

Ralph Gower's Frequent Insults at God

SHORT ARTICLE

I picked up this book "The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times" at the recommendation of John MacArthur in California thinking to get a head-start on Old and New Testament history based on what is available in archeology and knowledge of Jewish tradition to verify and explain the Scriptures. I love hearing Jewish history from the Scriptures and from Bible teachers who know and love the Jewish people. I have listened to MacArthur's sermons for more than a dozen years when I was a teen and later. MacArthur's other recommendation was Alfred Edersheim, so I got four of his books also. By the time I had gotten sixty pages into this book, it was clear that this author was going to try to make the Jewish people sound like they are Muslim/Arabic. It's not a problem to find similarities between opposing peoples as long as it is done honestly and for correction to both groups with gentleness. But this book was irritatingly dishonest, so I put it down at that point. The more I thought about seminary students being told to read this stuff, I felt like someone should do a thorough critique of these lies for sake of reference and to reverse the honorable recommendation of the book by seminary directors. When I picked up studying this book again, it got worse as Gower regularly makes lies to suggest that the Jewish people evolved slower than all other peoples, which also insults a majority of the rest of the people around the world. In other words, I am saying that Gower intentionally wrote a book of anti-Jewish lies which he apparently feels is an equal response to God's correction of the evils he prefers for society. I didn't do a really great response like some scholar no doubt could. But I have spent almost twenty years studying the Scriptures and trying to understand how it fits with real life. So I've got a good sense of the truth from tons of sermons, lots of discussions with brothers and sisters in the Lord, and plenty of time spent pondering mysteries and history and current events.

I think that anyone who wants a scholarly reply to Gower will be very disappointed. But I hope that someone who is being told to read this book and who loves the truth and loves the Jewish people will be able to use this report as a basis to refuse to study this garbage. Or if they still have to read the book, I hope that their faith will at least be fortified by being able to refute this garbage. I really want to get this removed from seminaries and bible colleges. I found three sources besides the one that I originally had, where MacArthur has recommended Gower for Jewish culture study and even just for enjoying study of the Scriptures. That really bothers me, because either MacArthur went based on someone's advice whom he should not have (in which case it seems that he would not have recommended it so many times without checking it first), or he actually wants students to run into this garbage. Gower was a travel tour guide in Israel as you discover in the book, but I would hope he wasn't doing this for very long. I would like to know who he was giving tours for. This book has always been published by Moody Press associated with Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. They have also put his book in collection with Merrill F Unger's Bible Handbook and Bible Dictionary, and Moody Atlas of Bible Lands for The Essential Bible Reference Library by Unger, Hillyer, Dowley, and Gower. David Jeremiah's Southern California Seminary (previously known as Shadow Mountain Bible Institute) also required this book for a syllabus on Bible Interpretation taught by Dr. Roy Zuck; it is now recommended only for "advanced students". The Bible Department Chair at Southern California Seminary is Dr. Gary C. Woods.

Ralph Gower originally co-wrote "The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times" with Fred H. Wight who had this to say about learning from Arab customs: "Through the centuries the Arabs have for the most part considered it to be morally wrong to change their ancient customs. For this reason the manners and customs of Bible-land Arabs are very much the same as the Jews of Bible times. There are some exceptions to this rule, and most of those have to do with religious observances."

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/OTStudies/MannersandCustomsInBibleLands1953.aspx>

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Under “Culture”, MacArthur only lists Edersheim and Ralph Gower.

<http://www.christianity.com/bible/bible-study-tips/how-to-enjoy-bible-study-11549394.html>

Pg 127 of MacArthur’s book – How to Study the Bible – recommends Edersheim and Ralph Gower for studying Jewish culture.

John MacArthur’s 2009 book – Preaching: How to Preach Biblically – in his footnotes in chapter Seven footnote #27 lists Ralph Gower’s book, then Fred Wight’s – Manners and Customs of Bible Lands – as the two primary sources.

In MacArthur’s articles in his library section of his website, in an article titled How To Enjoy Bible Study, he again recommends Edersheim and Gower.

