



Escaping the Darkness of Religious Light, Vol 1 (Volume 1)

Dr Kim M Clark

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“Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. That is, until I discovered that he isn’t,” Clark recalls. “As a child, I believed what I was taught if for no other reason than I was taught to believe.” Today there are millions of Latter-day Saints and billions of Christians and Muslims holding to that which evidence repudiates and reason and logic eschews; namely, quixotic dogmas and religious narratives that are largely primitive in both content and tenor. Those resigned to worshiping the biblical Jesus must understand that the religious narrative they celebrate is likely to be the sum of a collaborative and infertile campaign championed by myth-making confabulators. Gospel writers never needed a historical Jesus – what they required was an identity that was certain to perform on demand. In Jesus of Nazareth, Christians have found their hero. With disciplined and scholarly erudition, Clark demonstrates convincingly that the biblical Jesus – like all other Mythic Hero Archetypes before him – is cut from the same piece of fabulous cloth. And with little wonder, Clark insists: There is no God, and Jesus is his son. The inveterate and rehearsed claim that Life is supervised by a grand designer who creates with a sense of purpose and urgency is an old saw that spans millennia. For many (most?) believers, God is the friend who helps get them through the day. He’s said to be omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent – the consummate agent with an unequalled CV. But Abraham’s god has a dark and nefarious side that is not always obvious; unless, of course, you’ve read the Bible. He’s demanding, warmongering, vengeful, and a cruel taskmaster who rules by instilling fear into the hearts and souls of those foolish enough to doubt or challenge his greatness and power. Infidels and the insubordinate nonelites are doomed to endure everlasting horrors and unimaginable brutalities. Make no mistake, the god of the Old Testament is a maniacal bully. It’s time to abandon the big god of small minds. Our beliefs should reflect what is found in the data. What self-respecting person would knowingly hold to what evidence has repudiated – because that is what their parents or leaders assured them was true? Subordinates should never be required to echo what their leaders think and say – especially so when the requirement evokes a state of cognitive dissonance (or, as Clark says: “a state of intellectual dysrhythmia”). Instructing a child what to think is not an education, it’s an oppressive incarceration. Clark’s criticism of religion begins with its departure from rational thought and empirical reality, that so much of religion’s checkered history includes romantic philosophies and miscued harangues that are born outside the pure light of reason. The scientific method does not lend itself to testing the untestable or the metaphysical. Religious dogma is immune to empirical review or repair and is, instead, cloistered behind the opaque and scandalous veil of faith – that which calls for the intentional suspension of critical thinking. But why would any self-respecting person agree to suspend thinking or desist in asking critical questions – because that is what priesthood authority instructed? Where is the celebration in a belief, doctrine, or principle that has survived only because no one was allowed to examine or challenge the particulars? Only when a claim has the necessary corroborative support; only when the theory withstands the rigors of independent testing and merciless scrutiny is it accepted. But in the world of science, nothing is grandfathered. Our acceptance of a theory is forever provisional. Throughout Clark’s instructive tome is found a plethora of arguments why religious dogma is to be abjured and mistrusted (not heralded), and why the scientific method is man’s best hope and tool for achieving an intellectually buoyant state.

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