my question is more technical. i'm more interested in the mechanics of it. how is "sin" passed on" does god have to actively curse each subsequent generation? or did he fiddle with or insert a "sin gene"?

Sin came in the form of dsobedience, just like it did with Satan. Man was choosing to act apart from the will and goodness of God. That opened up the knowledge of evil for then, Adam as our federal head, our representative, was acting independantly of God and deciding for himself what good was. With man's limited knowledge this has lead to all the troubles that mankind faces when he tries to operate independently of God.

Adam had the choice in the Garden of eating of the Tree of Life that God had permitted him to eat of and living forever or in finding out for himself what good and evil was by disobeying God. His choice brought condemnation to all of us since now he was infected by the knowledge of what evil was and we inherit that knowledge from him, since we are along the line of Adam's seed.

Since God is good, pure and holy sin is rebellion against that goodness. Only in Christ and along the lines of His seed, the Second Adam, are we given new birth, a new nature in which we are restored to the intended relationship with God that was marred by the first Adam.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 6, 2009 2:14 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784599&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784599%26blog_id=618)

Hi Peter,  
"I haven't set my computer to an earlier time yet since I have a couple of hundred lectures on itunes that I need to download to my mp3 player."

Setting it back won't delete any new files. It will undo any new applications or settings.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 6, 2009 1:43 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784598&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784598%26blog_id=618)

Willis Elliott says:

"Cumulative evidence + Occam's razor = my conviction that, of the world's literature, the Bible best conveys the nature of God..."

I guess it does do it best, since it's the only source for the supposition that there *is* a God. You know there's a God because the bible says there is, and you know the bible is true because it's the word of God.

You don't see the logical fallacy there?

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 6, 2009 1:34 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784597&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784597%26blog_id=618)

Mary,  
I'm really not much interested in having this argument. I don't prefer one brand of Christianity to another, or Christianity in general to any other religion. To me, it's all absurd.

I hear American Christians whining all the time about about being "persecuted" (because atheists dare to question faith, or because secularists don't want school prayer), "just like the bible said we would be." Never mind that some 85% of the poulation self-identifies as Christian, and no politician can hope to gain office unless he at least claims to be.

Poor things.

It's gotten this ridiculous:  
[**http://tinyurl.com/ybe247r**](http://tinyurl.com/ybe247r)

And the Roman Catholic Church claims the lion's share of Christians in almost every country that is majority Christian - and has throughout most of CE history been the wealthiest, most powerful institution on Earth.

So don't expect me to get too exercised over English Catholics not being able send their children abroad for education, or laws passed prohibiting power to "foreign princes."

What was done to the Irish was reprehensible, but religion was only an excuse. It started well before religious differences.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 6, 2009 1:23 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784596&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784596%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

Here is the original quote again.

"T.N.D Mettinger... wrote one of the most recent academic treatments of dying and rising gods in antiquity. He admits in his book THE RIDDLE OF RESURRECTION that the consensus among modern scholars - nearly universal - is that there were no dying and rising gods that preceded Christianity. They all post-dated the first century."

Please note that Mettinger's book is on the "Riddle of Resurrection." I feel that is significant in the theme of dying and rising gods along the lines of Jesus' resurrection.

Of course, not reading his book I could be wrong. Nice backtracking hey? (^8

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 11:20 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784587&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784587%26blog_id=618)

Hi Pam,

Hi Pam,

Yes, I tried deleting and restoring Firefox, but no luck. It is still doing what it was doing before. It won't allow me to load a web address. I haven't set my computer to an earlier time yet since I have a couple of hundred lectures on itunes that I need to download to my mp3 player. Thanks for the suggestion. If I can't get it fixed in the next few days that looks like it will be my only option.

Thank you!

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 11:08 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784585&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784585%26blog_id=618)

Walter continue,

According to Yamauchi regarding Mithraism, there are relatively few texts and much of the claims that it influenced Christianity are not supported by the evidence, since it arrived in the West too late - AD 66.

So would you care to pursue this line of thought further regarding Mithraism?

In discussing the resurrection and the "prototypes gods" such as Marduk, Dionysus Yamauchi said there was none. As for Adonis, there are four texts that speak of his resurrection, all date from the second to fourth century AD. The supposed resurrection of Attis isn't noted until AD 150.

The accounts of Osiris more represents afterlife than resurrection and Yamauchi said the writings are found in Plutarch who wrote in the second century AD.

So we have lots of dying gods but no written evidence of "dying and rising gods" in the sense of resurrection to speak of before Christianity. Walter, can any of these be seen to have resurrected? More like "symbolic representations of the death and rebirth of vegetation." (p.178)

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 11:03 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784584&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784584%26blog_id=618)

WALTER: "again, all i can say is OMG!  
just do a little "unchristian" research, would you? it won't make you go blind or anything.... just read a non-christian source. start with egyptian gods osiris and isis. then let me know how it's possible that "the consensus among modern scholars - nearly universal - is that there were no dying and rising gods that preceded Christianity."

Strobel asked Edwin Yamauchi,

"Who popularized the idea that Jesus' resurrection was derived from the worship of dying and rising fertility gods?"

"In the scholarly world, these comparisons were promoted by a group of scholars"...which flourished at the end of the nineteenth and early into the twentieth centuries...Richard Reitzenstein...thought the sacrifice of Christ aligned itself with the killing of a bull by Mithras. Carsten Colpe and others severely criticized the anachronistic use of sources by these scholars."

Yamauchi goes on to trace how these supposed comparisons gained ground on the popular level through Sir James Frazer, on "a misreading of the evidence," and through three influential French scholars. Yamauchi says, regarding the question about taking various fragments of information and manufacturing a universal mystery religion,

"Yes, there is a widespread view that there was a general, common mystery religion, but upon a closer examination of the sources, nobody believes that any longer,..These were quite different beliefs. In fact, by the mid-twentieth century, scholars had established that the sources used in these writings were far from satisfactory and the parallels were much too superficial. It was pretty much of a closed issue in the scholarly community, but it seems to have been revived in recent years among writers on a popular level..." P. 166-167

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 10:30 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784576&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784576%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

WALTER: "peter,  
before you say osiris or any other resurrected god isn't EXACTLY like jesus, i will concede that. my point is the idea was not new."

That was one of the tangents I was going off on. The point is Walter, that it is not like Jesus' resurrection at all. Strobel's asked Licona about Osiris. Here is what he said,

"The most popular account says Osiris's brother killed him, chopped him into fouteen pieces, and scattered them around the world. Well the goddess Isis feels compassion for Osiris, so she looks for his body parts to give him a proper burial. She only finds thirteen of them, puts them back together, and Osiris is buried. But he doesn't come back to this world: he's given the status of god of the netherworld - a gloomy, shadowy place of semiconsciousness. As a friend of mine says, 'This isn't a resurrection, its a zombification!' This is no parallel to Jesus' resurection, for which there is strong historical evidence." p. 163.

Actually Ron Nash makes some good points about Jesus' death and resurrection in his online lecture "Two Central Miracles",

[**http://apologetics315.blogspot.com/search/label/Ronald%20Nash**](http://apologetics315.blogspot.com/search/label/Ronald%20Nash)

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 10:28 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784573&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784573%26blog_id=618)

Peter,   
Have you tried removing Firefox and reinstalling it? Or rolling back your computer to a time (restoration point) when Firefox still worked?

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 5, 2009 10:09 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784570&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784570%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

WALTER: "now, that may be an accurate quote - i assume it is. but it's just PATENTLY FALSE! especially this part:  
"the consensus among modern scholars - nearly universal - is that there were no dying and rising gods that preceded Christianity."

Well Walter, then can you document any written literature that can be traced before the birth of Jesus that is similar in nature to the resurrection account in Christianity that is not highly disputed, or for that matter the death of Jesus on a cross? I'm talking anything either written or carved in stone.

Also, what kind of credentials do these "scholars" have?