<https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A178/how-to-enjoy-bible-study>

Here is Amazon’s short-bio about the author Ralph Gower: **RALPH GOWER** (M.E., B.D., London Bible College; Ph.D., University of Liverpool) is currently the minister of Cornerstone Baptist Church, Ainsdale, in the north west of England. He has spent most of his life in the area of Religious Education as teacher, lecturer, researcher, administrator and inspector, and has written educational material for teachers and children. He has contributed articles to various Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias and is the author of *The New Manners & Customs of Bible Times*, *Frontiers*, *Religious Education in the Junior Years*, *Religious Education in the Infant Years*, and *Life in New Testament Times*. He has been a guide and tour leader in Israel. He resides in Lancashire, England.

It appears that Ralph Gower has retired from the pastorate. I wrote my thoughts as I went along reading, but I have just now reorganized into subject categories to show streams of arguments that Gower employs throughout the length of his book. Sorry for any strange responses from me that seem too reactive, because I had more alarmed responses due the logical progression of pages full of accusations. Also Gower increased the volume and intensity of errors somewhere around page 142 through about page 300.

I have only included a few of Gower’s major accusations against God in this 10 page article to make it short enough for people to read it and pass it along. I have a full article (21 pages) as well as a thorough critique that includes my smaller responses to all of the smaller mistakes/misrepresentations I could find. Within a given page (of Gower’s book) there are usually multiple errors, which I have separated with * in my notes so you see when I move to another error in the next sentence or further on the same page of Gower’s book. This is the only way I could do this without quoting every error from the book or else releasing a notated version of the book to accompany my notes – neither of those options seemed right.

The Home-Land of Israel

Pg 41 In the “Home” paragraph, it is suggested that the Jewish people are not welcoming to Arabs. Rather it was some of the Arab people – having been convinced to do this on behalf of world-government powers – who have been extremely unwelcoming to the Jews and tried to occupy some of the territory in advance of the largest Jewish migrations back to their home in the late 1800’s – mid 1900’s. *It is quite an accusation to say that the Jewish people just don’t understand how to make a “home”, and therefore want to treat the land as their “possession”. It is their possession, given to them by God. Some Arabs do not act as guests, so they are not welcome. *But this author praises the Arabs as being more welcoming to foreigners than the Jewish people are, which is really just a subtle suggestion to the unlearned reader that the Arabs really own the land which accuses the Jewish people of stealing it. *At the conclusion of his paragraph, he is basically saying that the Jewish people do not know God, but the Arabs do. That is extremely offensive and dishonest. His paragraph reminds me of a recent speech by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry after the trickery of the U.N. 2334 Resolution.

Pg 203 So Gower is trying to make an argument that "Jerusalem would probably never have developed in importance", and he is paralleling Israel "taking" Jerusalem from Jebusites (Canaanites) with Israel "taking" Jerusalem from Palestinians. I can't see any other reason for trying to belittle Jerusalem's significance to the nation of Israel than to try to force them into submission to the Arab League. *In fact, I just realized he used the word "occupation" to suggest that Israel stole Canaanite territory and kicked out its residents, when in fact, the Jebusites built on the territory only after (based on information they received from Ishmael and Esau) they realized it was valuable to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which is also what the Jordanians and others did just before Israel started to try to become a free nation again. *To suggest that the Jewish nation was divided into two camps over Saul and David is a complete lie. Saul didn't live for 350 years after Joshua conquered the territory and the division over the two houses (Saul and David) only lasted for seven and a half years after which David and Solomon reigned for another seventy-three years in peace.

Furthermore, when David went to Jerusalem to be anointed king over all of Israel, it proves that they had possession of Jerusalem. (Gower suggests that Israel didn't own Jerusalem until David conquered it.) What they didn't have was the stronghold of Jerusalem which became known as the City of David after he reconquered it from the Jebusites. The 2 Samuel 5 record actually says that David went to live in the stronghold and named it the City of David. In case that's still confusing, if you know anything about David you know that Bethlehem is the City of David (his birthplace), which is why Mary and Joseph went there to be registered, because they were of the lineage of David as recorded in Luke 2. It was the hometown of David's grandparents Ruth and Boaz and was founded as a city by his great grandfather it seems. It is also where Jacob buried Rachel when she died. And this is the suburbs of Jerusalem. So why is Gower suggesting that Jerusalem is so unimportant to the Israelites, that they didn't even possess it, and why is he saying that David had to reconquer it?

