

## **Deconstruction**

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Today, many people are deconstructing their faith. Young people or people in mid-life gravitate towards deconstruction. Deconstruction is defined as “a method of critical analysis of philosophical and literary language which emphasizes the internal workings of language and conceptual systems, the relational quality of meaning, and the assumptions implicit in forms of expression” (Google).

While this is a technical definition, deconstruction is about critically analyzing our systems of belief. There is nothing wrong with understanding our beliefs. Deconstruction is a popular way of explaining why a person may reject faith, organized religion, and traditional morality. This process typically validates a predetermined outcome by the participant. The person is often dissatisfied with faith as they begin deconstruction. He or she realizes their beliefs are based in family traditions.

### **Jesus Promotes Critical Thinking**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened” (Matt. 7:7-8). Jesus wants us to diligently seek the truth. On another occasion, Jesus told those critical of Him to search the Scriptures. The Scriptures testified of Him (John 5:39). Jesus wants us to be objective and informed.

Young people in their late teens and early twenties are at a point in life when they are just beginning to seek. Sadly, many have concluded their beliefs about God, religion, and or morality are based on the beliefs of their parents. Therefore, they conclude they will reject these beliefs and form views of their own.

If our faith is based on our parents’ faith, our faith will not survive. Our parents’ faith, as strong as it may have been, is not a firm enough foundation. If we conclude our faith is based on our parents’ faith, instead of rejecting God, we would be wise to ask several questions. Why did our parents teach us to believe in God? Why did our parents bring us to worship? Why did our parents teach us Biblical morality? Answers to these and other related questions will lead us to the Gospel.

### **The Gospel Builds Faith**

What is the Gospel? Some who are beginning to reject faith may struggle to accurately answer this question. Many think the Gospel is good advice. This mistaken understanding has led some to view the Gospel as being outdated; belief in God is unenlightened; worshipping what we cannot observe scientifically is silly; Biblical morality is unfashionable.

The Gospel is not advice. The Gospel is news. News is the facts of an event. Christianity is based on a historic event that involved real people. The Gospel is about Jesus of Nazareth fulfilling historic prophecies, dying a sacrificial death for the sins of the world, and being raised from the dead. The first people to break this news were eyewitnesses of the person, Jesus, and the events surrounding Him. In the New Testament, these eyewitnesses gave testimony concerning what they saw. Whenever the Gospel was communicated, the eyewitness testimony concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus was cited as the reason listeners needed to believe the Gospel.

In first Corinthians chapter fifteen, the apostle Paul restated the Gospel that he taught in Corinth. This text is the earliest recording of the Gospel. Paul wrote, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me” (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

The Gospel was not invented by Paul. He stated that he gave the Corinthians what he had been given. In his letter to the churches in Galatia, Paul cites events surrounding his early days as an apostle (Gal. 1:15-2:10). Paul was an eyewitness to the resurrected Jesus. What Paul witnessed was validated by Peter and James, other eyewitnesses. Therefore, Paul concluded that the Gospel he believed and had been teaching was true. Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah and He had been raised from the dead.

The apostle John also affirmed that he was an eye-witness to Jesus: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3).

These two Biblical examples demonstrate that the Gospel is fact-based. This is why Paul and John were able to convince people to believe the Gospel. Of course, we are not eyewitnesses. Instead, we must analyze the evidence of the eyewitnesses. We take the evidence and make an informed decision. We decide to believe the evidence or reject the evidence.

## **Conclusion**

Before rejecting belief in God, examine the Gospel. The events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus are the means by which God made Jesus King of Heaven and earth. This is how God denounced sin and death and offered(s) forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We cannot deconstruct facts into oblivion.

The popularity of deconstruction may stem from foundationless faith. If our beliefs are based on a family tradition, we should be dissatisfied. Rather than rejecting God; however, we must give critical analysis to the evidence of the Gospel. This is how a foundation of faith can be laid. Once we have a Gospel foundation, we can begin to build on it. We will become settled and unmovable (1 Cor. 15:58).