To continue on with the interview, Strobel adds,

"Obviously, that timing is absolutely critical: Christianity couldn't have borrowed the idea of the resurrection if myths about dying and rising gods weren't even circulating when Christianity was birthed in the first century AD.  
"Then Mettinger said he was going to take exception to that nearly universal scholarly conviction," Licona continued. "He takes a decidedly minority position and claims that there are at least three and possibly as many as five dying and rising gods that predate Christianity. But the key question is this: Are there any actual parallels between these myths and Jesus' resurrection?..."in the end, after combing through all the accounts and critically analyzing them, Mettinger adds that none of these serve as parallels to Jesus. None of them," Licona emphasized.  
"They are far different from the reports of Jesus rising from the dead. They occurred in the unspecified and distant past and were usually related to the seasonal life-and-death cycle of vegetation. In contrast, Jesus' resurrection isn't repeated, isn't related to changes in the seasons, and was sincerely believed to be an actual event by those who lived in the same generation of the historical Jesus. In addition Mettinger concludes that "there is no evidence for the death of the dying and rising gods as vicarious suffering for sins!"...Mettinger caps his study with this stunning statement: "There is, as far as I am aware, no prima facie evidence that the death and resurrection of Jesus is a mythological construct, drawing on the myths and rites of the dying and rising gods of the surrounding world."

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 9:10 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784565&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784565%26blog_id=618)

Every year huge numbers of Arabs/Muslims from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Kuwaitis, Syria, Egypt, Albania and dozens of other ethnic Muslim states who hate America swarm into the United States and add to the already increasing numbers of Arab/Muslim. And every year hundreds of mosques, which preach the extermination of all non-Muslims and the Islamization of America, are being added to the thousands already pointing their minarets skyward. Militant Islam is rapidly spreading its tentacles across America. One of the few Islamic moderates in this country, Muhammad Hisham Kabbani of the Islamic Supreme Council of America, estimated that "extremists" have taken over 80% of the mosques in the US, nearly all funded by Saudi Arabia. These extremists are working single-mindedly to turn America into an Islamic state, with the Koran as its foundation.

Many mosques, "Islamic Learning Centers" and Arab/Muslim Student Unions are distributing large numbers of pamphlets and leaflets attacking Judaism, Christianity and other non-Muslim religions and urging young Americans (esp. angry black Americans) to convert to Islam! Not surprisingly, a large number of African-Americans convert to Islam while in the prison systems! The National Islamic Prison Foundation, which coordinates a campaign to convert inmates to Islam claim an average of 135,000 such conversions per year.

These evil people exploit the freedoms given to them here in America and other democracies when their goal is to extinguish ALL freedom!

WAKE UP AMERICA!!! The threat is real and expanding!

**POSTED BY: SHLOMOFISHER | DECEMBER 5, 2009 8:31 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20ShlomoFisher%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784554&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784554%26blog_id=618)

France is faring no better. In 1945, there were 100,000 Muslims in France. A fifty fold increase since then now has them numbering 7 million out of a total population of 60 million! Muslims are already 25% of all French under the age of 21. If present birth trends continue, by 2030 a quarter of France's people will be Muslim, more than enough to determine who controls the national parliament and executive. The nuclear-armed French military is already 15 percent Muslim. And if the French-Muslim birth rate continues as projected, France will have a Muslim majority in less than 25 years! Another telling statistic is that although the Muslims are 12% of France's population, 70 percent of a total of 60,775 prisoners in France are Muslims! All of France's urban suburbs are being roamed by Muslim black African or Arabic gangs. One-fifth of all births in France are Muslims! Mohammed is one of the most common names next to Pierre! And Paris has the largest Arab community outside of the Middle East! This is a result of a lenient immigration policy, high Muslim birthrate and conversions. A very high proportion of French Muslims are in the underclass, that segment of the population that relies not so much on education and work as on welfare and predatory activities. In fact, over one thousand Muslim neighborhoods are under monitoring throughout France. Seven hundred of those Muslim neighborhoods are listed as "violent" and nearly 400 hundred are listed as "very violent." Violence ranges from rape (95% of rapists are Muslim), murder (85% of murderers are Muslim), theft and looting of cars (58% committed by Muslims) and street fighting to assault on teachers and civil servants.

In 1970 there were an estimated one-hundred thousand Muslims in the United States. Today, a mere 34 years later, the number is approximately 7-10 million! More than a quarter of a million people of Arab descent live in southeastern Michigan, making the area the second-largest Arab community outside the Middle East (after Paris, France). One frightening example of their prolific growth in American is Dearborn, Michigan. Of a total population of 90,000 Dearborn residents, 25,000 are now Arabs! And of all the Dearborn children under the age of 18, a full 58% are Arab children! Other developing centers of Arab/Muslim growth are Florida, Texas, New Jersey and California. God Bless America!

**POSTED BY: SHLOMOFISHER | DECEMBER 5, 2009 8:30 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20ShlomoFisher%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784553&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784553%26blog_id=618)

Sweden: Cold temperatures have not discouraged Muslim immigration. One out of every 22 Swedes are now Muslims and Islam is the nation's second largest religion. Farewell to the blue-eye, blonde hair Swedish beauties! Of the nearly 9 million people in Sweden, 400,000 are Muslim, leading to a drastic increase in anti-Semitic acts against Sweden's 17,000 Jews.

In Holland [The Netherlands], because of its total lack of anti-terrorism laws and its very high level of religious, cultural and judicial tolerance, Muslim-fundamentalist terrorist groups are allowed to thrive. The Muslims now number about 15% of the population. In 20 years' time the majority of Holland's under 18 year old children will be Muslim. In fact, 50 per cent of the newborns during the next twenty years will be Muslim! In Amsterdam, the most popular name for a newborn boy is Mohammed, and a majority of residents will be Muslim within 10 to 15 years. A finger in the dike won't work this time, folks!

Two million Muslims have soaked into Germany; one million into Italy; 200,000 in Spain; 500,000 in Belgium...1/10th its entire population and 1/4 of Brussels, its capitol city. Half of all babies born in Belgium are now Muslims! In total, 11,000,000 Muslims have saturated Western Europe! It now becomes clear just who is organizing and marching in Europe's anti-Israel and anti-American demonstrations!

In Italy, 95% of all rapists are Muslims. Eighty-five percent of all murderers are Muslims. Ah, such a wonderful religion of peace! What does the Pope and the rest of the Vatican Church have to say about this? Nothing! And what will the ordinary Italian say when, in ten years, Muslims will be the majority in Italy!!!

**POSTED BY: SHLOMOFISHER | DECEMBER 5, 2009 8:29 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20ShlomoFisher%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784552&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784552%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
before you say osiris or any other resurrected god isn't EXACTLY like jesus, i will concede that. my point is the idea was not new.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 5, 2009 8:19 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784551&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784551%26blog_id=618)

ShlomoFisher,  
agreed. it is very hard to find anything redeeming in islam. sure, there are good people who are muslims, but they seem to be so despite islam...

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 5, 2009 8:16 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784550&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784550%26blog_id=618)

Hi ShlomoFisher,

Your articles leave a lot to think about militant Islam. If Islam is the religion of peace as it claims then the moderate factions need to crack down on these extremists. I don't think that is going to happen.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 7:04 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784537&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784537%26blog_id=618)

Even non-Muslim Christians under Palestinian-controlled areas ["West Bank" and Gaza] are not faring so well. Bethlehem was 70 percent Christian in the 1970s. Today it is close to 70 percent Muslim. The growing Islamization of Palestinian society makes Christians very uncomfortable. The size of the Christian Arab community in the West Bank may have fallen as low as 10,000, a drop of 50 percent since the mid-1990s.

Two of Europe's most legally tolerant regions...namely, the Dutch-language areas around Europe's most important west coast harbors, Antwerp [Belgium] and Rotterdam [Netherlands]... as the main breeding ground for Muslim-fundamentalist terrorist groups. Osama bin Laden 's organization even runs shipping companies as fronts from Amsterdam.

