

“Let No One Deceive You With Empty Words.”

Ephesians 5:6-21

I grew up hearing over and over again that we only use about 10% of our brain. It was put forth as empirical truth – unchallenged in any conversation. I now know that this is not true. Brain scans show that we use all parts of the brain God gave us. We don't use them to the fullness of what He intended. We don't use them to the fullness of His glory. Our minds lead us to do foolish and unfruitful things. But those who say we only use 10% of our brain are simply not speaking the truth.

It seems there is no limit to the number of old wives tales, urban myths, historical inaccuracies, and pseudo-science that repeatedly are put forth as empirical truth – cannot be challenged.

I grew up hearing that most people in the days of Christopher Columbus believed that the world was flat and he set out to prove that the world was not flat. It was put forth as empirical truth – unchallenged in any conversation. I now know that this is not true.

In 1828, American writer Washington Irving (author of Rip Van Winkle and the Legend of Sleepy Hollow) published a book entitled *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*. It was a mixture of fact and fiction, and it was intentionally unfriendly to the Christian Church. Its theme was the victory of a lone believer in a round Earth (Christopher Columbus) over a united front of Bible-quoting, superstitious ignorant

people connected to the Church who were convinced that the Earth was **flat**.

In fact, the well-known documented argument that actually took place was not concerning a flat earth versus a round earth. The argument was about the distance between Europe and Japan which Columbus presented. Their debate had nothing to do with the shape of the Earth. And, by the way, the “ignorant representatives of the church” were correct in their assumption of the distance of the circumference of the earth. Christopher Columbus was wrong, and he would have run out of supplies if the Americas had not appeared where he expected to find Japan or India.

The story was told and retold as if it were an historical account. In 1834, an anti-Christian writer, Letronne, falsely claimed that most of the Church Fathers, including St. Augustine, St. Ambrose and Basil the Great, held to a flat Earth. His work has been repeatedly cited as ‘reputable’ ever since. In fact, not only did the church not promote the flat Earth, it is clear from such passages as Isaiah 40:22 that the Bible implies the Earth is round. Look it up. Seek out the truth.

In the late nineteenth century, the writings of John William Draper and Andrew Dickson White were responsible for promoting the myth that the church taught a flat Earth. Both had Christian backgrounds, but rejected Christ early in life. Draper’s work, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (1874), was directed particularly against the Roman Church, and was a best seller. Meanwhile White (who founded Cornell

University as the first explicitly secular university in the United States), published the two-volume “scholarly” work *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, in 1896. Both men incorrectly portrayed a continuing battle through the Christian era between the defenders of ignorance (the Christians) and the enlightened rationalists (the scientists).

“Let no one deceive you with empty words.” Keep in mind that Satan is the father of lies. Those who side with him and oppose God have no problem telling you a lie. And history shows that if you tell a lie often enough, many people will start to believe it. It is why advertisers and politicians will repeat their talking points over and over again.

We live in a deceitful world that wants you to view history and science and archaeology and all things that are “cool” as being over here. And opposed to that, over here, is the Bible and Christ and His Church. These people are liars and fabricators of stories. Their lies are intentional. These are the “sons of disobedience” on whom the wrath of God will come.

This past year, I witnessed first-hand how deeply this was engrained in our children. A young girl asked me if it was OK to believe that there were dinosaurs – as if believing in dinosaurs meant you did not believe the Bible. So I told her, the Bible talks about dinosaurs – Job 40:15ff. The “behemoth” described sounds a lot like a brachiosaurus to me. Look it up. Seek out the truth. “Let no one deceive you with empty words.”

The reason that young girl was afraid to consider dinosaurs was that she has been told over and over again that dinosaurs lived millions of

years ago, contrary to what the Bible says. It has been put forth as empirical truth – unchallenged in any conversation at school or on television. The shows on the “History” channel say that scientists have clearly demonstrated that life evolved over millions of years. Pseudo-science is put forth as empirical truth.

School is starting soon. It is time for our children to turn on their brains once again. Make sure you use more than 10%. Use them to His glory. And when you encounter “hard sayings” like we heard in our Gospel reading; when you are confronted with the Word of God that seems to not coincide with what you think you know; seek out the truth. Look it up. Martin Luther encouraged his students to wrestle with the Word of God.

We are called to ponder much deeper mysteries than the shape of the earth or even how the earth was made. The Son of God came down to earth to take away the guilt of your sin, to defeat death, to make you righteous in the eyes of God, to make you the temple of His Holy Spirit, to feed you with His body and His blood.

We live in a deceitful world that wants you to view history and science and archaeology and all things that are “cool” as being over here. The Bible is history. The Bible is a great guide to explain that which science cannot explain. The Bible is upheld in the archaeological record all throughout the ancient near east. To see how He has put all this together so that you and I can stand before Him as a true child of God is the coolest thing you will ever be privileged to hear. “Let no one deceive you with empty words.” Amen.