“Even The Noble Homer Nods”

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday October 28th, 2018

Text: II Peter 1:19-21

### Intro

1. Quintus Horatius Flaccus (8 December 65 BC – 27 November 8 BC), known in the English-speaking world as Horace, was the leading Roman lyric poet during the time of Augustus.
   1. He once wrote “Sometimes even the noble Homer nods” *(Ars Poetica I.359).*
   2. Homer was the blind Greek poet of the eighth century B.C., well known for his works, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* (which contained errors in his own stories).
   3. What Horace suggested was this: As accomplished as Homer was, he sometimes erred with reference to the facts of the incidents he mentioned. *(Name for it: “Homeric Nod”)*
2. It is true of every human author.
   1. Regardless of their genius and skills, they are still fallible.
   2. In spite of great care, they will “nod” or “slip” on occasion.
3. Contrast this to the authors of God’s Word:
   1. They were not great scholars – Acts 4:13
   2. Yet they wrote with great precision – Is. 44:28-45:1 (Cyrus named before birth)
   3. So amazing is their accuracy that we can only conclude that God oversaw the work –

II Pet. 1:19-21

1. A poet once said, “To err is human . . .” – People err, God does not!

#### To Err Is Human

* + 1. Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC), the famous Greek scholar, was renowned for his knowledge – Yet he made some colossal speculative blunders.

1. In his work titled *Parts of Animals,* he argued that within the human body, man’s soul is “lodged in some substance of a fiery character.”
2. He contended that the brain “is a compound of earth and water.”
3. He further suggested that sleep is caused by the blood flowing into the brain, thus making it heavy. This, he declared, “is the reason why drowsy persons hang the head” (Book II, Chapter 3).
   * 1. Titus Flavius Josephus (37 – c. 100 AD) was a Jewish historian. Though a respectable historian of his day, he frequently slipped.
   1. He declared that during the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, a heifer, being led to be sacrificed in the temple, gave birth to a lamb (*Wars,* 6.3).
   2. He spoke of a place in Egypt where fierce serpents ascend out of the ground and fly through the air (Antiquities, 2.10.2).
      1. Samuel Johnson (18 September 1709 – 13 December 1784), was the author of the first complete English dictionary, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1755.
4. He also produced *A Grammar of the English Tongue*. In that work, he stated that the letter “H seldom, perhaps never, begins any but the first syllable” of a word.
5. Regrettably he had not noticed that “h” was the second syllable in “perhaps.”
   * 1. Lord Byron (22 January 1788 – 19 April 1824), the famous poet and author of Don Juan, wrote a magnificent composition that he titled, “The Destruction of Sennacherib.”
     2. He dramatically told of the devastating deaths of the 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, along with their king, who besieged Jerusalem in the days of King Hezekiah.
     3. The poet slipped, though because the king was several miles away at Lachish when the destruction occurred.
     4. He returned to his home in the east and was slain by his own sons—in fulfillment of prophecy (II Kings 19:7, 36-37).
     5. Knowledgeable men, despite their great wisdom, are known to “nod” (slip up)!

#### Religious Writers Also “Nodded”

* 1. Muhammad (c. 26 April 570 – 8 June 632) founded Islam, wrote the Qur’an (even did his own chapter breaks and added verses)
     1. The religion of Islam claims that the Qur’an is inspired of God.
     2. Clearly, however, it is not, for it is flawed by many examples of “nodding.”
     3. For instance, the Qur’an suggests that the human fetus results from “sperm” (“life-germ,” no mention of an egg) that changes into “a clot of congealed blood,” which then becomes bones, later to be covered with flesh (Sura 23:14).
     4. This hardly is an accurate description of fetal development!
  2. Joseph Smith, Jr. (December 23, 1805 – June 27, 1844) wrote *The Book of Mormon*.
     1. It purports to be an infallible revelation from God given to Joseph Smith Jr. by an angel of the Lord – However, the writer “nodded” more than once!
     2. In Alma 7:10 it is said that Jesus Christ was born in Jerusalem. But, as every school child knows, the Lord was born in that “little town of Bethlehem” (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1).
     3. A man by the name of Nephi was using a “compass” to find his direction in the sixth century B.C. (1 Nephi 16:10; 2 Nephi 5:12). It is well known, of course, that the mariner’s compass was not in use until at least a thousand years after the birth of Christ (1st in use as navigation 960-1279 AD).
     4. Joseph Smith Jr. also taught that there were people living on the Moon—six feet tall, dressed like Quakers, and with a life span of 1,000 years (Huntington, 1892, 3:263). Brigham Young, Smith’s successor, when asked about this matter, concurred, suggesting that such beings lived on the Sun as well (Young, 13:271).
  3. Mary Baker Eddy (July 16, 1821 – December 3, 1910) founded “Christian Science”
     1. She produced a book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which she claimed was co-authored by God – Yet she“nodded!”
     2. She wrote: “Man is not matter—made up of brains, blood, bones, and other material elements.... Man is spiritual and perfect; and because of this, he must be so understood in Christian Science.... Man is incapable of sin, sickness, and death” (1934, p. 475).
     3. In spite of her denial of human mortality, she died December 3, 1910!
  4. Many others who claimed to write for God are known to have “nodded” (slip up)!