Something rotten in Denmark? How about the 200,000 Muslim immigrants trying to dictate their anti-Israel, anti-America and anti-Western values upon 5 million Danes? Even though they represent only 4% of the population, the Muslims consume upwards of 40 percent of welfare spending. They also account for 65-75% of the country's convicted rapists... with almost all victims non-Muslim Danes! Demographers have predicted that in just 40 years, one out of every three Danes will be Muslim. At this point, we're sure the Danes wish it were their Jewish population which was growing faster than rabbits on a hot tin roof. Jews are almost always model citizens! But the Danish Jews only number 6,000. Click here to see Danish Muslims in action!

WAKE UP AMERICA, while there is still time!

**POSTED BY: SHLOMOFISHER | DECEMBER 5, 2009 4:45 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20ShlomoFisher%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784522&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784522%26blog_id=618)

Other examples: Algeria is wracked by bitter fighting between Islamic Fundamentalists and the military. Death toll, 100,000 over a ten year period! Nigeria is in the midst of a war in which Muslims are murdering Christians and burning down their churches. Moslems against Christians. It doesn't take much to trigger an angry mob of Muslims. The Miss Universe Pageant was held there at the end of 2002. Muslim opposition to the pageant boiled over after a local journalist wrote that the prophet Mohammed would have approved of the contest and might even have wanted to marry one of the contestants. The ensuing riots in Kaduna left 220 dead and 400 wounded. In Kenya the Islamic Party has declared Holy War on the government. In Turkey the secular Muslim government is being challenged by the militant Refah Islamic Party. A civil war rages in the Sudan between Muslims in the north against the Christians in the south. Sudan's militant Muslim regime is slaughtering Christians who refuse to convert to Islam. In recent years, more than two million Sudanese have been killed out of a population of 35 million as its government used bombings and famine in its war on its own people.

Will non-Islamic nations be forced to build a "Giant Wall" as China did to keep out the Islamicized Monguls? Will the electronically-enhanced, concrete wall the Israeli I.D.F. recently erected keep out the Arab-Palestinian terrorists?

ISLAM: "Religion of Peace?"

Ten thousand Lebanese Christians were massacred in 1860s, while over 100,000 were killed in the Lebanese civil war of 1975-1990. Thousands of women were raped. That war was provoked by Yasser Arafat's PLO. Damour was once a thriving Christian Lebanese village until 500 (primarily young boys) were massacred and its population was expelled. This sort of violence and intolerance symbolizes treatment of Christians by Muslims in the Middle East. And, instead of an international arrest warrant Arafat received a Nobel Peace Prize!

**POSTED BY: SHLOMOFISHER | DECEMBER 5, 2009 4:44 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20ShlomoFisher%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784521&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784521%26blog_id=618)

Until a nation has embraced Islam, it is legally considered a battlefield (Dar-ul-Harb). Once it has converted to Islam (or all its citizens have been slaughtered or driven out), it then becomes a Land of Peace (Dar-us-Salaam). For those who think that the threat of Islam is only a phenomenon of the Middle East, think again! Although the Jewish State of Israel has been fighting a brave and fierce battle against Islam for over 50 years, there are many other "hot spots" in the world.

For example, the supreme Taliban's hard line leader in Afghanistan, Mullah Mohammed Omar, issued an edict that Buddhist statues insulted Islam. Apparently no one clued in Mullah Mohammed Omar that Islam is an insult to humanity! In any event, within days of his edict, all Buddhist statues, including a giant 5th century Buddha at Bamiyan carved out of sandstone (see photos), were destroyed as the "civilized" world could only stand by and watch it happen.

ISLAM: "Religion of Peace?"

Unfortunately, most people aren’t aware of Islam's murderous philosophy or they find it too monstrous to believe. However, a brief review of recent history and current events should make you doubters out there re-think your position. Two articles in the L.A. Times wrote about Muslims in Indonesia forcing Christians of all denominations to convert to Islam or get their throats slit. Thousands upon thousands of Christians were first converted and, according to rigid Islamic religious dictate, forced to undergo sexual mutilation of their foreskin or clitoris (with kitchen knives and razor blades) to make them conform to Muslim standards. Then they were are enslaved to their local Muslim chieftain. This was not some aberration of Islam but rather business as usual for all but the so-called "moderate" factions. This is Islam's sad legacy of murder, terror, lies and brainwashing to advance their cause of global conversion and subjugation... their so-called "personal struggle"... THEIR "Jihad!"

ISLAM: "Religion of Peace?"

**POSTED BY: SHLOMOFISHER | DECEMBER 5, 2009 4:43 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20ShlomoFisher%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784520&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784520%26blog_id=618)

While much of the world fixates on its usual obsession... setting up Jews for a second Holocaust, Islam is also hard at work laying waste to major portions of the world and preparing to impose Islamic rule over everybody and extinguishing their respective non-Islamic civilizations.

"Are you nuts," you might ask? " After all, is not Israel their primary enemy?" But to think that all Islamic issues spring forth from the Arab-Israeli conflict and that only Israel is a target shows a naivety that only invites disaster down the road! After Islam finishes off Israel, their "Little Satan," all the other larger Satans will meet up with the Sword of Islam! America has already seen the spillover of Islamic terrorism... the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut with the loss of hundreds of U.S. marines, the bombing of the U.S.S. Cole naval ship off Yemen, the 9-11-01 World Trade Center bombing in New York, and now the murders at Ft. Hood. Yet America has received but a small taste of what Islam has in store for them!

The world "ISLAM" is Arabic for "surrender" or "submission" to the will of Allah [God]. In the language of the Holy Qur'an, Islam means the readiness of a person to take orders from God and to follow them through. It is not derived from the word, "peace," as Muslims would have us believe! Look it up in any dictionary and see for yourself! Seeing a Muslim praying nearly flat on his face five times a day even projects the appearance of a master-slave relationship... a submission of sorts. And while the Muslim is submissive to Allah, all "non-believers" (Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Catholics, etc.) MUST submit to the Muslim. That's how THEIR God wills it to be!

ISLAM: "Religion of Peace?”

Islam is today being portrayed as a peaceful and tolerant religion. History proves otherwise! Though there were certainly periods of relative tranquility and tolerance, minorities and non-Muslims have always been prosecuted under Islam. In fact, Islamic ideology is based upon an intense hatred of the non-Muslim. For Muslims, there exist two kinds of non-Muslim enemies... kafir (non-believers in Islam) and ahl al-kitab (People of the Book). Kafir, such as Buddhists and Hindus, must either convert to Islam or face execution. People of the Book include Jews and Christians. These people need only submit to Muslim authority to avoid forced conversion or death. Although they may keep their original faith, their status becomes dhimmi (a "protected," yet inferior non-Muslim status). So instead of outright forced conversion or slaughter, the Christians and Jews would be allowed to remain somewhat unmolested as long as they acknowledged the superiority of the Muslim. However, as 100,000 dead Lebanese Christians and Israel's beleaguered Jewish population have discovered over the years, these guarantees have proved worthless!

**POSTED BY: SHLOMOFISHER | DECEMBER 5, 2009 4:42 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20ShlomoFisher%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784519&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784519%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
OMG...this is such typical strobel et. al. i just makes me want to puke.

you quoted, (and apparently believe as the final word on the matter....)