In fact only one of the passages he references (from Judges 19) shows "Jebus" (Jerusalem) in the possession of Jebusites, but in the very same chapter it says that Bethlehem was in Israel's possession at the time, and in Judges 21:19, it explains that there was an annual feast of the Lord held there in Shiloh which is north of Bethel. To be clear on exactly how close that was to Jerusalem, 2 Kings 23:4 explains that King Josiah pulled all of the objects of Baal, Asherah, etc. out of the Temple in Jerusalem and burned it outside the city and carried it to Bethel which was the next town over. So these are all cities within close walking distance to Jerusalem. The next thing he does is burn the wooden image from the house of the Lord at the Brook Kidron as well as other things. And he clears the high place and the altar out of Bethel. If you look in your concordance or your Bible for activity in Shiloh and Bethel, you will see that most of the events around the Tabernacle and offerings and priests' work was in these cities right around Jerusalem until Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem. So even when Israel didn't own parts of Jerusalem for some of those early years, they owned much of the territory around it. You can see this also in Joshua 15:63 which explains that "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell WITH the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day." So it wasn't in Jebusite possession, but they were allowed to occupy part of it because Israel made peace with them. *Gower finishes his lies with a tiny bit of truth when he says the city name means "City of Peace" which he says is "an understanding that has remained with it ever since" after he lied again by suggesting that David reinterpreted the city to make it a spiritual city that could unite the divided halves of Israel, because "It was not enough, however, to use a neutral city as a capital."

Jesus is Not Contradicting Himself

Pg177 Gower accuses Nehemiah of doing the very thing that Jesus cleared out of the Temple – corrupt certification of animals for sacrifices to be sold to the people – when Nehemiah actually set up the system of tithing for the upkeep of the temple grounds and the daily sacrifice done for all the people and the

purification of the temple, not for trickery against the people. *He then references other mocking scholars who suggest that this is the system that got passed down to the Pharisees. *He also ascribes twelve percent as the usury that he accuses them of exacting from the people in exchange for certification. *Gower then accuses our Lord Jesus of wanting to hide the practice by chasing it away from the Temple grounds because it was not sanctified enough for visibility at God's house of prayer for all nations. *Gower specifically says that the exchange was not illegal, and refers to what Jesus had to do at the Temple as "acting out the principle of two messianic prophecies (Psalm 69:9; Malachi 3:1-4; see John 2:17)." as though Jesus was playing a drama for the sake of a show of purity at God's house.

Pg 261 There was a Judas who was a Zealot, but it was not Iscariot (as Gower wonders) because the situation happened around the time of Jesus' birth (Acts 5:37). Also Iscariot had no followers who dispersed afterward. You can clearly see that Judas intended his own gain and didn't care about the outcome. He didn't consult Jesus about it, which he would have done if he loved Jesus. *And no, that kiss was not one of affection. (A disgusting claim that Gower elaborates on pages 242-243.) *Judas did perhaps think that Jesus would be forced to set up a kingdom which would make Judas rich and powerful among both Jesus' followers and the religious rulers of the new kingdom, but that didn't work. *So then he realized that he had betrayed innocent blood and could never reap the benefits he thought he could, so he hung himself. It was not real repentance, meaning that he did not try to help Jesus deal with the false accusations or help turn the people to instead protect Jesus from the religious rulers, whom Judas knew to be corrupt. He just wasn't getting what he wanted, so he killed himself rather than be known as the traitor who turned Jesus in for greedy gain. Just look at Jesus' conversation with His disciples at the Passover table about one of them betraying Him, and it will clear that right up for anyone who is confused.

Pg 108 Gower went from weird back to accusing God. He enjoyed going straight from the joy of (implied) drunkenness to the judgment of God (the whole paragraph that starts on Page 107). Only someone who is evil like Gower could draw such a contrast so harshly in order to make God look crazy. *He also tries to suggest that bees didn't exist until Roman times or else that Jewish people did not know how to harvest the honeycomb. *The picture on this page is disgusting. *Pg 109 Gower really is trying to make it seem like they were obsessed with wine/grapes; now he is saying that the land flowing with milk and honey was actually a land flowing with milk and wine syrup. *And Gower completes this by implying that they basically never drank water, but rather drank wine all the time for health sake.

