

GNITN

#428

TikTok Bible Scholars

We Live In The Information Age

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” (Dan 12:4, NKJV)

We all know that the ease at which we can get access to information is at an all-time high. The advent of the Internet of course is the driving reason for such an explosion of content. And the ease with which anyone with a cell phone can opine online is opening doors of communication that individuals from literally around the globe can walk through at any time. However, the verse I opened with is more specific on the which topics will see knowledge increase as we see in this [quote](#) from *Barnes Notes on the Bible*:

And knowledge shall be increased - To wit, by this method. The angel seems to mean that in this way there would be an advance in knowledge on all the subjects of religion, and particularly on the points to which he had referred. This would be one of the characteristics of these times, and this would be the means by which it would be accomplished. Our own age has furnished a good illustration of the meaning of this language, and it will be still more fully and strikingly illustrated as the time approaches when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole world.

How this will happen, and we could make a strong case that it is happening right now is the aforementioned social media platforms. For good or for evil, access to information is there.

Access Is Not Always A Good Thing

Like much of the plethora of knowledge at our disposals, it isn't neutral. And since just about anyone can get way more than their 15 minutes of fame knowing what is truth and what isn't can be a daunting task. Some would say it is herculean with a wink and a nod to that mythical man. Ironically, if you didn't know what the word “herculean” means, you can ask your cell phone and it will tell you. But my point is that just seeing a video with someone telling you what the Bible actually means on a topic or breaking down the verses in it word by word using the original languages seems to be blowing up as well. Well, at least I'm seeing “scholars” popping up on my various media feeds more and more, many with better and better use of graphics and slick presentations. When these folks first started showing up, it was just them leaning up their cell phones on all the theology and Bibles they owned and reading notes or just winging it. Now we have the ability to make everything look very professional and with Artificial Intelligence aiding us, it is very easy to add the shiny, sparkling elements that catch our attention for more than a few seconds. However, if we strip away all those added elements what we have left is whether what they are saying is right or wrong. Unfortunately, many people, based on the amount of views and then comments are showing me that there isn't a lot of discernment being done if any.

A Disturbing Trend

If you're like me, you can scroll on your phone for more time than I want to admit going from one 30-60 second video to another and then wonder where all my time went. That is disturbing all by itself. More disturbing is that these Bible scholars, some who actually boast of that title seem to share a lot of the same characteristics. They set up their arguments by giving us the deeper truth that no one knew before but was there all the time if we only knew that meaning of

the original words. They pull out all manner of information to support their claims and then their conclusions. I have no issues with people giving their opinions, but many people seem to be accepting their declarations lock, stock and barrel. It would appear that a little bit of knowledge goes a long way in forming opinions, but when our collective attention spans have been reduced to mere seconds well, the art of research before we accept a conclusion is lost. It is so easy to just let someone else do the hard work and tell us what we need to know. Such trust should be earned, but all too often, sounding intelligent is all that's needed in these days of National Enquirer sensationalism that usually start with phrases like "Did you know that the Bible doesn't really mean this?" or some other catchy lead. One disturbing trend is that people aren't doing their due diligence anymore. Another is that rather than challenging these short, pithy expositions we instead let someone else do it for us and then the original author takes their refutation video and makes fun of it. It plays out like the cereal commercial that ends with "Silly rabbit, Trix are for kids." We need to break that cycle of "gotcha" by taking responsibility for our own research.

The Bible Has Had Critics Before

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" (Gen 3:1, NKJV)

It's not like God's Word hasn't faced scrutiny before. One needs only to go back to the first book of the Bible to see that. In the Garden of Eden the serpent questioned the only words of instruction given to Adam and Eve back in **Genesis 2:16**:

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Interestingly, even these simple verses are the topic of the TikTok Bible scholars as even some say that God lied and the serpent told the truth. I personally have a hard time with telling people that God lies as the original premise of any teaching and I certainly can't abide telling people that the Bible authors view of sexual sins according to God vary from book to book based on the culture they lived in at the time. All of those things are heard in their videos and much more. The trend I see in a great deal of these snippets of Bible information is that the Bible has a lot of errors in it and what it really means is vastly different than what you know. And in almost all cases, the translations are wildly off and we've been believing a lie. Dastardly and evil rulers took the original transcripts and made it say what they wanted it to say and we simply had the wool pulled over our eyes this whole time. What would we have done unless these learned people hadn't come along to shine the light on things? To which I say, you're a little late to the party of Biblical criticism. And I might add, you're views aren't novel either.