*"T.N.D Mettinger - a senior Swedish scholar, professor at Lund University, and member of the Royal Acadamy of Letters, History, and Antiquities of Stockholm - wrote one of the most recent academic treatments of dying and rising gods in antiquity. He admits in his book THE RIDDLE OF RESURRECTION that the consensus among modern scholars - nearly universal - is that there were no dying and rising gods that preceded Christianity. They all post-dated the first century."*

now, that may be an accurate quote - i assume it is. but it's just PATENTLY FALSE! especially this part:  
*"the consensus among modern scholars - nearly universal - is that there were no dying and rising gods that preceded Christianity."*

again, all i can say is OMG!  
just do a little "unchristian" research, would you? it won't make you go blind or anything.... just read a non-christian source. start with egyptian gods osiris and isis. then let me know how it's possible that *"the consensus among modern scholars - nearly universal - is that there were no dying and rising gods that preceded Christianity."*

oh brother.... this is not even controversial. anybody who looks into it can see that there were jesus-precedents out there when the jesus story was being developed.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 5, 2009 2:19 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784490&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784490%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
re romulus and remus copying from the jesus story:

you quoted something from that wiki page which you thought implied the story came after jesus. the expression "back-formation" probably caught your eye. romulus and remus date from the 700s BC, so there's A LOT of room for "back-formation" before jesus came along.

the site also said this:  
*"There is a legend dating to sometime in the****first century BC****that conflates Romulus and the god Quirinus. According to this legend, Romulus's life ended in the thirty-eighth year of his reign, with a supernatural disappearance, if he was not slain by the Senate.*

*One day, when Romulus and all the people had gone to the Campus Martius, a sudden storm arose. The darkness became so great that the people fled in terror. When the storm was over, the Romans returned. To their surprise, however,****Romulus had disappeared.****The people sent for him, but none could find him.****The people were amazed,***

*After the Senator calmed the mass of people, he told the assembled Romans that he had****seen Romulus being carried up into the heavens.****Romulus, the Senator said, had called out that he was going to live with the deities, and wished his people to worship him as the god Quirinus. In response, the Romans built a temple on the hill where the Senator said that Romulus had risen to heaven. This hill was called the Quirinal Hill in Romulus' honor, and for many years the Romans worshiped Romulus, the founder of their city, and their first king from that very spot.*

so, this story PRECEDED jesus - infact was probably common knowledge in first century AD judea. now, this doesn't prove the early disciples copied this story, but it speaks to what people expected from a god.

i assume you're not questioning that the osiris, horus, dionysus etc...are post jesus, right? it's really a fruitless strategy to try to claim jesus was the first resurrected god/man born of a virginn impregnated by a god. a much better strategy, from your point of view, would be to claim, like willis elliott, that god sent these precedents to us so that when jesus came we'd recognize him as having all the standard god-qualities.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 5, 2009 2:04 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784488&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784488%26blog_id=618)

TO FARNAZ's Dec.4

Are you quoting some anti-Christian rant, or did you make it up by yourself? If the latter, I congratulate you for creativity.  
1  
In a little of what you say, I recognize the NT, which for many years I taught in graduate schools. E.g., it's few anti-Jewish passages reflect Jewish persecution of the earliest Christians (as contemporary Jewish literature contains some anti-Christian passages).  
2  
Unlike Tanakh & the Qur'an, the NT never commands or even suggests that the hearers/readers become violent against anybody - quite the reverse! (All three, of course, teach that humanity is under the judgment of God.)

**POSTED BY: ELLIOTTWL | DECEMBER 5, 2009 2:00 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20elliottwl%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784485&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784485%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

WALTER: "there are many many other "pagan parallels" to jesus. i poked around that site you gave claiming to refute the "copycat" notion. you went so far as to say, "vise-versa" - like older religions "borrowed" from christianity.... i didn't see anything like that.  
as far as i could see, they had to say, well...these stories aren't EXACTLY like the jesus story...it's kind of like jesus is a composite of these other guys.

Lee Strobels, The Case for the Real Jesus, in an interview with Michael Licona, p. 160, and citing M. Licona,

"T.N.D Mettinger - a senior Swedish scholar, professor at Lund University, and member of the Royal Acadamy of Letters, History, and Antiquities of Stockholm - wrote one of the most recent academic treatments of dying and rising gods in antiquity. He admits in his book THE RIDDLE OF RESURRECTION that the consensus among modern scholars - nearly universal - is that there were no dying and rising gods that preceded Christianity. They all post-dated the first century."

On some of the myths Licona, recorded by Strobels had this to say, p.162-163,

"Attis? This myth is older than Chritianity but the first report we have of a resurrection of Attis comes long after the first century. Adonis is more than a hundred years after Jesus. There is no clear account in antiquity of Marduk even dying - and so a resurrection is even less clear. Some scholars say Tammuz is an account of a dying and rising god - but that's disputed, and besides, it's not good parallel since there are no reports of an appearance or empty tomb and this myth is tied to the changing of the seasons."

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 1:23 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784479&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784479%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

Your Wikipedia article on Romulus and Remus had this to say,

"After his death, Romulus was deified as the god Quirinus, the divine persona of the Roman people. As a mythological figure, his historical basis is disputed, and it is supposed that his name is a back-formation from the name Rome. Some scholars, notably Andrea Carandini, believe in the historicity of Romulus, in part because of the 1988 discovery of the Murus Romuli on the north slope of the Palatine Hill in Rome."

Did you think that it is possible based on the admitted lack of historical evidence, by the expert unbiased Wikipedia contributors, that some of the myths surrouding these figures were embellished from the Christian tradition and not the other way around? What is the earliest supported historical record of these two and how much does it say about them?

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 12:20 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784469&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784469%26blog_id=618)

Re: religious wars in Britain

I'm sorry but your British history could use some revising. There were hundreds of Catholic martyrs and thousands of deaths over a period of, say, 150 years (and that's not counting what happened in Ireland.) The tomb of the last priest executed in 1654 ( by Oliver Cromwell) --just for being a priest--is in Westminster Cathedral. Americans, who learn the standard Whig version of history, always focus on the reign of Mary Tudor when 289 died.

[**http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14165a.htm**](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14165a.htm)

**POSTED BY: MARY\_CUNNINGHAM | DECEMBER 5, 2009 2:49 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Mary_Cunningham%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784436&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784436%26blog_id=618)

PamSM:

*I call 'em as I see 'em.*

Well, you saw inaccurately and called them wrong. Religious persecution, plain and simple and lasted centuries. Also know as

**The Penal Laws**

*The general name given to the enactments against Roman catholicism made between the accession of Elizabeth I and 1700. Rejection of papal authority was imposed by an oath of allegiance in 1563, stating that ‘no foreign prince hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual within this realm’.*

*After the excommunication of Elizabeth I in 1570, the purpose of legislation changed from securing royal supremacy to defeating the new recusant missionary campaign. Priests were executed, particularly after the Acts of 1584-5 which made it treasonable for a priest to enter England.*

*The laws of the Restoration period, especially the Test and Corporation Acts, kept the catholic community on the margins. Catholics suffered for the disastrous reign of the last catholic king James II under laws barring them from carrying arms, inheriting or buying property, sending children abroad for education, or teaching in a school.*

Extended to England and Wales, Scotland and finally Ireland. Incredibly enough the religion of 90% of the Irish people was proscribed and persecuted.

Finally repealed in 1829. Church of Ireland disestablished in 1869 or so.

A timeline:

[**http://tinyurl.com/yhjno59**](http://tinyurl.com/yhjno59)

**POSTED BY: MARY\_CUNNINGHAM | DECEMBER 5, 2009 2:34 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Mary_Cunningham%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784435&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784435%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

Final post of the night.

[**http://www.tektonics.org/copycat/osy.html**](http://www.tektonics.org/copycat/osy.html)

[**http://www.tektonics.org/copycathub.html**](http://www.tektonics.org/copycathub.html)

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 2:33 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784434&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784434%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter,

WALTER: "peter, re the long-overdue second coming, i said,  
"...jesus said ALL THESE THINGS. "ALL". come on...you're a literalist... did he use "all" figuratively...?"

"All these things" in relation to what and to whom Walter?

And no, not figuratively, unless the language (and context) and related Scriptures implies so. And the coming in the clouds of Daniel 7 implies figurative language. As for wars and rumors of wars, false prophets, the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, end of the age, etc., definitely not figurative. The question is did these things happen? Was the temple desecrated? Were there false prophets, were there rumors and wars, earthquakes, was the gospel preached to the ends of the world as the Jews knew them to be? Was it a time of Jacob's trouble? To fit with Daniel's prophecy about the four kingdoms and then the eternal kingdom, did Rome meet that criteria of being the fourth kingdom? Were the seventy sevens met that was decreed for Daniel's people? Is the eternal covenant and kingdom now in place?

