

The Bible For Dummies by Jeffrey Geoghegan and Michael Homan Quotes

The Bible simply says that Adam and Eve ate the “fruit,” not an “apple.” The belief that the forbidden fruit was an apple seems to derive from the fact that the Latin words for apple and evil (malum) are identical, the only difference being the accenting of the word. Thus, apple growers the world over can breathe a corporate sigh of relief: The forbidden fruit is unknown.¹

God already knows the answers to the questions He asks. His questions seek to give humans an opportunity to come clean. Regarding God’s redundancy: God often spells out the exact relationship of one person to another when addressing moral issues because, according to the biblical authors, distrust, alienation, and murder result when people forget their relationship to one another. In this case, God is trying to bring home the gravity of Cain’s crime: Killing one’s brother is a very personal and tragic act, impacting not only the dead but also the living.²

From Noah’s sons and daughters-in-law the earth is again repopulated, in fulfillment of God’s commandment to “be fruitful and multiply” (the one commandment God never rebukes humankind for not obeying).³

Laban begins searching for his missing idols, coming last to Rachel’s tent (the Bible is good at drama). Rachel, as a last-ditch effort not to be caught with the stolen goods, places the idols underneath her saddlebag and then sits on it. As her father searches her tent, Rachel realizes that her posture might raise suspicions and says, “Forgive me father for not standing up, but the way of women is upon me.” Now, “the way of women” is a Hebrew euphemism for, well, “the way of women” that happens monthly. Laban, having raised two daughters, knows all too well not to mess with “the way of women,” and quickly scurries out of the tent, without finding his stolen teraphim.⁴

In 1631, King Charles I of Britain ordered 1,000 Bibles from a reputable English printer. All was well, except for one mistake: The printer left out the word “not” in the seventh commandment (to

¹ 54

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read “You shall commit adultery” in error). The king was not amused, and he ordered all the texts recalled and destroyed. This edition became known as the “Wicked Bible,” and only a few copies remain around today, each worth a fortune.⁵

The word prophet comes from the Greek word prophetes, which means “to speak on behalf of another.” On the most basic level, then, biblical prophets are messengers who speak on behalf of God. In Hebrew, though, the most common word for prophet is nabi’ (pronounced na-VEE), which means “one who is called.” Thus, the emphasis in the Hebrew Bible is not so much on the prophet’s role as a messenger but on his or her status as one called by God.⁶

The Book of Job has more “one-time words” than any other biblical book, making Job extremely difficult to translate. Because of its unique vocabulary, modern translations of Job differ widely, and even early translators had a hard time. For example, in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Bible), Job is 400 lines shorter than the Hebrew text, which has led some to hypothesize that the translators became so frustrated when trying to translate Job’s unique vocabulary that they just omitted lines they couldn’t understand.⁷

As part of Paul’s solution to the problem of sexual immorality, he recommends marriage. As he puts it, “It’s better to marry than to burn [with passion]” (1 Corinthians 7:9). For those not “burning,” Paul recommends remaining unmarried so that they can be undistracted in their service to God. Paul admits, though, that most people don’t have this “gift,” and that other apostles, such as Peter, have wives and serve God just fine. Over the next thousand years, many men and women took Paul’s advice on celibacy to heart, and celibacy gradually became the ideal for those wanting to devote themselves fully to God’s service. Then, in the 11th century C.E., what Paul put forth as a recommendation Pope Gregory VII made a requirement for all those wanting to serve as clergy in the Catholic Church. When the Protestant Reformation took place in the 16th century, the celibacy of the clergy was one of the first things to “go out the window” — literally, as Martin Luther, a (former) Catholic monk, married a (former) Catholic nun after helping her escape from her convent through a window.⁸

According to the New Testament, no one is righteous enough to go to heaven. Therefore, when God judges humankind based on what is written in the books recording everyone’s life, the

⁵ 118

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assumption is that everyone is going to eternal judgment (what Revelation calls the lake of fire). The only exceptions to this rule are those who have received God's provision for human wrongdoing — Jesus' death on the cross. For those who have accepted Jesus' payment for sin on their behalf, their names are written in the Book of Life, and they will live forever with God in heaven.⁹

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