

FREAKS—Take Up Your Cross

Psalm 139:13-16; Matthew 16:24-27

[Target Truth Ministries.com](http://TargetTruthMinistries.com)

The Law, & The Gospel of Grace

Pastor Gerry Box 1299, Ukiah, Ca. 95482

Any freaks out there? Society and government representatives continue to be threatened concerning the transgender and LGBTQXYZ issues. In 2016 it was North Carolina. And, in 2017 it was Texas and today every state grapples with how to accommodate various life issues. The church, in many cases, is either struggling with these issues, or is pulling away from Jesus in an attempt to blend into the main stream of political correctness. In the new book **EDEN to EVIL**, these issues of why we experience persecution, suffering, and tragedy are directly addressed. **EDEN to EVIL** explains exactly why we are struggling with concepts of transgenderism and the LGBTQXYZ community, and how the Christian Church needs to properly respond.

Any freaks out there? Some believe I'm a freak because I actually like to spend most of my time in the Bible and jail and prison ministry. How weird can you get? God actually calls Bible believers peculiar (**1 Pet. 2:9**—KJV—The Greek reads peculiar--peculiar because we love Jesus). The basic difference between a Christian and other people is that I (as a Christian), know I am a pitiful sinner and cursed by God because of my own personal sin. In other words—I deserve this life of suffering, hardship, and death. Jesus died to reconcile me and others back to God so that now I have become a new creation--“born again” (**John 3:3-7**). When I surrendered to Jesus I became a Christian and my sin in the past, which condemned me, was covered over...eliminated. It is our relationship with Jesus that saves us (**Rom. 4:6-8**). Most people just believe their problems are a result of bad decisions (maybe theirs...but, usually someone else's), and that these problems can be dealt with and fixed by either themselves, or government, or something else within our human power to fix. In other words—people feel they are being persecuted, many times for no good reason—and a good God would not allow this to happen...so they decide to ignore God, or decide there must be no God.

The book **EDEN to EVIL** describes in great detail exactly why we suffer in pain, and endure tragedy and persecution in this life.

Basically, the story of life is this: We all once had a great relationship with God in Paradise (Eden—**Eph. 1:4-5, 11; Gen. 2:1**). Some of that multitude / host of paradise, like me, decided to defy God (**Gen. 2:17; Rev. 12:1-4**), we are cast out of heaven / Eden, and we are now born into this world...to die physically (the 7-Day creation—this world). In Eden we could only die spiritually—spiritually, meaning, being separated from God. We couldn't die physically in Eden, because we all existed in supernatural eternal bodies, not subject to death. We were all created to live eternally. Adam and Eve are the examples given to us by God of this eternal existence in Eden, as well as the first couple selected by God to begin this physical existence. In order to die physically, we are banished to this 7-Day creation (this world) to be born in a flesh form, and die—just as Adam and Eve (they are the examples--the first couple created physically by God). God is just and requires death for those who defy Him--the ultimate curse. Note that at the end of the 7-day creation of this physical world, all the beings of Heaven and earth are finished (**Gen. 2:1**), and we now exist either in Heaven (the 2/3rds of **Rev. 12**), or we are banished to earth (the 1/3rd of **Rev. 12**).

So, as a result of our own personal decision to sin against our Creator, God banished us from His kingdom and we are now born into this world--Satan's world for the time being (**Rev. 12:1-4**—see Message “*Satan's Deception*”—[Target Truth Ministries.com](http://TargetTruthMinistries.com)). Remember that Jesus said that we must *first* be born flesh, and *then* be “born again” in order to be restored back to a relationship with God in his kingdom (**John 3:1-7**—Born Again means to now have a *personal* relationship with Jesus). We all know that we, as flesh beings, are on a pathway to death. The big question is why a few seem to be born with a silver spoon in their mouth (rich and healthy and popular), while most of us are born with all sorts of curses (born with crippling physical problems, born with mental illness, born to parents in poverty stricken nations, born to parents who abuse, born with biblically unacceptable sexual drives such as adulterous and promiscuous behavior (whether homosexual, or heterosexual), as well as anger, drunkenness, lying, stealing, etc. (**Matt. 15:15-20**). We are born with certain tendencies, and born to certain situations, because God has determined before our conception, exactly what fate we each would face in this flesh world, in order to provide an overall plan of reconciliation for those who will

put their trust in Jesus and be saved (**Gen. 3:16-19; Rom. 8:28**--all things work together). Let's be honest, even rich kids face failure and depression—they can just hide it better behind the wheel of that Lamborghini they are driving on their way to Las Vegas.

In other words, God has planned it all from the beginning (**Psalms 139:13-16**). We are all born cursed with a variety of problems—including the fact that we are slowly dying. God, our Creator, has determined (based upon our sinful action in Eden), just what combo of curses each of us would be born with—with the intention that all of this will work to bring salvation (**Rom. 8:28**), to all those who showed shame in Eden (**Gen. 3:6-8**—they showed shame, and hid). Some at the creation remained true to God (2/3rds- **Rev. 12:1-2**), and they remain in Paradise with Him. Some in Eden did not show shame for their sin. Satan is that example, as he continued to defy God, and showed contempt, just as many in Eden did (**Ezek. 31; Isa. 14:12-20**). Some of us in this life of flesh will be saved, and some will not. No one, except God, knows who is who.