Dispensationalism has only been around for the past two hundred years, not even that. It, like evolution, has influenced the masses to a large extent. But is it the right interpretation of Scripture?

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 1:57 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784431&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784431%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter (December 3, 2009 9:37 AM ),

WALTER: "peter,  
i realize now that you "vise-versa" comment was in reference to strobel's book. i haven't read that one, but i've read two others. strobel is really irritating because he purports to be presenting a balanced case, but he only "interviews" (tosses softballs to) believers."

Sure, I've noticed that those he interviews are top notch Christian experts in the field, and therefore he presents the evidence as coming from a Christian framework, and usually evangelical at that. But these people are experts in their respective fields. Based on that evidence, the question becomes is it accurate, does it support the history that has been dug up?

WALTER: "i'm curious as to how he could "make the case" that older godmen borrowed from jesus!"

Because the earliest source written evidence is so far fetched or is dated after the gospels and epistles, and since the maniscripts are few and far between it is hard to know how much of them have been tampered with and altered over the course of years - the exact claim you critique Christianity over, except the number of manuscripts is phenominal and some of them are dated near the source and within the lifetime of the eyewitnesses for the Christian message.

If these pagan accounts are written after the gospels and epistles, then you need to bring forth something that is written before the gospels and epistles that we can compare how similar these claims you are making are. Can you do that? If not, then how do you know that these accounts were not embellishments of the Christian message?

Yuk, I don't like typing in Internet Explorer. There is no spell check, and none of the bells and whistles that Firefox has, such as references works at your fingertips. Still haven't figured out how to get Mozilla Firefox up and runnning again. This entire comment section would have highlighted any issues on Firefox.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 1:34 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784429&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784429%26blog_id=618)

Hi Pamsm,

PAM: "Sorry, Mary, I call 'em as I see 'em."

And until you see them they are not what they are supposed to be. You act in the place of God as the one determining what they are.

PAM: "While I find all believers credulous to some degree, or at least incurious,..."

That would include you too Pam for you are a believer. For any knowledge to take place you too Pam have to first believe something. You have to start on something, and what you start with builds the foundation. Your foundation rests on nothing objective. It could all change tomorrow.

PAM: "I certainly find Peter's brand of religon the most firmly blinkered of all. He can't allow himself to consider for even a moment the possibility that he might be wrong."

I can be wrong, but God can't. Can you? I mean on the one issue that can mean the difference between eternal life and separation from God for eternity - the existence of the God of Christianity and the only means to Him - the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pam, you talk about how open you are but I suspect that you closed your mind a long time ago. As I have said before, neutrality is a myth. You are so deeply entrenched in your world view that everything you think of is screened/processed through it. The scary thing is that you have no objective base to place any of your beliefs on. Christians can know, on the other hand, because Someone outside themselves - God - has given them an objective standard to measure and justify what is true. That standard is His revelation - His holy Word, and it is confirmed through the union that comes from being in Christ. That is something you know nothing of.

As John Frame said in The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, p.71,

"Often in philosophy, however, the "fact" is thought to be a kind of reality-in-itself, a reality totally devoid of any interpretation - divine or human - by which all attempts at interpretation are to be tested. In reply, (1) we must insist that there are no facts that are utterly devoid of interpretation; there are no "brute facts," to use Van Til's terminology. All facts have been interpreted by God, and since all things are what they are by virtue of God's eternal plan, we must say that "the interpretation of the facts precedes the facts" (Van Til)."

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 5, 2009 1:09 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784427&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784427%26blog_id=618)

Hi Rev,

How are you? I'm aware that there are those such as you who read the NT in ways that do not promote bigotry and worse. Unfortunately, there have always been and always will be those who do and those who do not recognize that they are reading the Tanakh through a revisionist lens that, from a Judaic perspective, is, quite frankly, morally disgusting.

Jews will not say this, of course, because unlike Christianity, Catholicism, Islam, Judaism holds that the Lord has a covenant with all peoples. Observant Jews are secure in their commitment to their religion and do not have to get everyone else to see things their way.

But, hey, that's Jews. The question is why isn't it also Christians and Catholics?

**POSTED BY: FARNAZ1MANSOURI1 | DECEMBER 4, 2009 9:46 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Farnaz1Mansouri1%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784413&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784413%26blog_id=618)

Meant to write:

"We are NOT BORN IN SIN. The story of Adam and Eve is, as Judaism, has always had it ETIOLOGICAL and cautionary."

**POSTED BY: FARNAZ1MANSOURI1 | DECEMBER 4, 2009 9:41 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Farnaz1Mansouri1%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784412&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784412%26blog_id=618)

More on the NT (sic) and religions of love

More than once, I have blogged on the Christian notion of this monstrous, unforgiving, human/god sacrificing deity.

More than once, I have been met by queries authored by Christians/Catholics as to how God could have forgiven human for the "sins" of Adam and Eve? How could it be that we are not "born in sin"?

Christians/Catholics,

The very fact of these questions should be all the evidence needed for the assertions I've made. We are NOT BORN IN SIN. The story of Adam and Eve is, as Judaism, has always had it teleological and cautionary.

Further, we KNOW how to redeem ourselves. We have principles, ethics, etc. That is what we are supposed to derive from the relevant passages of Tanakh. And we do not redeem our own precious arses. We redeem humanity.

The Tanakh redactors wrote what they thought essential to be transmitted. They did not intend for any generation to emulate or justify atrocities by virtue of reference to Tanakh as so many Christian/Catholic princes, kings, et al, have done.

They wrote of singular moments in history/ myth. They did not create models, or idols. No Jew outside of a mental hospital would ask, What would Moses or Jacob do? NO IDOLS.

The psalms are meant to bring a people in line with its history, not as personal messages to God.

Frankly, Cs, either learn how to read the book, or just give it up. It, in no way, authorizes you NT, the Quoran, or anything else.

Cs and Ms will just have to live with that since the Tanakh isn't going to change any time soon.

**POSTED BY: FARNAZ1MANSOURI1 | DECEMBER 4, 2009 9:33 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Farnaz1Mansouri1%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784411&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784411%26blog_id=618)

Nothing, and I mean nothing, approaches the violence in the NT. This is a document that views the deity as so wretched that He holds mankind guilty for the errors of Adam and Eve.(!)

This is a deity so bloodthirsty that it insists upon human sacrifice, to have been ended forever with the binding of Isacc, in order for mankind to make up for Adam and Eve's "sin."

This is a deity so miserable that it cannot settle for human sacrifice merely, but insists on making humans into God killers.

This is a document that lies repeatedly, going beyond myth into virulent, racist propaganda, implicating Jews for a Sanhedrin meeting that never could have been held since it was Passover. (Jews had and have their own religion.)

NO reputable NT (sic) scholar places any faith in this Sanhedrin nonesense.

The number of fictions are endless. There are the stick figure Jewish Pharisees, who never existed, and were, in fact, a Greek literary invention.

No Jew, not JC, if he existed, no Jew, at any time, anywhere on the face of the earth, would have participated in that blood/wine, flesh/bread business, am import from the mystery religions of the region.

And what, for two thousand years, did the religion of love, do with its NT?

Kill Jews. Kill Muslims, Kill one another. Kill Hindus.

I have not begun to touch on what are now generally judged to be errors in this viscous NT, whose practitioners spread contemporary anti-semitism to the Muslim world, and never say a word about how it has developed and is developing there.

The Tanakh, and, yes, Quoran, pale before the injuries that the NT has underwrtten.

Moreover, I am not alone in this thought. I am accompanied my Christian and Catholic scholars, who see beyond the literal, into implications.

It's really not so difficult, you know.

