

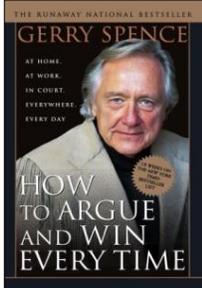
Acts of Gad

The Good, the Gad, and the Smugly

June 12, 2022



Today we're learning how to be more wrong, to be more noble.



So, **are you ready to be wrong?** We *hate* being wrong; and we're *really bad* at it. Ever defend something *right*, and *after the fight realize* it's *wrong*? And you need to *admit it*? Ain't *that the worst*?! Why is that? Well *sadly*, **we're more concerned about being right than knowing truth.** It's part of the pride package that comes standard with *our model*. Admitting we're wrong is often our *last resort*, when it should be our *first resort*.



So **we need to develop an expectation of routinely being wrong.** It's the *secret of peace* and *joy* and *nobility*. And it's the reason the smugly religious led their nation to annihilation despite the *prophets*, *John the Baptist*, and *Jesus*.



We've been reconstructing the story of the famously, formerly possessed, miracle-working Gadarene – **Jesus' first apostle**, and commissioned by Christ to spread the Good News of the power and authority of the Jewish Savior of the world to the pagans across the pond, by casting out demons *in His name*, in the Decapolis. Matthew says **this guy's east-side story is fulfilling Isaiah's shining light, rising across the Sea of Galilee**, (Mt 4:15-16; 12:15-21) **even as Jesus, the Light of the World, shares His own west-side story of grace and mercy and impending doom.** And according to the boys, (Mk 9:38; Lk 9:48) good ol' Gad was going strong up north, when they were *opposed by him*, and then *rebuked by Jesus*, for *ignorantly, unsuccessfully, attempting to curtail his mission*.



He's Jesus' star in the east, (Dan 12:3) **sent to single-handedly establish ... us, the Gentile body of Christ**, while Jesus is teaching and taming His own on the wild west-side. And whether Gad knew it or not, **Jesus went and sent, to prepare a place to keep Jewish believers safe** during the much-propheesied destruction and desolation that was coming – in 70^{AD} – to the Temple, Jerusalem, and every synagogue in the land – **when every Jew was either killed, committed suicide, or was enslaved, sold, and scattered** around the globe. But those the Good Shepherd had led, **fled the Promised Land to the land promised by Jesus, back across the Jordan** where OT Jesus/Joshua had led 'em in, to get to the mountains of Bashan, where the people of Pella had been prepared by Gad to receive and protect them. By the way, **Gad's name is actually pronounced "god"**. Seriously. And appropriately. As Jesus said to the smugly religious, more concerned about being "right" than being saved:



"Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? If He called them gods to whom the Word of God came—and **Scripture cannot be broken**— do you say ... '*You are blaspheming,*' because I said, '*I am the Son of God*'?" – John 10:34-36 ESV



The Bible's defining feature is its God-breathed perfection. Yet ironically, over 200 published, admittedly-self-contradictory, Gospel "harmonies" have woven Jesus' stories into various agenda driven concoctions that serve to strengthen the claims *against* His credibility – cuz **you can't violate the big rule: "Scripture cannot be broken"**. And it don't need *fixin'*! *We do*. I've been weaving the Word for nine years now. And many of you keep asking when I'll be finished. When it's *perfect*. I'm not about to settle for just being guesswork #201. But it's *getting* there. And I can see how it'll serve as *forensic proof* of the inspiration and infallibility of *all Scripture*. And before you say, **"That's great, but I don't need proof I know it's perfect,"** take a look what Paul said to the Thessalonians.

[We] thank God *continually* because, when *you received* the Word of God, which you *heard from us*, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the Word of God [They must've been pleased with that ... until they read this] – 1 Thessalonians 2:13 NIV

Now the *Bereans* were of *more noble character* than the *Thessalonians*, for they *received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day* to see if *what Paul said* was *true*. – Acts 17:11 NIV

See the difference? **The Thessalonians' based their hope on Paul's word.** Which just isn't ... as *noble*. Whereas **the Bereans substantiated their hope on God's Word.** And that's called *faith*.

