

**The Inscrutable Question: Falwell-O'Reilly Interview; Escrow Blessing; The Bible is God's Guaranteed Revelation of Himself, 2 Peter 1:19**

The Reverend Jerry Falwell, interview by Bill O'Reilly, 30 Nov. 2001, "The O'Reilly Factor," Fox News Channel, New York, NY:

- Bill O'Reilly: I'm Bill O'Reilly. In the "Personal Story" segment tonight: the controversial cleric, Reverend Jerry Falwell. Is the fallout over his remarks concerning that God may have punished the USA for our permissive society over? Mr. Falwell joins us now from Lynchburg, Virginia.
- Jerry Falwell: Well, the answer is because I didn't state what I meant to state. It's a long and very profound thing when you are talking judgment because the sleeping church, 2 Chronicles 7:14 says, "If My people" and that's me and I didn't put myself and the church in the fact that our spiritual underbelly was exposed. But no one is to blame but the terrorists and clearly they are getting their recompense for that.
- B.O.: Now Islam. We've had a lot of imams on here and all that but there's something about Islam that troubles me in the sense that there seems to be—and there is this in the Old Testament as well—a violent undercurrent to many of the passages in the Old Testament and in the Quran, not so much in the New Testament. Do you see Islam as a religion that is peaceful?
- J.F.: I have to be honest and tell you I've never read the Quran and so for me to comment on what I don't know would be wrong. Clearly there have been some clerics who have commented on what they say is in the Quran about, for example, about a man keeping a whip in his house to beat his wife when necessary and the putdown of women; a verse—I don't know what the location is—but allegedly encourages the killing of the infidels, that is, Christians and Jews that gives me pause but blaming all Muslims for Osama bin Laden is like blaming all Evangelicals for those who bomb abortion clinics.
- B.O.: I don't think anybody's blaming the Muslims but it's a tone. Look! And it's similar to the tone of some fundamentalist Christians. There are some Christians around the world who believe that unless you accept Jesus Christ that you can't go to heaven. So all the Jews, all the Muslims, all the Hindus, all the Buddhists, they're toast! They ain't going! All right? It's an exclusionary faith. Unless you think or believe that Jesus is the Savior, you're not going to Paradise. Now, in the Islam religion there is a strain of that as well. If you're not with us, you're an infidel. You see the two parallels?
- J.F.: I do, but the difference is Christianity doesn't encourage killing the infidels, it encourages them to evangelize them into Jesus Christ.
- B.O.: But do you believe that unless you accept Jesus you're not getting in?
- J.F.: Bill, I believe outright that as an evangelical Christian ... there is a God in heaven who had a Son named Jesus Christ who died for the sins of the world, mine included, and I was born again in January '52. And I believe John 14:6. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, the life; no one cometh to the Father but by Me." But I don't believe that's vindictive or in any way bigoted. I believe that's all inclusive and that's why I've spent fifty years sharing that gospel with the world.
- B.O.: All right then. If I'm a Jewish guy and I don't believe that Jesus is God, can I go to heaven?
- J.F.: I don't believe anyone can go to heaven—Gentile, Jew, black, white, red, yellow, whatever—without knowing Christ as Savior and that's what your Catholic church basically doctrinally preaches.
- B.O.: No-no! No-no! No, no, no, no! No-no! No, no, no, no! They don't. They got a little loophole here.



- J.F.: What's that loophole, Bill?
- B.O.: And here's the loophole—if you want to hear it, it's very interesting and I believe this to be true—the Catholic theologians, not all of them but the one's I respect, say that if you lead a life that mirrors the life of Jesus in the sense that you love God, whatever God, above all things, and you treat your neighbor as yourself, that's enough to get you into heaven or into Paradise, whatever you want to call it, because that's Jesus' philosophy. So maybe you don't acknowledge that Jesus is God but by living the way that He did that's enough to get you there. And I believe that.
- J.F.: You'll never get Pope John-Paul II to amen that and you won't get Billy Graham to amen that.
- B.O.: Maybe I won't but I think that's an inclusionary religion and that's a religion for all mankind.
- J.F.: Hey, I admire and respect your point of view and there's nobody I admire any more in television than Bill O'Reilly and nobody sends more people to watch you because I like what you're doing, but you're wrong on that.
- B.O.: All right. But I'd rather be wrong and inclusionary than exclude—see I know some very, very, very good Jews and Buddhists, and I can't imagine that an all-just God would ever not accept them into wherever that God is.
- J.F.: God is not willing that any should perish. God loves everybody alike ...
- B.O.: That's right! And I can't imagine that that God would exclude anybody because they don't have the gift of faith.
- J.F.: But God has provided only one plan of salvation.
- B.O.: You know, faith is a gift and not everybody has it, Reverend. And I know some great Muslims and I expect to see them there—I probably won't be there—but anyway, you know what I'm talking about. My last question is this: that you are a man who comes across as compassionate but who is very rigid in his beliefs and I see that in the Islamic world as well. Will there ever be a meeting of the minds?
- J.F.: I think this: I, as a minister of the gospel, can honestly sit here and say there is not a soul in this world that I don't love with God's love. That doesn't mean that I agree with everyone and particularly on theological matters. I happen to have been a great friend of John O'Connor's in New York and John and I have done much work together. Both of us happen to believe that Christ is the only way to heaven but at the same time we work—and so does Dr. Graham, and so do millions of other born-again believers—with everybody in the world lovingly, but sharing that saving gospel of Christ as the only way ...
- B.O.: All right, Reverend. Always good to see you. We appreciate your point of view.
- 29) Not only this, the true humanity of Jesus Christ, after completing His assigned task in the Incarnation, was crowned with glory and honor at His Session and was worthy of worship by the angels.
- 30) Just as the angels were given special clothing in commemoration of their advance so also the winner believer has special clothing included in his package of escrow blessings.
- 31) The Aaronic priesthood in the Age of Israel was required to wear certain vestments in the performance of their duties. The mature believer-priest of the Church Age is granted as a reward special clothing for all eternity.