**POSTED BY: FARNAZ1MANSOURI1 | DECEMBER 4, 2009 9:19 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Farnaz1Mansouri1%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784409&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784409%26blog_id=618)

I think that if there were some way to erase our religious "hard drives," and start from zero to consider the evidence for and against belief in a supernatural creator, there would be far more atheists in the world.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 4, 2009 2:24 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784342&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784342%26blog_id=618)

"Henry VII changed it..."

I meant, of course, Henry VIII. Didn't hit that key hard enough, I guess.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 4, 2009 2:18 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784340&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784340%26blog_id=618)

Mary,  
You say,  
"Pam might tone down the increduality re believers a tad, just a suggestion."

Sorry, Mary, I call 'em as I see 'em.  
While I find all believers credulous to some degree, or at least incurious, I certainly find Peter's brand of religon the most firmly blinkered of all. He can't allow himself to consider for even a moment the possibility that he might be wrong.

You also said,  
"I write as a member of another minority in Britain: the Catholic minority. This has been much persecuted throughout the centuries..."

Oh, come on, Mary. GB was firmly Catholic for most of its history. Henry VII changed it, but his daughter, Mary ("Bloody Mary") changed it right back, and burned the non-Catholics at the stake. The next four monarchs were protestant, but James II was another papist. Although he didn't officially change the religion, his tolerance of Catholicism and Catholic appointments to high political and military office eventually led to the "Glorious Revolution" and the 1701 Act of Settlement that effectively barred Catholics from the monarchy forever (although I understand there is a movement to overturn this). This hardly amounts to "centuries of persecution."

Were you to limit your claim to Ireland, you might make a better case, although her problems with England certainly predated religious differences - the Norman English were as Catholic as the Irish were.

In any case, all this whipsawing of state religion and it's attendant maltreatment of the "out" group, was one of the prime motivating factors in the establishment of the principles on which the American experiment was (happily) founded.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 4, 2009 2:11 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784339&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784339%26blog_id=618)

WIFC

No one is saying the OT is not violent. It is. They were violent times.

But even *it*pales in comparison to the Holy (?) Koran.

**POSTED BY: MARY\_CUNNINGHAM | DECEMBER 4, 2009 12:57 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Mary_Cunningham%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784326&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784326%26blog_id=618)

Thing is Walter, Islamism is a grave threat to liberal democracy--probably the most serious one we face today. Yet, the PC brigade is busy trumpetting the "religion of peace" theme, and calling 'racist' anyone who points out that for a peaceful religion it currently boasts a lot of violent men who kill *in its name*.

Then they trot out the 'violent Christianity' theme. Oh yes! And Mother Theresa crashed a plane into the twin towers yelling "in the name of the father, son and holy ghost".

**POSTED BY: MARY\_CUNNINGHAM | DECEMBER 4, 2009 12:55 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Mary_Cunningham%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784325&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784325%26blog_id=618)

elliottwl,  
you said,  
*"What I find "laughable" is that anyone over age 12 would expect to find in it no development."*

i don't think i said that. in fact, i have often made the case that there is CLEAR development in the texts. there's no doubt the NT is more "moral" than the OT.

gone is joshua's jihad, replaced by jesus's "live and let live" attitude. mind you jesus also promised non-believers eternal damnation in hell, so it's not exactly "live and let live", but it's better than the god-sanctioned wars of the OT.

also, in the NT the miracles are much more modest. i know resurrection is pretty cool, but it's not parting the red sea or flooding the earth.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 4, 2009 11:36 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784310&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784310%26blog_id=618)

hi mary,  
good to "see" you. now i can say "peter, pam and mary"...

i agree that we have to be wary of overdoing political correctness. it would be irresponsible of a government not to at least recognize that "terrorism" is largely a muslim thing. and that to find terrorists, you've got to focus on muslims. do we even wonder if the next "suicide" (i wish it were only that) bomb will be detonated by a muslim? call it profiling if you wish, but it's just a logical application of overwhelming statistics.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 4, 2009 11:25 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784307&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784307%26blog_id=618)

Dr Elliott,

As one here--the only one?--who walked out of holy mass into the midst of a mob of howling Islamic protestors, I agree with your wariness.

In Western Europe the multi-cultural tolerance seems to have gone only one way: towards tolerance of the Islamic minority. I write as a member of another minority in Britain: the Catholic minority. This has been much persecuted throughout the centuries, yet the Islamists would have trashed Westminster Cathedral without a second thought had not the craven police *finally*drew on their limited reserves of courage and confronted the mob.

Here in Britain we were subjected to three successive summers of Islamic terrorists plots: the first against the underground (successful) the second and third (mercifully failed) against major airlines and London nightclubs respectively. The latter was carbombs awa nailbombs, the second timbed to explode as panicking civilians fled the first--disgusting, eh?

I grow weary of people who have *never*encountered this type of terror dismissing Islamists with: "oh it's just a minority"..Well, these sharks swim in an Islamic sea, and other Muslims seem to tolerate them with a remarkable degree of equanimity.

WIFC and Pam: good to see you. Pam might tone down the increduality re believers a tad, just a suggestion.

**POSTED BY: MARY\_CUNNINGHAM | DECEMBER 4, 2009 11:06 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Mary_Cunningham%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784303&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784303%26blog_id=618)

willis elliott,  
we would absolutely welcome your input to our conversation - which as pam mentioned, has been going on for quite a while now. we're probably on our 5th or 6th thread, since they keep "timing out" on us.

i don't necessarily find religion or christianity inherently "laughable", though i am atheist. i DO find it laughable (in a tragic way) that a person today could believe the earth is 6000 yrs old and that noah's ark is a literally true story from ~4500 years ago. nonetheless, i have many friends (i suppose i'd count peter in that category after all this time) who do.

peter,  
i call you a literalist because when the bible says something like "elijah rose to heaven on a chariot of fire", you think there was an actual elijah, an actual chariot, it was actually on fire and that elijah actually rode in it up (why "up"? where is heaven?) to heaven.

i understand there are parts that even literalists take figuratively (sometimes unwarrantedly...like "all these things...), like the parables and the obviously figurative language. mind you, i think this is how the bible authors intended it. i think they really thought the entire world was actually flooded 4500 yrs ago. as (most) humans have come to realize that's not true, rational educated christians have come to take those parts figuratively too.

willis elliott,  
do you have any comment on historical literalism?

1)was the bible was written to be taken literally (except where it's explicitly couched as "parable" and so forth)?

2)has the bible historically (say until the 1600s or 1700s) been taken literally? i understand for instance that galileo and kepler "calculated" ages of the earth on the order of 6000 yrs. they probably also thought there was a real, literal global flood too.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 4, 2009 7:58 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784280&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784280%26blog_id=618)

Hi Pam,

PAM: "Peter, any unbiased person doing a plain reading of the bible can see all of the problems and contradictions clearly. And wouldn’t you think that if this is the treatise meant to instruct the people as to whom God is, and what he expects of them, that he would have made sure to make it plain and clear to all?"

Show me a person who is unbiased Pam? You have to believe something in order to have any belief about anything at all. Your starting point is as circular as mine or anyone elses, but the question is can it make sesne of itself without borrowing from the Judeo-Christian framework?

I do not see the Bible as being contradictory. You do. Your apparent contradictions have explanations that are logical, mabe just not to your mind, or Walter's. Those posts on biblical errors in Mark were absurd. Things like "region" implies "city" or that Jesus could not have walked from Sidon to the Sea of Galilee.

I'm off to bed now.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 4, 2009 2:14 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784274&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784274%26blog_id=618)

PS. Dr. Elliott, sorry for mispelling your name. Sometimes I pay little attention to detail.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 4, 2009 1:58 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784273&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784273%26blog_id=618)

Hi Walter, Pam, Dr. Elloit,

I finally found you. My preferred Mozilla Firefox has been on the blink for two days since I downloaded the latest version. I'm back to Internet Explorer until I get the problem resolved.

Dr. Elloit, I welcome your comments, and hope we are not barging in here, but if we are please say so and we will become nomads again. (It would be so nice to find a place of welcome.)