Now *faith* is the substance of things *hoped for*, the evidence of things *not seen*. **For** by it [the substance of evidence] the *elders obtained a good testimony*. – Hebrews 11:1-2 NKJ

You see, **Thessalonians settle for secondhand hope.** Whereas, **Bereans seek the substance.** Because, **a good testimony requires seeing for yourself.** So how *noble* is *your* character? Or should I ask: What's *your* hope based on? **Tradition? Presumption? Emotion? Anxiety?** Or **pure, unadulterated truth?** The Bereans examined the Scriptures to see if *Paul* was *right*, and just as *importantly*, where *they* were *wrong*. So *often* we turn to Scripture **to support or defend our beliefs.** So *seldom* **to realign, recalibrate, and correct our views.** You see, it's a *milk vs. solid food* thing.

For everyone who partakes *only* of *milk* is unskilled in the Word of *righteousness* ... – Hebrews 5:13 NKJ

[Even though, *literally*] *All Scripture* is God-breathed and is useful for *teaching, rebuking, correcting* and *training in righteousness* ... – 2 Timothy 3:16 NIV

[In fact] *Blessed* is the man whom God corrects ... – Job 5:17 NIV

For these commands are a *lamp*, this *teaching* is a *light*, and the corrections of discipline are the *way to life*, – Proverbs 6:23 NIV

[To put it *bluntly*] He who hates *correction* is *stupid*. – Proverbs 12:1 NIV

... for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to ... those who by reason of use have *their* senses exercised to discern both good and evil. – Hebrews 5:14 NKJ

[Isaiah asks] Whom shall He teach? ... [And answers] Them that are weaned from the milk ... [and *weaving the Word*] For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little. [Why] – Isaiah 28:9-10 KJ21

The *whole vision* has become to *you* like the words of a book that is sealed [Why?] – Isaiah 29:10-11 NKJ

[For the Lord] instructed me that I should ... Bind up the testimony, [and] seal the law among my disciples. [Why?] – Isaiah 8:11, 16 NKJ

I saw the Lord sitting on a *throne, high and lifted up* ... Also *I heard* the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send” ... [Then I said] “Send me.” And He said, “Go ... Make the *heart of this people dull* ... and *shut their eyes;*” [Why?] – Isaiah 6:1-10 NKJ

We are for *signs and wonders* in Israel from the Lord [Why?] – Isaiah 8:18 NKJ

[These are] *rebellious* people ... children who will not hear the law of the Lord; who say to the seers, “Do not see,” and to the prophets, “Do not prophesy to us right things; [like: Read your Bible] speak to us smooth things” [like milk] – Isaiah 30:9-10 NKJ

Even after Jesus had done all these *miraculous signs* in their presence, they *still* would not *believe in Him*. This was to fulfill the Word of Isaiah the prophet: “Lord, who has believed our [sealed] message and to whom has the Arm of the Lord been revealed?” [Jesus said the Father “revealed them to babes” (who need milk) (Mt 11:25)] For *this reason they could not believe*, because, [“Anyone who does not *receive* the kingdom ... like a *little child* (being weaned) will *never enter it*” (Mk 10:15)] as Isaiah says *elsewhere*: “He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, [“But as many as received Him ... He gave the right to become children of God” (ready for solid food!) (Jn 1:12); Know why?] ... Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about Him. – John 12:37-41 NIV



So, want to glorify Jesus? **Find some of His glory for yourself!** And you’ll be excited to share it. Like when you go to a good restaurant, or a good movie, or find a good doctor. Now, a less-than *noble* might say: **“But I don’t need to examine it; I’ve already accepted it.”** Oh. Sorry, but you literally *can’t*, if you haven’t *examined* it for *yourself*. **You’ve only accepted secondhand faith.** Which is fine for new-reborns. But Rock-solid faith is based on *substance*, not intuition or tradition or presumption or a face-saving defense of *apathy*. A *Thessalonian* might say, **“But, I don’t have a problem with the Bible.”** That might be true but it’s not the point; because **the Bible has a problem with you.** It’s *designed* to *bring* you and me, to a point of decision on whether it should judge *my brokenness*, or if *I* should judge *its*. Cuz **I’m the one that’s in my own way** – and *that’s* an obstacle I can’t move without seeking His help for myself in His Word. **Know why “Scripture cannot be broken”?**

Because **“Every Word of God is flawless”.** (Prov 30:5) Especially if you *hear* a little, *there* – in your *heart* – a little. Our Father says, to: **“Keep [My Words] within your heart; for they are life to those who find them.”** (Prov 4:20-22) And Jesus tells us that **the only folks who’ll find ‘em, are those who’ll seek ‘em.** Jesus used the Old Testament prophets to *warn* His followers exactly when to *flee* to *escape death*.