#### Accuracy of the Scriptures

* 1. In glaring contrast, the writers of the Biblical records never “nodded.”

1. Universe
   * + 1. The first two chapters of the Bible contain the divine record of the beginning of the Universe, including the Earth and its inhabitants.
       2. Though it was penned over 3500 years ago, there is nothing that opposes any demonstrable fact of science.
       3. Any book on astronomy or Earth science, penned fifty years ago, already is obsolete. Yet Genesis in its simplicity is factually flawless.
       4. The Bible says the universe had a beginning. The Second Law of Thermodynamics says the universe is decaying *(Heb. 1:10-11).* In order to decay, there must be some starting point in “recent” past to decay from.
       5. Contrast this with the *Enuma Elish*, the Babylonian creation tablets; which asserts the eternality of matter (see Pfeiffer, 1966, p. 226).
       6. The Genesis record affirms that creation activity was concluded by the end of the sixth day *(Gen. 2:1-3).* Science says, as per the First Law of Thermodynamics, that nothing is being created today.
       7. No less than ten times Genesis 1 affirms that biological organisms replicate “after (their own) kind.”
       8. In contrast, modern pseudoscience (i.e., the theory of evolution) is dependent upon the notion that in the past organisms have reproduced after their non-kind!
       9. God’s word is perfectly in harmony with the known laws of genetics.
2. Medical Knowledge
   * + 1. The ancient world’s knowledge of medicine was based on myths and superstitions.
       2. An Egyptian remedy for hair loss was to apply a mixture of six fats (horse, hippopotamus, crocodile, cat, and ibex) with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey. (*Papyrus Ebers, 16th* century B.C.)
       3. Even though Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22), no magic mumbo-jumbo is found in his writings. Instead, Moses was far ahead of his time in terms of medicine and sanitation.
       4. Lev. 13 contains detailed information for the diagnosis, treatment (disinfectant with soap), and quarantine of the diseased all of which would lessen the spread of the disease.
       5. A leper was required to cover his upper lip (ESV; KJV: Lev 13:45). Dr. J. S. Morton has noted, “Since the leprosy bacilli are transmitted from nasal drippings and saliva, this practice of having lepers cover the upper lips was good hygienic policy.”
       6. Dr. William Vis, *“Medical Science and the Bible,”* 1950: “To show how far Moses was ahead of modern society we need only to remind ourselves that the word ‘quarantine’ originated in the 14th century when the Italian ports of Venice and Genoa first refused admission to immigrants who might be harboring plague and required them to stay on board forty days, hence the word quarantine. Even in the 17th & 18th centuries leprosy spread over southern Europe until the principles of Moses were re-enacted successfully.”
       7. No other law code in the whole of ancient history came anywhere near rivaling these health regulations!
3. Geography
   * + - 1. When the *Encyclopedia Britannica* was first published it contained so many mistakes relative to American geography and topography, that a rival publisherof *New American Cyclopedia* issued a special pamphlet correcting the numerous blunders of its British rival.
         2. In ancient Rome, Tacitus wrote a book on the geography, manners, customs, and tribes of Germany. J.W. McGarvey said it contained so many errors that many were inclined to doubt that this well-known Roman historian could have produced such a flawed volume (1956, 3:26-27), which was said, “Geography was its weak point.”
         3. The Bible contains literally hundreds of references to geography and topography.
         4. Luke mentions 32 countries, 54 cities, and 9 Mediterranean islands. There is not the slightest mistake in any of his references.
         5. In fact, many archaeologists and historians have used the Scriptures to navigate the old world to find and locate ancient cities and artifacts!