Pam and Walter call me a "literalist" which is not what I am. I take the Bible as literal or plain language where it warrents that kind of genre. I take God as speaking to us in language that we can understand, and that even through translation from the original languages. I believe that Scripture interprets Scripture, and to coin a phrase, "In the old contained, in the new explained." Both testaments are a witness to God and are God's Word, His revelation to us, in which, through the means of that Word and by the grace and leading of the Holy Spirit we come to faith in Christ, who is revealed extensively in both testaments and who is the only way to God. As God's Word, I look upon Scripture as my highest authority in intepreting this world, and quite frankly the only means available in which we can make sense of life, meaning, truth, meaning and purpose.

Walter and Pam, I will try and get back to you later this weekend. It's late.

**POSTED BY: PETERHUFF | DECEMBER 4, 2009 1:56 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20peterhuff%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784272&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784272%26blog_id=618)

Mr. Elliott,  
You're coming in late on a discussion that has been ongoing for months.

To give you a bit of background, Walter and I are atheists, and PeterHuff is a presuppositional creationist.

If you're interested, you can go to the previous part of the discussion on Richard Mouw's thread of Nov. 17th.

We try to find threads where there is little or no commentary so that we don't horn in on the conversations of others with our continuing debate.

We're happy to have you join in, but you're not of the same literalist belief as Peter, so it may seem like we're talking past you at times.

If you'd rather we go elsewhere, let us know.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 3, 2009 9:40 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784253&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784253%26blog_id=618)

TO WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH

PAMSA finds "discepancies" in the Bible, and you find Bible-believing "laughable." Neither of you has been properly taught to read the genre of ancient literature of which the Bible is the most influential survivor.  
The Bible is an archive stretching over about 1,000 years. What I find "laughable" is that anyone over age 12 would expect to find in it no development.  
The reason the Hebrew Scriptures (as Old Testament) are bound together, in the Christian Bible, with early Christian literature (as New Testament) is that we Christians have always read the OT through Jesus, the canonical Christ. But some fundamentalists on the right read it as through it were a loaf of bread, equally nutritious in all its parts; & some critics criticize us Bible-believers as though we were all fundamentalists: THAT I do indeed find "laughable."  
As for your observation that some ideas in the Jesus Story are found elsewhere in ancient cultures, OF COURSE! If the ideas weren't floating around in & through the cultures of early Christian times, the Jesus Story could not have made sense to those who experienced him & heard it. But your assumption that "Jesus" is a pastiche, a paste-up job using floaters in the cultural mind, THAT is an esthetic construct of transparet negative motivation & without historical standing.

**POSTED BY: ELLIOTTWL | DECEMBER 3, 2009 9:22 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20elliottwl%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784249&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784249%26blog_id=618)

TO PAMSM

Cumulative evidence + Occam's razor = my conviction that, of the world's literature, the Bible best conveys the nature of God, the meaning of the universe, & the purpose of human life. Until I became 80% blind, for more than 60 years I read it daily in Hebrew/Greek/Latin/German. And I'm not what you seem to think Bible-believers are, viz. stupid (one of my earned doctorates is a University of Chicago PhD).

**POSTED BY: ELLIOTTWL | DECEMBER 3, 2009 8:41 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20elliottwl%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784245&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784245%26blog_id=618)

Two

OJ had seven abrasions and three cuts on his right hand after his return, one cut was quite deep. He variously claimed that he “couldn’t remember” how he got them, or that he “broke a glass” in his hotel room when he heard of Nicole’s death. Blood was found on towels and sheets in the room, but none on the glass. A passenger on his flight to Chicago remembered a bandage on his finger.

When he was scheduled for a police interview, he packed a bag with clothes, money, his passport, and a disguise, and the low-speed chase ensued. On that drive, he repeatedly said “I’m sorry.” He said the same words to Nicole’s corpse at her wake.

There was previous domestic abuse of Nicole by OJ, and known death-threats.

He utterly failed a polygraph test, scoring a *minus-22*. The only questions that didn’t show prevarication were “What is your name?” and “Where do you reside?”

Bear with me, I’m getting to the point… :)

Now the defense team had an answer for each of these pieces of evidence, of course. The detectives were racist; the glove, socks, and blood evidence were planted; the DNA lab was sloppy, the samples contaminated; the glove didn’t fit (never mind that the leather shrank after the blood dried, and OJ had deliberately not taken his arthritis meds for several days prior so his hands would swell, and there were rubber gloves in between…); the blood on the gate was from a previous visit/injury; the DNA results didn’t absolutely rule out *every* other human in the entire world…

And the star-struck jury acquitted on “reasonable” doubt.

Sure, any one of those bits of evidence might have been wrong – might have had an innocent explanation - but *all of them??* Please. It beggars imagination

Peter, any unbiased person doing a plain reading of the bible can see all of the problems and contradictions clearly. And wouldn’t you think that if this is the treatise meant to instruct the people as to whom God is, and what he expects of them, that he would have made sure to make it plain and clear to all?

Those unbiased readers would be the millions of baffled people who watched the trial and couldn’t believe there wasn’t a conviction. The defense would be the theologians who have tried mightily, and with great convolution, to explain away what is plainly written; and *you* would be the credulous jury that failed to be skeptical enough to do its job.

Apply Occam’s razor: All else being equal, simpler explanations should be preferred over more complex ones. Or, in other words, if it walks like a duck…

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 3, 2009 6:17 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784224&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784224%26blog_id=618)

One

Let me start with some of the earlier posts that concern biblical discrepancies and their “interpretations” – something that has kept theologians well occupied for lo, these many centuries.

There is a reason why I keep commending William of Ockham and his razor (oddly known as “Occam’s razor”) to you, Peter.

I don’t know whether the OJ Simpson trial was followed as closely in Canada as it was here, but perhaps you know something of it…?

The prosecution had quite a bit of evidence against him. There was blood on the back gate at Nicole’s house that was a DNA match to OJ, there was an Aris Isotoner (Bloomingdales exclusive) $55/pair leather right-hand glove found at the scene with blood from OJ and both victims. It had cuts in it. Nicole had purchased 2 pairs of these gloves in December, 1990. Pictures show OJ wearing this type of glove, although he claimed not to own any.

There were shoe prints (in blood) at the scene from Bruno Magli size-12 shoes (OJ’s size). These shoes were of an expensive style very rare in the US. OJ claimed not to own any of those “ugly-a\_\_” shoes, but photos of him wearing them surfaced. There was also such a bloody print in OJ’s Bronco, on the driver’s side mat. There was blood in the vehicle matching OJ, and some that was a mixture of OJ,s, Ron’s, and Nicole’s.

There was a knit cap at the scene with hair inside that matched OJ’s. The same type of hair was found on Ron Goldman’s shirt.

OJ was seen by another driver after a near-accident caused by him running a red light, shortly after the time of the murders. He leaned out the window and yelled at her.

Kato Kaelin, asleep in OJ’s guesthouse, heard several thumps on the back wall of the house (separated from the back fence by just a few feet) between the time of the murders and the time that OJ left for the airport. In that space, the match to the crime scene glove was found, also soaked with blood matching all three principles. The glove also had hair matching Ron Goldman’s, and carpet fibers from OJ’s Bronco.

There were socks found in OJ’s bedroom that had blood matching Nicole’s. There were blood drops between the Bronco and the gate, and on the driveway and sidewalk inside. There were blood drops in the foyer inside the house.

The limo driver who came to take OJ to the airport buzzed several times without reply. He then reported seeing a man of OJ’s height and weight crossing the driveway and entering the house. Afterward, his buzz was answered. He reports OJ as “sweaty and nervous” on the drive to the airport. He and Kato both remember a “moon-shaped” well-stuffed bag that OJ insisted on handling himself. No such bag was found in OJ’s possession on his return from Chicago. He had bought a knife from Ross Cutlery, six weeks prior to the murders, that was a match to the type used. This knife couldn’t be found, either.