Jewish People are Not Arabs

Pg 20 It is not true to say that women and men wore identical clothes; otherwise God would not have told them to not do this. *Also the next section about Joseph's coat suggests this very transgression of wearing a woman's garment, which is weird. *There is no indication that all women other than prostitutes wore veils in public; there is no Scripture to say that or any tradition that I'm familiar with. (See also page 17 – same problems)

Pg 57-58 There is that word "sheikh" again (also on Page 29) as if to suggest that Jews are basically the same as Muslims or something. That is so wrong; this word should not be used; maybe an elder or father as the Scripture says would be a better term. But this seems intentional by repeating it like this in reference to Abraham whom Muslims claim to be the father of Islam. *As a matter of fact, there he goes promoting Abraham's immorality with Hagar which produced Ishmael, before he has said a word about Isaac. This is not right. Is Ralph Gower Arabic or Muslim? I don't understand why he is focusing on Muslim associations.

Pg 250 And now he's going to pretend to look at the Scriptures again while making up more lies. "Removing the shoes" – Obviously, God is not concerned about Moses bringing his dirty shoes on the dirty side of the mountain (it wasn't carpeted, Gower). Removing shoes is spiritually removing the filth of this world that you

have been walking in, as was the principle of washing feet. Based on everything he has said in this book so far, Gower doesn't want to understand God's heart and His use of spiritual teaching to our hearts. So at this point, it's no great surprise that Gower rewrites the meaning and praises Muslims for carrying on a good "principle of respect".

Pg 287 Then Gower says "To fight was a religious duty" as if to make Israel sound like Muslims fighting endless holy wars.

Pg 353 Gower refers back to Pg 216-218 where he says that the threshing floor of Araunah became called "rock Moriah" which he says is in the Dome of the Rock. At an earlier point, he had also said that this is believed to be the site where Abraham went to offer Isaac on the mountain. And in those three pages, he basically makes it sound like that is the exact spot where the Temple should be, while suggesting that the "rock Moriah" which can be seen inside the Dome of the Rock is the marker. So now Gower is adding to that confusion by saying that when Herod built his temple, there was no ark of the covenant and basically implies that the "rock Moriah" was its presence of god.

Pg 354 Gower makes the Sabbath seem like a nice principle to be guarded lest they be forced to work seven days of "tyranny". He does not know how to honor God. *Wow again! He just said that "The idea of a sabbath probably had its origin in Babylon, but they were days of fear when people kept indoors because of terror of the gods". I think that speaks for itself without explaining. *What does Gower mean by "after God had revealed Himself"? *He also says the Jewish people may have been motivated by fear instead of enjoyment. No, they were motivated by greed sometimes, but they should not have been.

Gower Hates Jewish People

Pg 198 All of that apparently was a build-up to accuse Jesus of being racist and vulgar, because now after that dangerous drama (pages 196-197), he references Jesus talking to a woman from Canaan (whom he refers to as abusive, untrustworthy dogs) where Jesus is trying to make sure she understands that he cannot begin to do miracles and healing in her city because His focus must be on Israel first, so that then the gospel could go freely to her Gentile nation with honest representation. She understood it because she knew the moral condition of her people, but Gower apparently wants to rewrite this as though Jesus was instead verbally assaulting the woman and she just accepted it for no logical reason. *So when Gower follows all of that up with more commentary about dogs being disrespected and filthy, he then concludes with Jesus calling unbelievers dogs in Revelation 23:15. In other words, rather than recognize the true nature of these typically cruel people and by way of assumption that God is going to judge people based on racial discrimination or cultural conditioning, Gower is using "domesticated", modern opinions of dogs to suggest that Jesus is demeaning of people who were actually cultured, smart, and generally good people which is how Gower has repeatedly framed the Canaanite people. This is an accusation I hear all the time from atheists and scoffers, but why from Ralph Gower who is promoted as giving an honest representation of Biblical history? *If it wasn't clear enough, his very next statement is "Towns built by the Greeks and Romans tended, by contrast, to be well-planned and with paved streets." He is clearly saying that Jesus should not criticize the animal-like cruelty of cultures and people that Gower notices were sometimes better in appearance (by gain from bullying other people) than the Jewish culture. So Gower makes the entire history of the world a competition of powerful versus weak humans, evolved versus unevolved humans. The truth is that choices affect an entire family, can affect an entire ten generations of that family, and tend to shape the moral failures of an entire people in a region if not dealt with at the root. This is not mental inability as Gower pretends throughout this entire book and in doing so, he insults most people around the world. This is moral choosing, which Gower refuses to understand because admitting so would call him into accountability to His Creator as he will do before God's Throne in heaven. Apparently, Ralph Gower wants to hide from truth.

