

**Lyceum 140 – March 26, 2026**, a forum to Think, Discuss, Share, and Learn from one another. Your input is welcomed - Iron sharpens iron.

Neighborhood “The 1826, in Connecticut, a farmer named Josiah Holbrook started a school for ‘the general diffusion of knowledge and raising the moral and intellectual taste’ of Americans. In those days, the opportunities for higher education were limited to those venerable old universities that had long served the upper crust. Holbrook’s vision was to make learning – practical, liberal, and humane – available to working people of all kinds. He named his school the Lyceum, after the garden where Aristotle once taught his students philosophy.... We need to go deeper than the superficial fights that characterize public life. We need to return to the first principles and meet each other there as human beings.”– Nathan Beacom, Plough Magazine, Autumn 2023, p. 9.

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**Debunking common misconceptions about the Bible that we may have grown to live by in grade school and beyond.**

There are many common myths and misconceptions about the Bible that people readily believe. For example, did you think that one pair of each animal boarded Noah’s Ark, or that Satan was the ruler of hell? In fact, a lot of these ideas have come from misrepresentations in art and literature that have seeped into pop culture and folklore as thousands of years have gone by.

The misconceptions about the bible were gleaned from multiple sources from the Internet under common misconceptions about the bible. It was a fascinating, and at times a humorous search through the annals of biblical history. -Roger J. Vanden Busch

1. Adam and Eve ate an apple.

Many people believe Adam and Eve ate an apple in the Garden of Eden; however, the Bible never actually names the fruit. Genesis simply calls it “the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

2. The serpent is Satan.

**Originally, the Bible used the serpent in Eden as a symbol of deception and cunning. In Genesis, the tempter is only called “the serpent.” The identification of the serpent with the devil came later through interpretation and the New Testament.**

**3. Jesus was born in a stable.**

**Many nativity scenes show Jesus being born in a wooden stable. However, the Bible never mentions a stable at all. In Luke, it simply says that Mary laid Jesus in a manger, which is a feeding trough, and implies it was a stable.**

**4. The animals went two by two.**

**Most people picture every animal entering Noah’s Ark in pairs. However, in Genesis, it says that “seven pairs” of clean animals and birds, and “one pair” of unclean animals, entered the ark at the same time.**

**5. There are only ten commandments.**

**Many people assume that the Ten Commandments are the entirety of God’s law in the Bible, but they are just a small portion of the laws within the Bible, which contains over six hundred commandments.**

**6. The immaculate conception.**

**Many think the “Immaculate Conception” refers to Jesus’s miraculous conception, but it refers to Mary being conceived without original sin. The confusion comes from mixing up “Virgin Birth” with “Immaculate Conception.” There are two different ideas.**

**7. Three kings visited Jesus.**

**Illustrations of the manger scene usually show kings visiting baby Jesus, but the Bible never says that they were kings. In fact, it says, “wise men from the east,” and they were more likely scholars or astrologers, not royal rulers.**

**8. The wise men visited the manger.**

**There’s also no actual evidence that they were at the Nativity at all. The shepherds came on the night of Jesus’ birth, but Matthew says the wise men visited “a house” later, and Jesus may have been a toddler by then.**

**9. Moses parted the Red Sea.**

**A common misconception is that Moses parted the Red Sea. However, the original text refers to a body of water which translates to “Sea of Reeds.” This suggests that the event may have occurred in a shallow lake.**

**10. Mary Magdalene was a prostitute.**

**Mary Magdalene has long been portrayed as a repentant prostitute, but the Bible never labels her that way. The confusion came from medieval sermons that merged her with other female figures in the Bible. While there were “women of questionable professions” in the gospels who encountered Jesus and followed Him, the Bible never names Mary Magdalene as one of them.**

**Mary Magdalene is referenced many times; one such chapter is in Luke 8, where her name appears among women who financially supported Jesus’ ministry, and the scripture mentions demons were driven from her.**

**This misconception was implied in 591 during Pope Gregory’s Easter sermon and spread from there due to Mary Magdalene’s name being listed in Scripture as an unnamed “sinful woman,” implying the sin of this nameless woman to be promiscuous.**

**11. Constantine formed the Bible.**

**Many think Emperor Constantine decided which books went into the Bible at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. In truth, the collection of books was formed gradually over centuries, and Constantine’s influence was political, not scriptural.**

**12. Jesus had long hair.**

**Artistic depictions of Jesus often show him with flowing hair and European features, but the Bible gives no physical description of him at all. The long-haired image of Jesus became popular through medieval and Renaissance art.**

**13. The Bible has changed over time.**

**Some claim the Bible has been heavily altered to serve politics or religion. However, thousands of ancient manuscripts confirm the consistency of core teachings, and most variations are minor spelling or grammatical differences.**

**15. The Bible is a single, unified book.**

**The Bible wasn't written by one person at one time. It's a library of about sixty-six books written over 1,000 years by many authors, and its styles range from history and poetry to prophecy and letters.**

**16. Money is the root of all evil.**

**The Bible never actually says money itself is evil. In Timothy, it says, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." So, it warns against greed and misplaced priorities, not wealth itself.**

**17. The Bible forbids alcohol.**

**It's often claimed that the Bible condemns all use of alcohol, but this isn't accurate. Scripture warns strongly against drunkenness and addiction, yet it also portrays wine positively as a symbol of blessings and celebration.**