[Mark writes] “When you see ‘the *abomination* that causes *desolation*’ standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then ...flee to the mountains” – Mark 13:14 NIV

[Hey Matthew, the *reader of what?*] “When you see ... ‘the *abomination* that causes *desolation*,’ *spoken* of through the *prophet Daniel*” – Matthew 24:15 NIV

[Hey Luke, can you give us a *hint*?] When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, [which they *were*] then ... flee to the mountains, [which they *did*] ... For these [April-September, 70^{AD}] are the days of vengeance, [that Isaiah and oh-so-many others *wrote about* in the *Old Testament*, and are *quoted about* throughout the New] that all things which are written may be fulfilled. – Luke 21:19-22 NKJ

That's one of the treasures I'm tracking! By loading *His Word* into my heart, **so I can get my ignorance and assumptions out of His way**. Cuz I want to know *which* Scriptures He's referring to; cuz we can't finish *weaving* His Word, line-upon-line, without 'em! So my enquiring *mind* wants to know *why* He *privately* went on to say to *Peter, James, and John, and Andrew*, that:

²⁴ They will fall by the edge of the sword, [which 1.1 million *did!*] and be led away captive into all nations. [Which 97,000 *were!*] And Jerusalem will be *trampled* by *Gentiles* [which it *was*] ... [And] ²⁸ when these things *begin to happen* [which they *did*, just *months* before 70^{AD}] ... your redemption draws near. ... ³⁴ But take *heed* to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with ... *cares of this life*, [rather than lightened by hope in *His life*] and *that Day* come on you *unexpectedly*. ... ³⁶ [Watch and pray] that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things" – Luke 21:24-36 NKJ

[And why did *Peter* later say] The time is *near* when *all things will end*. – 1 Peter 4:7 NCV

[And why'd *James* say] Behold, the *Judge* is standing *at the door!* – James 5:8-9 NKJ

[And why'd *John* say] It is the *last hour* ... *we know* that it is the *last hour*. – 1 John 2:18 NKJ

[And why'd *Paul* say] The Lord is *at hand*. – Philippians 4:5 NKJ

[And] What I *mean*, brothers, is that the *time* is *short*. – 1 Corinthians 7:29 NIV

[And why, shortly before 70^{AD} did the writer of *Hebrews* say to] Encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. – Hebrews 10:25 NIV



I'm *so tired* of reading how they were either *confused* or didn't *mean* what they *said*. Cuz, **you don't get to say God's Word got it wrong!** You *only* get to say you don't get it ... *yet*. I'm on the hunt to know if this is why that *legion* of Gad's *demons* asked Jesus if He'd come to torment them "before the time?" (Mt 8:29) And I see no reason we can't know.

"For there is nothing *hidden* that will not be disclosed, and nothing *concealed* that will not be known or brought out into the open. Therefore consider carefully how you listen. [Because] Whoever has [Truth] will be given more; [Truth] whoever does not have, [Truth] even what he thinks he has will be taken from him." – Luke 8:16-18 NIV

So I wanna *know* – *got'a* know – cuz I keep *finding*, again and again, that so much of what's been labeled as *error, archaic, or contradiction* is in fact just *reckless listening*. So you need to:

Guard what was *committed* to your *trust*, avoiding the ... contradictions of what is *falsely* called *knowledge* ... [by those who] *strayed* concerning the *faith*. – 1 Timothy 6:20-21 NKJ

Christianity is filled with people who believe what they believe because they believe it. But not *us!* Cuz **we're going for something more noble!** And maybe you're thinking, "But I don't know the Word of God at *all*." Take heart; remember: **those Bereans weren't more noble for knowing**, but for **seeking**, and **refusing to settle**, and for every *day* **being ready to be wrong**.