Paths of the Seas – Ps. 8:8: “Discovered” by Matthew F. Maury, 1840-1860 AD: *“If God said it’s there I will find it!”*

* 1. The Bible is not a science textbook, but is accurate when it mentions scientific facts!
     1. Though it comes into conflict with scientific theories, it is in harmony with every known fact of science!
     2. Throughout time, Science had to “catch up” with God’s word! (Pic of 16 Harmony of Scriptures and Science Facts)
  2. There are many other areas where the Scriptures have been proven right throughout time, despite the “modern wisdom” of the time! (I Cor. 1:19-21, 25)

#### Alleged Slips

* + 1. Over a span of many centuries, hostile critics of the Bible have charged the sacred writers with “nodding.”
    2. Time after time, however, when the true facts have come to light, the Scriptures have been vindicated!

1. The Bible mentions the Hittites 47 times, but no physical or historical evidence was found until 1876 & 1906 *(Some claim critics said Hittites never existed).*
   1. 1876: A British scholar & Syriologist, Archibald Sayce, suspected tablets he found were evidence of the Hittites in Boghaz-koy, Turkey.
   2. He wrote a book, *“The Hittites: The Story of a Forgotten Empire”* (1888).
   3. 1906: A German cuneiform expert, Hugo Winckler, went to the site tablets were discovered at and excavated.
   4. He found 5 temples, a fortified citadel, many monumental sculptures, over 10,000 clay tablets, and whole libraries were found along with complete genealogies of the people of the city.
   5. Once deciphered, it was announced to the world that the Hittites had been found.
   6. It became one of the largest ancient discoveries ever made!
2. Pilate is called “Governor” in the gospels – Mt 27:2: “to Pilate the governor.”
   1. Was he governor, prefect or procurator? (Why important?)
   2. Josephus calls him all 3: governor, prefect & procurator (after 44 AD).
   3. As Procurator he would not have had authority to sentence anyone to death before 44 AD. As Prefect he would (4 BC – 44 AD).
   4. 1961: A block of limestone was found in the Roman theatre at Caesarea, the capital of the province of Judea, bearing a damaged dedication by Pilate to a Tiberieum. It read, “Pontius Pilate, prefect of all Judea.”
3. Politarch Inscription on the Vardar Gate in Thessalonica (spanned the Ignatia Way)
   1. Acts 17:6-8 (ESV, NAS): Luke says a man named Jason was taken before the “city authorities” (ASV, KJV, NKJ: “the rulers of the city”).
   2. The word he used was *G4173 politarchēs [pol-it-ar'-khace]:* a town officer, that is, magistrate: ruler of the city. (Compound word: from polis (city) and arche (ruler)).
   3. It occurs here twice but nowhere else in extant Greek literature. This led earlier critics to claim Luke was in error, a claim that persisted for hundreds of years.
   4. 1867: During the Ottoman Empire (1299-1923), in an effort to expand the city walls of Thessalonica, the city gate and ancient walls were torn down.
   5. An inscription was found on the city gate, known as the Vardar Gate that says, “In the time of the Politarchs…”
   6. It was sent to the British Museum.
   7. Since then, archaeologists in Thessalonica have unearthed several inscriptions using this term.
   8. Far from being mistaken, this is another indication Luke was an accurate, well-informed, eye-witness, and credible historian!
      1. The Word of God has been said to be inaccurate, but time after time, it has been proven true!

## Conclusion

1. Even the noble Homer may “nod,” but those guided by the Spirit of God never did!
2. You can trust the word of God! (II Tim. 3:16)
3. Let us not put our trust in the fallible words of men but in the infallible, eternal word of God! (Mt. 24:35; Jn. 12:48; I Pet. 1:24-25)
4. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Realize the error of your ways and acknowledge your Lord and Savior, repent and be baptized into His name!
5. If a Christian in error, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late. Repent and be renewed!
6. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!

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