

## A Sermon on Reasonable Explanations

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for October 22nd, 2023 (and beyond)

This sermon is in part inspired by the Book of Revelation written by John of Ephesus in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Matthew 5:45, and Matthew 7:12. The Holy Bible is nothing more than a makeshift historical record of events that have already transpired, been passed down through many generations through oral histories, and recorded for posterity. It is not a prognostication and should not be treated as such.

The Book of Revelation describes many natural phenomena as supernaturally motivated at a time when over 80% of the human population couldn't read. Animal rain is real and sometimes fish, frogs, and other animals do fall from the sky. Sources: <https://earthsky.org/earth/raining-fish-and-frogs/> and <https://time.com/28894/animals-have-actually-rained-from-the-sky/> Toxic algal blooms also known as HABs turn the water red which some refer to as a red tide. Source: <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/redtide.html> The toxic algae does kill surrounding sea life such as fish. In 536 AD there was a huge volcanic eruption in Iceland that left most of Europe and parts of the middle and far east in total darkness for 18 months because the ash pollution and resulting climate change blotted out the sun making it look no brighter than the moon for 18 months. Source: <https://www.science.org/content/article/why-536-was-worst-year-be-alive> John of Ephesus was 29 years old when the volcano erupted.

Matthew 5:45 is a way of saying that all of the aforementioned natural phenomena happen to everyone and shouldn't be taken personally or as an act of divine retribution. I often wonder how ignorant, evil or deviant people are who insist that other people's suffering is their own karma or just deserts rather than having or showing compassion. Such people at times appear to be very superstitious and potentially very guilty since they seem to wish to avoid the ill and injured or blame them where the afflicted aren't at fault. I imagine they have only suffered as a result of punishment and at no other time when they hold such a position. If my only suffering was a result of punishment for errors of judgment on my part, I might assume the same goes for everyone else. But, that's not my experience and I'm not that myopic.

Matthew 7:12 is the golden rule and Jesus says we are to treat others the way we wish to be treated if roles were reversed to avoid hypocrisy. The 536 AD volcanic eruption was accompanied by a plague and came after human sacrifice was outlawed. It makes sense under the circumstances, with so many illiterate and so little accumulated knowledge at the time, that people may go overboard with regulation in hopes to appease any deities angry enough to make the earth erupt with fire and brimstone followed by 18 months of night. But, that volcanic eruption wasn't a result of human error or any lack of faith even if some capitalized on the terror of it going forward while taking it out of context and calling it a prediction rather than a historical account. And, if you pray for a loaves and fishes miracle and then fish fall from the sky, that's also a coincidence with a reasonable explanation.

For argument's sake, it does seem the second coming was in 536 AD, according to scripture and additional historical records/archaeological evidence, if one is to take the Book of Revelation literally. So, Leslie Weatherhead and others may be on point when embracing the idea of reincarnation. That being said, it is up to everyone to commit to truth and virtue for the sake of peaceful coexistence regardless of storefront or cultural influences. Do you regret missing 536 AD or were you there? 18 months of moonlight, a pandemic of the plague, food scarcity because of lack of sunlight, illiteracy, and superstition brought on the Dark Ages. It's a free country here in the USA, believe what you want and know the rest.

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There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.