The curses we each are born with are no indication of whether we will be saved or not. Just because a person is born into the Islamic part of the world, and never heard about Jesus being fully God, and being the suffering servant—the Savior—in other words they never heard the Gospel message of Jesus (**Isa. 53**), does not mean that they cannot be saved. God has provided for all circumstances, and He has foreordained the millennium (**Rev. 20**), for the purpose of possibly saving those “missed” in this world of Satan's domain (see Study on *Millennium*, and/or the book “*Revelation, Apostasy, End Times, & This Generation*”—**Target Truth Ministries.com**). God has always provided His plan to the generations of mankind. Man is the problem—we continually drop the ball. The curses each of us suffer with will all work together eventually to bring salvation to those God has chosen (chosen based upon our actions in Eden—shame [like Adam and Eve], or contempt [like Satan]).

Do you remember the reason Jesus gave for the man being born blind from birth (**John 9:1-3**)? Remember, all things work together (**Rom. 8:28**).

Nowhere in Scripture does it say that Christians have it all together, and that the members of a church are all “good” people, and that “bad” people could never be part of a church. If anything, church members know and understand that the opposite is true—church members understand that we have sinned, and have been cursed with all sorts of ills. We are all freaks. Some of us are in the majority when it comes to the world's definition of freakish behavior, and some of us are in the minority. We, as Christians, who love Jesus are on the path to perfection...but we will not be totally perfected until we leave this physical life. We are a new creation in Christ, and on a path of becoming righteous, but are not yet totally perfected in this flesh existence (**Philip. 3:12-14, 20-21; 2 Corin. 4:16**). A good example of this today is found with the social issue of sexuality. Heterosexuals are in the majority of the population, and homosexuals are the minority, but *all* are subject to adultery and fornication (sex outside marriage between one man and one woman—we *all* are sinners—all freaks—**Matt. 5:27-28; Rom. 3:10-12, 23**). In Jesus' time the “untouchables” and “outcasts” were those with diseases (like leprosy), or those cursed with homosexual attraction. They were shunned and forced to live separate lives (discriminated against—**Numb. 5:1-4**—not their choosing). Jesus tells us He is the Creator (**Col. 1:15-17**), and He formed us exactly in a certain specific way for His purposes (**Psalms 139:13-16**), and He loves us all (**John 3:16-17**). We are actually all “untouchables,” “outcasts,” freaks, and sinners...estranged from God—born into this world with certain curses, for the purpose of being eventually reconciled—*or not* (**Rom. 5:10-11; John 3:18; 2 Corin. 5:17-20**). Christians understand the “Good News,” which is that Jesus has overcome the world (**John 16:33; Luke 5:12-16**—we are cleansed by Jesus), and all those who trust in Jesus' and God's ways will enjoy a renewed life in this world (have peace of mind), and an eternal life restored and reconciled back to God and His kingdom.

So, if we are all cursed, why do some curses (leprosy and homosexual attraction), seem more evil than others? The Satan of Eden is with us in this age now. Satan wants to pit all of us freaks against each other, by having the freaks in the majority (the “normal” sins), pick on the freaks in the minority (like the sin of homosexual activity). We are all freaks in this world—all sinners expelled from God's presence in Paradise—all in need of someone to save us—Jesus. In other words, we are all in the same boat (earth), and Jesus tells us that we would

all be better off if we rowed together, instead of fighting each other (**Matt. 5:43-47**). Unfortunately, we will never all row together in this fallen world (this world is Satan's domain for the time being). But, for those of us (Christians), who trust in Jesus as fully God, we must look for those who will row with us, regardless of what freakish image they may have. In other words, those who are law abiding and those who have spent time in jail can work together for Christ--as long as we both avoid sin from now on. Whether heterosexual and homosexual, we can work together for Christ, as long as we both avoid adultery, fornication, etc., follow God's law, and change (repent—**Rom. 12:1-2**). The issue is not the person...the issue is our actions. Some see the truth, but many are *willingly ignorant*—*deliberately* overlook, or *deliberately* forget (**2 Pet. 3:5-9 KJV**). Many will deliberately ignore the Word of God—they could care less.

God has provided the rule book—God's way to victory. The Word of God includes both the law, as well as the gospel of grace. I know that many people only want to focus on the mercy and grace part of God's Word (the victory in Jesus). But, the laws (rules), are essential to grace and mercy—they are *both* necessary for our understanding of God's ways.

The law says people need to work, and live a certain way, and follow God's ways. Everyone (even pastors), would rather just love people, and not have to admonish them for offending God's law. But, we must admonish people if we really love them, because their eternal life is in the balance. It is easy to "help" the poor by supporting government efforts to eliminate poverty. The government is not concerned with judging your lifestyle or your eternal destiny...just in feeding you, and finding a drug to heal you, and a roof to house you. You're still going to die, but somehow we seem to ignore that small detail—that there is an eternity beyond this flesh existence.