Pg 242 Pg 242 Okay, I'm going to respond to this part about inns at this point. *He suggested back on page 234 and is repeating it again, that most of the inns housed prostitutes, which made it important for the Christians to set up their own system of inns basically. But by doing this, Gower implies that there were improprieties among the travelling believers. He comments on the character of most of the inns and follows that with suggesting that the Christians had an elaborate system of inns by using the term philoxenia, *then by suggesting that many Christians were homeless, and *finally by suggesting that the believers in 3 John were examples of travelling believers who would not work. *He follows all of that by suggesting that a believer would stay for several days and then move to the next spot. *He concludes by saying that you could not be a leader unless you ran an inn basically. This is all incredibly disgusting, what Gower is saying! *By referencing Acts 9:43, he also calls to mind some previous statements about the smell of tanning work on page 160 where he said that "it was so bad personally that it could become grounds for divorce. When the servants of Cornelius came looking for the house of Simon the tanner at Joppa, it would have been easy to find (Acts 10:6)". *They were not providing housing for foreigners (xenia); they were not travelling bands of homeless people, they would settle in another city, not keep moving around; the few that did travel constantly were also working often, they were not avoiding work; and finally, there was no requirement to run an inn, but rather to show hospitality to fellow believers and their visiting family and the occasional apostle or travelling elder.

Pg 242-243 Gower is clearly going to continue this disgusting rant with talking about church greetings now. *This guy makes me both disgusted and hurt by this slander. How can he accuse our Lord Jesus of greeting His disciples with a kiss on the lips, so that – according to Gower's twisted, perverted mind – Judas felt comfortable greeting Jesus with "several" kisses on the lips, which made Jesus wonder if Judas was betraying Him with a kiss? *Gower intentionally started these three sentences with Genesis 29:11 as the example, so that anyone who looks that up would understand what he is hinting at. No, the fact of the matter is that Jesus knew exactly what Judas had done and rebuked him for pretending to be a close friend by giving the "holy kiss" type of greeting.

Pg 286 Obviously Gower is about to make Israel sound subversive in their military tactics because he suggests they didn't have the budget to have a real military. The truth is that God did not want them to have to live by military might, only to capture their land at the first. But then as long as they followed God's plans, they would not have had to fight anyone. But of course, we are all prone to disobedience and certainly an entire nation is more vulnerable to its flaws, so it didn't work how God had wanted. *Gower could have done a much better work of not making it sound like Abraham went and destroyed Sodom to get Lot out, but he doesn't care about inaccuracies caused by misplaced comments. *Yeah, Gower loved Judges 5:23 whenever he heard that, because it makes Israel sound bad using God to justify war which is only confusing to people in the modern bubble of so-called "peace" which the elite world powers treat as a "hudna" or temporary cease-fire to build up rearmaments and change the rules of the game. *Pg 287 Then Gower says "To fight was a religious duty" as if to make Israel sound like Muslims fighting a holy war. He does so right after referencing 1 Samuel 11:1-2 which shows the unfair treatment of the people around them wanting to gouge out all of their eyes. He doesn't give any verse for spiritual requirement for war, just an extrapolated thought from Israel's beginning and Saul's bad leadership. *Of course, Gower can't really say whether God timed an earthquake to destroy Jericho or if it was just some myth. *Pg 288 So Gower says that Israel basically only attacked demoralized and helpless soldiers at their weakest moments while they were suffering natural disasters (which is Gower's rephrasing of God's defense for Israel). *Then he says "Such tactics were typical of the Israelite militia when there was no standing army". Doesn't that sound like Gower is writing a pretend origin/verification of Jewish guilt with modern Mossad operations? *No, David was not first a military man; he actually played the harp in the palace first of all. *And King Saul was not asking for David's other brothers, they were already in his army. Saul just wanted to know who he was to be so bold. *Then Gower says "As a private army they terrorized the country when David was in exile in Ziklag." That is an outrageous statement to suggest that David was terrorizing Israel; it's as if Gower didn't bother to read the fact that David lied to

the Philistines which he should not have done. But Gower would suggest that David was running a terrorist operation to steal the kingdom rather than admitting that King Saul was terrorizing the nation of Israel by his disobedience – more Mossad false parallels. *Again, David’s purpose was not war, so he didn’t keep large stock of military equipment; he only dealt with specific problems. *Pg 289 David was supposed to be at peace and should not have counted his fighting men, but Gower doesn’t want to admit that. *And Gower doesn’t bother to mention that the entire reign of Solomon had peace; he just wants to suggest that there were mandatory drafts for the military.