**POSTED BY: PAMSM | DECEMBER 3, 2009 6:16 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Pamsm%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784223&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784223%26blog_id=618)

peter, re post-flood human migration:  
you said,  
*"I never gave a date [for the flood]."*

would you give a date? i think literalists generaly put it btwn 2500 & 2300 b.c.. for the purposes of this discussion, you can pick the date, but it's important that we "fix" something - youknow, to have an objective reference point... for this calculation i'll set it at 2400. you can correct it if you think it's otherwise.

i said,  
"according to biblical theory, peleg was born ~100 years after the flood and the "dispersal" of humans happened during peleg's 240 (!) year life span - btwn 2300 and 2060."

you said,  
*"I'm not sure on the exact dates that you would fix Peleg at."*

1chr1:19 says the "confusion" (of languages at babel) happened during the life of peleg. gen11 puts peleg's birth 101 yrs after the flood and his lifespan at 240 yrs. so, if we can "fix" the date of the flood, we can "fix" the date of the "confusion" - essentially, the beginning of all human civilization outside babel. so if you say 2400 flood, you could say ~2200 for the beginning of extra-babelical (!) civilization. i'll call that the "upper bound".

first, this is absolutely laughable to anyone who knows anything about anthropology/archaeology/genetics/languages/etc... (except possibly those beholden to biblical presuppositions).

but now, come at it from the other end. biblical archaeologists get their first "match" with real history with "shishak" - biblical and regular archaeologists, agree shishak invaded canaan in 925 b.c.. biblical archaeologists like to point to the ~1212 "merneptah stele" as the "earliest extra-biblical reference" to israel. so, call 1212 the "lower bound". this means you've got to "fit" the known, continuous string of egyption kings from merneptah on back into only 1000 years.

[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\_of\_pharaohs**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_pharaohs)

the problem gets worse the further back you go. who were the pharaohs of the oppression/exodus? one would think rameses is in there somewhere since the israelites "recorded" building "rameses and pithom", but rameses is too close to merneptah for that to make sense. following the chrolologies, literalists generally suppose 1400s thutmose or ahmenhotep to be the oppression/exodus pharaohs. so now, you've got to "fit" the first 17 dynasties (1800 years) into the 800 years from the "confusion" to the 1400s b.c.

these dynasties are pretty-well attested to and there aren't that many gaps in the kings' reigns. also, don't ya think it would have taken a few hundred years to go from the "confusion" to establishing empires like egypt and china and india. we could really put the so-called "upper bound" for the beginning of extra-babelical civilizations at around 2000 b.c. at the earliest.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 3, 2009 2:09 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784170&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784170%26blog_id=618)

btw, we were talking about "visiting iniquities". NIV calls it "punishing"... i don't know which is a better translation, but "visiting iniquities" is sooo much better-sounding....

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 3, 2009 11:55 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784145&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784145%26blog_id=618)

peter, re the long-overdue second coming, i said,  
*"...jesus said ALL THESE THINGS. "ALL". come on...you're a literalist... did he use "all" figuratively...?"*

you said,  
*"When someone uses the word "all" such as Jesus does many times throughout the gospels, does He mean all without distinction, such as people of every kind, of every nation, male and female, rich and poor, or does he mean without exception, which means every single person who ever lived, bar none?"*

well, no, i would be silly to take "all" literally all the time. like if someone says "*all* the animals were destroyed" or "*all* the mountains were covered with water" or "*all* the leaves turned brown", it would be silly to think that literally refers to every single animal, mountain or leaf.

but that's not analogous to mt 24. HERE, in mt24, in this context, jesus is only talking about a handful of things - things he'd just finished enumerating for us: temple destruction, tribulations, signs, second coming (in judgement) and subsequent eternal life in heaven (or hell, depending...).

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 3, 2009 10:59 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784135&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784135%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
i said,  
*"...god contradicts himself on this elsewhere: in some places he says the visits the inequities on sons and in other places he says he doesn't. i suppose it really doesn't matter what he says, because he DOES still visits us with the consequences of adam's sin, right?"*

you said,  
*"Please give me the verses. Context is important. One of them is the verse I cited above - Exodus 20:5, but what is/are the other(s)?"*

there are many verses that say he does "visit inequities on sons", but only a few saying he doesn't.

deut24:16 hints at it:  
"Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin."

2ki14:6 is similar, as is jer31:30.

ezek18:20 says it:  
"...The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son...."

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 3, 2009 10:45 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784133&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784133%26blog_id=618)

peter, re original sin:  
i said,  
*"like i said - not logical. knowledge of anything can't be passed on in fruit. are you sure this isn't figurative?"*

you said,  
*"The fruit was real. It REPRESENTED two choices open to Adam, to take the fruit and disobey God's wise council, or to listen and believe that God knew best. Man chose to make the decision that opened up the whole can of worms."*

well, first it was ADAM not "mankind" who chose that. but my question is more technical. i'm more interested in the mechanics of it. *how* is "sin" passed on" does god have to actively curse each subsequent generation? or did he fiddle with or insert a "sin gene"?

i said,  
*"what's wrong with the "knowledge of good and evil"? a thoughtful person might say you really can't have one without the other."*

you said,  
*"Who determines it? Without an objective standard it is subject (pardon the pun) to change."*

so who determines the "objective" standard? christians? muslims? whatever religion happens to be in the majority?

the very fact that there are so so many religions/denominations/sects/cults etc... proves that you can't use religion as the objective standard. but, if you cull through all those religions i think you'll find that there ARE a few bits of accumulated wisdom that DO seem to be universal - and therefore possibly "objective". there aren't many. basically they boil down to "don't steal". they can be enumerated as don't steal, don't murder (steal a life), don't lie (steal someones's trust) and so on. from this idea we can develop "higher level" morals like "don't discriminate" and "be fair" and "cooperate" and "be nice".

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 3, 2009 10:24 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784128&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784128%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
i realize now that you "vise-versa" comment was in reference to strobel's book. i haven't read that one, but i've read two others. strobel is really irritating because he purports to be presenting a balanced case, but he only "interviews" (tosses softballs to) believers.

i'm curious as to how he could "make the case" that older godmen borrowed from jesus!

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 3, 2009 9:37 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784117&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784117%26blog_id=618)

peter,  
re king sargon's legend: i guess i got my myths conflated. sargon's father was unknown. his mother DID float him down the river in a basket (apparently commonin those days) presumably to protect him from something, but they don't say. he became the leader of his people.

i guess i was mixing in the eqyptian osiris who was divinely fathered, performed miracles and was resurrected – all before 2000 b.c. and egyptians believed that upon death we would meet our maker, and with our eternal fate in the balance, be judged.  
[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osiris**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osiris)

and the legend of romulus and remus (founders of rome) who were also born of a divinely-impregnated virgin and floated down a river in a basket.  
[**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romulus\_and\_Remus**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romulus_and_Remus)

there are many many other "pagan parallels" to jesus. i poked around that site you gave claiming to refute the "copycat" notion. you went so far as to say, "vise-versa" - like older religions "borrowed" from christianity.... i didn't see anything like that.

as far as i could see, they had to say, well...these stories aren't EXACTLY like the jesus story. true, no one story is exactly like jesus's, but they can be conflated to make a jesus stroy. it's kind of like jesus is a composite of these other guys.

**POSTED BY: WALTER-IN-FALLSCHURCH | DECEMBER 3, 2009 9:33 AM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20walter-in-fallschurch%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204784115&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4784115%26blog_id=618)

Remarkable,

You and I agree! Thanks,

hariaum

**POSTED BY: NAVIN1 | DECEMBER 2, 2009 4:39 PM**[**REPORT OFFENSIVE COMMENT**](mailto:blogs@washingtonpost.com?subject=On%20Faith%20Panelists%20Blog%20%20|%20%20Navin1%20%20|%20%20Islamophobia:%20Is%20there%20nothing%20to%20fear%20but%20fear%20itself?%20%20|%20%204783988&body=%0D%0D%0D%0D%0D================%0D?__mode=view%26_type=comment%26id=4783988%26blog_id=618)

The comments to this entry are closed.