**18. Jesus was born on December 25.**

**The Bible never gives a date for Jesus's birth. December 25 was chosen centuries later to align with Roman festivals. However, shepherds watching their flocks suggest he was born in a warmer season.**

**19. The New Testament replaces the Old.**

**Some think the New Testament replaces the Old Testament, but Jesus said, "He came to fulfill the Law" (Matthew 5:17), not to abolish it. So, the New Testament builds on the foundation of earlier promises.**

**20. The Bible is a rulebook.**

**The Bible isn't just a list of laws; it's also a book of history, poetry, letters, and prophecy. It tells a story about people and God, not just commandments. So, its purpose doesn't solely lie in regulation but emphasizes the spirit of the law.**

**21. Satan rules hell. Many people imagine Satan as the ruler of hell. This idea, however, comes more from medieval art, literature, and pop culture. Scripture portrays Satan not as a ruler of hell, but as one who will be punished there.**

**22. Doubt is forbidden.**

**Some think faith means never questioning God. However, Scripture includes doubters like Thomas, Job, and David to show that questioning often leads to deeper faith and that honest struggle is a part of belief.**

**23. There are seven deadly sins.**

**The famous “seven deadly sins” of pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth isn’t found in scripture as a single list. Early Christian theologians developed it, and while the Bible discusses those sins, they are not grouped in this way.**

**24. Faith provides immunity.**

**Some think that believing in God prevents hardship, but the Bible shows the opposite. Prophets, apostles, and even Jesus suffered, showing that faith gives the strength to endure trials, not immunity from them.**

**25. The Bible was written in English.**

**The Old Testament was in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek. English translations of the bible didn’t come until much later, when the King James Version appeared in 1611.**

**26. All angels have wings.**

**Angels are often shown with feathered wings and halos, but most biblical angels appear as ordinary people. The “winged angel” image developed from artistic symbolism meant to represent their swiftness in conducting God’s will.**

**27. The angels sang at Jesus’ birth.**

**Popular carols and holiday imagery often depict angels singing at the birth of Jesus. Yet, in Luke, the angels do not sing but rather say, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.”**

**28. A whale swallowed Jonah.**

**The story of Jonah is often retold as “Jonah and the whale,” but the Bible never actually says that a whale swallowed him. The original text in Jonah refers to “a great fish,” and does not specify what kind of sea creature it was.**

**29. Genesis is modern science.**

**Many readers assume Genesis is meant as a scientific report. In truth, it’s a theological narrative about creation’s meaning, not its mechanism. So, its purpose is to show who created the Earth, we are stewards of the earth, as opposed to how they created it.**

**30. Tattoos are not a sin, and getting a tattoo is not sinful. The only verse where tattoos are prohibited in the Bible (Leviticus 19:28) was written for the Israelites only and referenced a pagan ritual that was in worship of a false god. No Bible verses about tattoos state that tattoos are a sin for Christians today.**

**Some might argue that 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 implies that Christians shouldn't get tattoos, as our bodies should highlight the glory of God. "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies."**

**However, this passage about our bodies as God's temple isn't about tattoos at all. In this section, Paul is talking about sexual immorality and honoring God with your body – not body modification.**

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### **Quotations to Help You Find Strength in Challenging Times**

**1. "The only way to do great work is to love what you do." – Steve Jobs.**

**Finding passion in your work can transform mundane tasks into fulfilling endeavors. When you love what you do, every challenge becomes an opportunity for growth.**

**2. "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." – C.S. Lewis.**

**Age should never limit your aspirations. Embracing new goals at any stage of life can invigorate your spirit and open doors to exciting possibilities.**

**3. "What lies behind us & what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." – Ralph Waldo Emerson.**

**Your inner strength is far more significant than past failures or future worries. Tapping into that strength can empower you to overcome any obstacle.**

**4. "Believe you can & you're halfway there." – Theodore Roosevelt.**

**Self-belief is a powerful catalyst for success. By believing in yourself, you've already taken the first crucial step toward achieving your dreams.**

**5. "In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity." – Albert Einstein.**

**Difficulties often conceal hidden opportunities for growth and learning. Embracing challenges can lead to unexpected paths and valuable insights.**

**6. “Keep your face always toward the sunshine—and shadows will fall behind you.” – Walt Whitman.**

**Focusing on the positive aspects of life can help diminish negativity. By seeking out the light, you’ll find it easier to navigate through dark times.**

**7. “The best way to predict the future is to create it.” – Peter Drucker.**

**Taking proactive steps toward your goals empowers you to shape your own destiny. Your actions today lay the groundwork for tomorrow’s successes.**

**8. “Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.” – Winston S. Churchill.**

**Both success and failure are transient states; what truly matters is your perseverance. Embracing courage allows you to keep moving forward despite setbacks.**

**9. “You must do the things you think you cannot do.” – Eleanor Roosevelt.**

**Challenging yourself to step outside your comfort zone fosters growth and resilience. Every time you face a fear, you expand your capabilities.**

**10. “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” – Eleanor Roosevelt.**

**Dreams fuel ambition and innovation. Believing in their beauty inspires action and motivates you to pursue them relentlessly.**