Gower Does Not Want God to Exist

Pg 215 “Jesus’ Yoke” – Gower is so mean in his accusations against God. He would make it sound as if God were not lightening our burden but rather forcing us to “carry loads impossible for a human being” but gives us a means of carrying it. But in Matthew 11:29-30, Jesus says, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Jesus is saying that He is a better Master than human masters with their heavy traditions and legal burdens. So Gower would make Jesus to be a liar. In other words, as Gower sees it, Jesus does not lift the burden of law, but rather gives an apparatus (government) to apply it easier. Gower is so wrong about this; he does not understand the purpose of the law. *Again, in “Following After Jesus”, Gower continues his theme of accusing Jesus of trying to start an earthly kingdom or rebellion, rather than Jesus being a teacher of eternal life.

Pg 272 There is a sneaky commentary in there by Gower suggesting that Exodus 21:20 was unjust in only punishing a master who accidentally killed his slave, compared to “thou shalt not kill”. In other words, Gower is accusing God of hypocrisy in His law. *He even outright says, “Most of the laws of this kind were similar, if not identical, to many of the judgments made by rulers in surrounding society. God was in effect taking the customary law that people understood and putting his approval on specific laws so that they formed a legal code.” In other words, God doesn’t know what is right, He just co-opts it from other peoples who have better morals than His own as Gower would have it sound. So Gower is clearly accusing God of having low morals, while praising secular humanists as being more moral than God.

Pg 273-274 Now Gower is suggesting that even God’s firm laws were really just similar to how the Hittites controlled their subjects. So he is saying that God even copied that. *Now Gower has subtly added that God is a jealous God, as if that is the reason for such laws. Gower is repeating one of the most disturbing and often-repeated accusations made by atheists and scoffers against God. *Then Gower adds by suggesting that God imposed the death penalty based on His jealousy. Gower does not understand righteousness or God’s authority in it.

Pg 331 Notice how Gower refers to the Bible as stories. *Um... did Gower just say that Jesus “showed us how to live” and then quote Jesus saying “you should do as I have done for you”, and then add that “He allowed himself to be put to death”? Obviously that could just be poor sequence, but I see it as intentional after all of the hate and accusations I have read from him. But it would seem nice that Gower is trying to give a gospel presentation here to clean up his image and convince everyone that in spite of his “mistakes” along the way, he cannot be called a scoffer, mocker, or unbeliever. He wants everyone to remember him as being a Christian since he at least claims to believe in Jesus here.

Gower does Not Know God

Pg 56 God says the blood is the life of all flesh, so that really should not be difficult to understand why not to eat flesh with it. It is a disregard for life. It also would confuse the meaning of the sacrifices – giving of a life

for our life because of sin – which would have damaged the work of Christ dying for our sins by shedding his blood out on the cross. He gave His life for us. It is not difficult to understand this.

Pg 91 A field is not the same as a hard path or wayside – which literally means the space of the edge of the field that doesn't get plowed and is used for walking. *Again Gower is pretending that even the field was always like hard path when they plowed because he is pretending that they plowed in late summer (they actually plowed in late autumn/early winter just after the latter rains had softened the ground to be able to plow it for the coming spring). In the parable, Jesus is explaining different types of hearts, but this reinterpretation by Gower would require God to force a change of heart in people who want to have a hardened heart, which He does not do. Jesus sows in soft soil, and He will work with the persons who have thorns and rocks if they want to remove them. It would be difficult for Gower to get this parable right because He doesn't believe that God changes hearts based on repentance and faith. So he is instead suggesting that everyone's heart is equally hardened and incapable of receiving truth and tries to force God to be responsible for our salvation or judgment. Somehow Gower sees all people as equally sinful even though he does not seem to believe that people are capable of equal knowledge as shown by his regular degrading of the Jewish people throughout this book. Jesus said – if you do not get this parable right, how will you understand any of the other parables? By suggesting that everyone's heart is like the wayside ground, Gower is saying that everyone's heart is equally hardened against God's truth. How is this guy a pastor in England? Who listens to him?

