

# CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

## *Following a Person versus Following a Religion*

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all of fiction: jealous, and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving, control freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty, ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist; infanticidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously, malevolent bully.” Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* p. 57

Biblical Examples:  
Genesis 19.24  
2 Kings 1.10

**John 5.39-40**—You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you possess eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

**Luke 9.51-55**—As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them.

**2Timothy 3.16**—All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

**John 5.36**—I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me.

**Luke 7.28**—I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

**1Corinthians 13.8-10**—Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.

**Hebrews 1.1-3**—In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways [polymeros and polytropos, parts and forms], but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son . . . The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation [charakter] of his being.

**John 1.17-18**—The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.

“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”— John 14.9

\*All texts quoted from the TNIV or NRSV unless otherwise noted.

Marriage

Slavery

Violence (Exodus 23.29-20)

Nationalism (King)

Law

**Matthew 5.17**—Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. [pleroo - to make full or complete]

**Colossians 1.14**—In whom we have redemption . . .

**1 Peter 1:18,19**—Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold . . . but with precious blood . . . the blood of Christ.

**Luke 9:29-35**—As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus . . . a cloud appeared and covered them, and they [Peter, James and John] were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”

**Matthew 7.1-6**—“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in someone else’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from the other person’s eye. Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

**John 4.7-29**—When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?”(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. ) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” . . . Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?”