- 32) And the manner by which these Church Age rewards are acquired is by means of spiritual growth.
- 33) The Word of God has more validity to the soul of the Church Age believer in discerning the content of divine thought than if the believer was allowed to be an eyewitness to the transfiguration of Christ.

34) This is the point that Peter is making in:

2 Peter 1:19 - [NASB] And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

- 35) The emphatic point that Peter is making occurs in verse 19. He has demonstrated that he and his fellow apostles were eyewitnesses to an event that gave them the highest level of sensory perception about the resurrected glory of Messiah.
- 36) He uses the vocabulary of the Eleusinian mysteries to drive home the point that they witnessed the eternal Logos, not a cleverly devised *muthos*. They experienced *epoptes*, an advanced level of consciousness about the Logos that no one else knew at the time it occurred.
- 37) This being a fact, Peter then makes his point: “What I saw on that mountain with my own eyes is not as certain a report about the Messiahship of Jesus as is the written Word of God.” The words “more sure” translate the Greek adjective:

βέβαιος / *bebaios* /- “solid, durable, sure, valid, guaranteed”

- 38) Peter uses a word whose definition goes back to the Attic Greek and by doing so affirms that the Scripture’s revelation of the Lord’s resurrected glory is a far more reliable guarantee than that of eyewitnesses. Details are provided by:

Spicq, Ceslas. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 1. Translated and edited by James D. Ernest. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 280-81:

Bebaios—“that on which one can walk,” hence “solid, firm, durable, sure, certain.” It often modifies [**λόγος**] *logos*: an utterance that is well-founded, authorized, and thus convincing. **Βέβαιος / *bebaios*** / is therefore often associated with **πιστός / *pistos*** / [“faith”] and **ἀληθής / *alethes*** / [“truth”].

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 138:

(The noun) **βεβαίωσις / *bebaiosis*** / is a “legal technical term for guaranteeing, furnishing security.”

- 39) Further clarification is provided by:

Deissmann, G. Adolf. *Bible Studies*. Translated by Alexander Grieve. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 104:



Βεβαίωσις / *bebaiosis* / “The seller was required, in general, to deliver to the buyer the thing sold *without dispute*, and had to accept the responsibility if claims should be raised to the thing by others. If the buyer, however, had obtained from the seller the promise of guarantee, he could, if claims to the thing were subsequently raised by others, go back upon the seller and summon him to confirm that he (the buyer) had bought from him (the seller) the thing now claimed. If the seller refused to do this, then the buyer could bring against him an action (called) **βεβαιώσεως / *bebaioseos* /** In the language of the Attic (legal) process, **Βεβαίωσις / *bebaiosis* /** thus received the technical meaning of a definite obligation of the seller: the seller did not only make over the thing to the buyer, but assumed the *guarantee* to *defend the validity* of the sale against any possible claims of a third party.

A sale **εἰς βεβαίωσιν / *eis bebaiosin* /** is a *definitive, legally guaranteed* sale.

... in Attic jurisprudence: *guarantee in regard to a sale*; it is still a technical expression for a *legal guarantee*.

By our taking *confirm* and *sure* in the sense of *legally guaranteed security*, the statements in which they occur gain in decisiveness and force.

- 40) Peter exhorts his readers to compare the prophetic word of the Old Testament with his eyewitness account at the transfiguration. The “prophetic word” was represented on the mountain by Moses whose ministry was the Law which revealed the Messiah through ritual. Elijah’s ministry represents the prophets who revealed the Messiah through prophetic writings.
- 41) Of the two, the writings of the Old Testament must be considered by them to be of more value than Peter’s eyewitness testimony.