It All Comes Down To The Basics

Billions and billions of people have come and gone before these social media influencers showed up with their higher criticism of the Bible and by extension the God who authored it. And these charges they level are just rehashed views of people who, in their vast accumulated knowledge of things simply don't believe God actually exists. He is the product of fertile imaginations and we need to put this whole inspired Word of God nonsense in its place. I have to admit there were a few times when I was thinking they might have a point, but my spirit sensed that they were

leaving out some very, very important things. Picking at a single verse or word in a verse is a very easy way to cast doubt on the whole Bible and it's been done before and much better by Bible critics in ages past. These minute-long hit and run take downs of the Bible leave out the context of Scripture and belie an overall view that the Bible isn't inspired and God-breathed as it claims. And if God is a liar, then well we need to throw out that whole Jesus died for sin thing as well. Intellectually honest people can also be sincere, but sincerely wrong. I think that the very first thing anyone who thinks that the Bible isn't all it's cracked up to be is to state that's how they feel right from the start. And then rather than pick and choose verses on the Ten Commandments and make wild accusations that the translators were trying to hide things from people they, need to address what they think about Jesus being the Son of God. The scarlet thread running through the Bible is how God loved the world that He gave His only Son to redeem us from our sins. One doesn't need a PhD in divinity to understand that. A lot of learned people figured that out before many of those digital creators were more than a twinkle in their father's eyes. And their lives were changed radically by knowing it.

Changed Lives Are Hard To Ignore

The standard for any book that claims inspiration is how people's lives are changed by them. And I might add that the Bible has had many, many critics before and some of those critics made it their job to prove it wrong. They actually tried to pick it apart to show how many errors were in it much like these folks are doing now. Some were college students, others were seasoned journalists, and others were accomplished lawyers. All were very intelligent and believed they could bring the Bible down. And all came to the same conclusion that those before them did. The Bible is exactly what it says it is and God is very, very real. One man, *Josh McDowell* says this on his [web site](#):

As a young man, Josh McDowell considered himself an agnostic. He truly believed that Christianity was worthless. However, when challenged to intellectually examine the claims of Christianity, Josh discovered compelling, overwhelming evidence for the reliability of the Christian faith. After trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, Josh's life changed dramatically as he experienced the power of God's love.

Another staunch critic, *Lee Strobel* is described this way on his [web site](#):

Lee has been described in the Washington Post as "one of the evangelical community's most popular apologists." He was educated at the University of Missouri (Bachelor of Journalism degree) and Yale Law School (Master of Studies in Law degree). He was a journalist for fourteen years at The Chicago Tribune and other newspapers, winning Illinois' highest honors for both investigative reporting and public service journalism from United Press International. After probing the evidence for Jesus for nearly two years, Lee became a Christian in 1981.

And if we want to go really old school, we can see how the foremost Bible scholar of his day, the Apostle Paul went from a Christian-hating terrorist to a man who is responsible for authoring the majority of the New Testament. He bragged about his credentials:

Yet if anyone ever had reason to hope that he could save himself, it would be I. If others could be saved by what they are, certainly I could! 5 For I went through the Jewish initiation ceremony when I was eight days old, having been born into a pure-blooded Jewish home that was a branch of the old original Benjamin family. So I was a real Jew if there ever was one! What's more, I was a member of the Pharisees who demand the strictest obedience to every Jewish law and

custom. 6 And sincere? Yes, so much so that I greatly persecuted the Church; and I tried to obey every Jewish rule and regulation right down to the very last point. **(Phil 3:4-6, TLB)**

He would go on to note how much they meant to him later:

But all these things that I once thought very worthwhile—now I’ve thrown them all away so that I can put my trust and hope in Christ alone. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have put aside all else, counting it worth less than nothing, in order that I can have Christ, 9 and become one with him, no longer counting on being saved by being good enough or by obeying God’s laws, but by trusting Christ to save me; for God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith—counting on Christ alone. (Phil 3:7-9, TLB)

There really is power in the Bible and many miss that by dismissing it as fables and fairy tales.

I Don’t Hate Them

While I’m not supportive of these digital Bible thinkers it is their conclusions that I don’t agree with. I certainly have no ill will or bad feelings about them. I’m sure if we met we’d have cordial conversations and enjoy maybe a meal discussing life in general. I like the Apostle Paul am a sinner saved by grace. I’m always up for a good debate as long as that all it is. And rather than make a cottage industry out of poking holes in people’s arguments I’d prefer to just put the truth out there and see what happens. There’s a reason I didn’t name names or use pictures of people now. I also have every confidence in God’s Word to not return void and any discussions with any of these social media personalities I have will be in private messages. Jesus debated people who tried to trip Him up, but to those who were sincere and really wanted answers, like the woman at the well and Nicodemus, He patiently spent time with them one-on-one until they got what He was saying. That’s also my advice for any of us who pray and then respond to these posts. Season your words with love, compassion and care. And just know that it isn’t your job to change people’s opinions, but to speak the truth in love as we’re told in [Ephesians 6:15](#). Let God be in charge of results.