The government message is to use "clean" needles (we'll even make em free), engage in "protected" sex (we'll even make em free), and you have a "right" to taxpayer's money as aid for food, housing, legal aid, dental care, transportation, medical care, education, etc.,—no stigma—it is an "entitlement"—no real requirement to actually work for any of these things. It's all free to you—you're right as a citizen. Of course, things may be free to some, but we all know that someone else is paying. God's law however, says that each person is personally responsible for themselves, and we should not burden another unless absolutely necessary (**Prov. 10:4-5**). We are all born into a cursed world, and even work itself is a curse—yes (**Gen. 3:16-19**). Jesus tells us to follow God's ways—to love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind (**Luke 10:27**). We can ignore God's ways—God's laws (**Rom.7:7-12**), but we will perish.

The gospel says that you need to have faith in Jesus as fully God—no other way (**John 14:6; Acts 4:12**). This message of Jesus "only" is offensive to most of the world. It is a message of love in that it tells people that heaven is available. The entry to heaven is free...the price has already been paid by Jesus (grace—**Eph. 1:8-9**), and we only need to trust in Him. But, at the same time, the gospel reminds us that "other ways" are lies, and this offends people who think Jesus wants us to be tolerant. Jesus is not tolerant of sin and false gods. Jesus came to divide (**Luke 12:51-53**). God is patient—longsuffering, while waiting for us to *change* (repent). Jesus loves us and died for us—in order that those who love Jesus and trust in Him will "make it."

Both the law and the gospel are needed for us to understand God's Word. As stated by Tullian Tchividjian: "The law is God's first Word to us, while the gospel is God's final Word to us. The law is God's Word of demand. The gospel is God's Word of deliverance. The law forces us to face our sin, while the gospel forgives us our sin. The law accuses us, while the gospel acquits us. The law exposes sin, while the gospel exonerates sin. The law may curtail bad behavior, but only the gospel of grace can transform the heart and mind."

Ironically, by not delivering the laws message, we actually diminish the need for the gospel and grace. Only when we see that the way of God's law is *absolutely inflexible*, will we see that God's grace is *absolutely indispensable*. God's law reveals our sinful behavior, while God's gospel reveals our deliverer--Jesus. We are in constant need of both—God's law in the Bible (**Ex. 20; Mark 12:28-31**), and God's grace through Jesus' sacrifice (**Matt. 5:17; Col. 1:19-23**).

Even “born again” Christians struggle with this life. We continually (daily) battle against temptations and desires (**Rom. 7:15-25**). God does not tempt anyone (**James 1:12-17**), but God does allow Satan to tempt us. Why...because this world (the 7-Day creation--this age of reconciliation...**Rom. 5:10-11**), is Satan’s domain for the time being. In Eden we chose to follow Satan, and deny God—Adam and Eve are the example—we are all banished to this earth (see the book **EDEN to EVIL** at [Target Truth Ministries.com](http://TargetTruthMinistries.com)). But, God will provide us enough strength to overcome any temptation that Satan puts in our path—if we will surrender to God and His ways (laws). It is normal to daily be burdened by our sinful nature, and to struggle against temptations. This is exactly what Jesus meant when He said that we need to pick up our cross daily (**Matt. 16:24-27**). The cross represents the curse—suffering and death. Every day we will have to carry our cross and deny our temptations (curses in life), and suffer through to the day we die.

For those who do not believe in God, and who do not accept God’s law, they also suffer each day, but regard their suffering as persecution brought on by someone else. For the unbeliever, God becomes the problem, not the answer. This is Satan’s plan, to blame God. But, we know we are only living the life we asked for, and this is because in Eden we defied God, followed Satan, and we brought on this death ourselves (**Rom. 5:12**). This flesh existence is a gift for the purpose of being restored and reconciled back into God’s kingdom for those who trust in Jesus—we have to be born of flesh...then be “born again” (**John 3:1-7**). We all face curses, and then face death in this world. What truly is amazing is that God loves us enough to suffer a very painful death Himself, in order to save some of us—all those who will trust in Jesus.

So, how freaky would you describe yourself? I’m fairly freaky myself. I’m a sinner, now saved and on a path to eternal life with Jesus. I’ve got a variety of curses in this life. The freakier a person is, the bigger the cross a person must carry—every day. We all, saved or unsaved, have a cross to bear. We will all suffer and die. What Jesus requires of us, is that if someone’s cross is heavier than yours, that we should help that person bear that burden—every day (**Matt. 7:12**). That is what love is—bearing each other’s burdens, just as Jesus bears ours. Jesus does not remove the cross from us in this life—but, He makes the load easier to carry, because He bears it with us. And, He removes it from His followers entirely at death (**Matt. 5:1-12; 2 Corin. 5:21**). So, in conclusion, fellow freaks...take up your cross...and lend a hand!