Pg 97 The stuff on this page is so convoluted, you almost can't untangle the mass of knots he just made. Gower comments about David defeating his enemies as like beating them to dust under a millstone. *Then he describes the trampling of grain by the oxen as a third method of threshing or "trampling" as he calls it. *Then Gower uses this as an analogy for ministry by extrapolation from Paul's questions (1 Corinthians 9) about having to work a full-time job while also trying to spend his life full-time helping the people grow spiritually and not receiving any return benefit from them which is an almost impossible burden on any person. *He then makes it worse by referencing a person accidentally stepping on an ostrich's or stork's eggs because they are left on the ground, and *then by referencing the Anti-Christ trampling and destroying the earth. Wow, just wow! That is so wrong, it hurts to think about. How does Gower make these twisted mangled stories? Gower is definitely getting ideas from demonic powers. A believer doesn't accuse God or the saints and servants of God that way. I can't see this as ignorance that is causing this from Gower.

Hatred and Blasphemy Against Christ and/or the Holy Spirit

Pg 126 So Gower thinks Jesus doesn't actually know where fish are or have authority to direct them unless he happens to have a vantage point on shore and perfect timing of fish near the boat. In that case, I suppose this would add to Gower's suggestion that they were lousy fishermen, since he says they could just have someone on shore regularly and easily catch a huge pile of fish. But Gower's disbelief and hatred of God comes out in this, because this was the means by which Peter understood that Jesus was Lord of all, even over the fish. So Gower condemns himself by his own words proving that he refuses to believe in the son of God. If Jesus does not have power of fish as Gower maintains, then He has no power over the hearts of men. But Jesus is Lord of all, which is why Peter recognized his sinfulness in light of the fact that Jesus really is God. Gower does not believe this and would rather reinterpret Simon to be an ignorant know-nothing who follows Jesus because he saw some fish. Don't be fooled by Ralph Gower's long words of pretending to know the Scriptures; he hates God.

Pg 130 No, no, no. Hang on. All of these guys were not fishermen. And by doing that, Gower is suggesting that Jesus never wanted to help row. Oh I see, so Gower thinks Jesus isn't actually capable of stopping a storm either. Gower thinks it was just random timing that the storm came to a sudden halt. He is such a liar. We need to stop pushing this garbage on Bible students. It is a tedious pile of garbage that leads toward disbelief for those who enjoy mocking God but want to pretend to be a pastor for money. Pg 131 Yep, Gower

is now suggesting that the "Peace! Be Still!" that Jesus spoke was an admission that Satan controlled the weather, which is totally false. Rather than Jesus being Lord of all, now he is subject to Satan whom Gower would have being lord of all.

Pg142 Why would Gower use Satan as an example of a goat leading the people, and where did he see a goat in Isaiah 14:9 or Zechariah 10:12? *Also he is using that "under the rod" phrase in a really awkward way, like he did a few pages earlier as though God threatens to beat away the rebels with his club/rod (which I'm not sure are equivalent as he claims). *Pg143 God did not choose a goat for that particular sacrifice based on the animal being unpopular. *He should have noted that the evil mythological use of goats would have been a reason for Jesus to make this example of separating sheep and goats. *Why bother referencing Bacchus and goats in the way he has done in the last two sentences in that topic?

Pg168 Gower here makes reference to Christ being one of the necessary cornerstones of a building for strength and direction, but then suggests that lots of leaders were being referred to this way. I don't see evidence for that as a common phrase and it really seems that Gower is intentionally cheapening the significance of Christ being the Chief Cornerstone. *To further my point, in the accompanying picture, he refers to the huge stones at the lower part of the walls of the Dome of the Rock as an example. *Pg 170 Once again he messes up the Biblical understanding of Christ being the cornerstone by referring to a keystone in an archway that is totally unrelated.

Pg 212 Why is Gower saying that Herod became "King of the Jews"? I suppose he's going to suggest the modern opinion that the Romans hated Jesus and wanted to put Him to death, because He was secretly a political contender. It calls to mind the writing above Jesus' cross and Pilot's statement that he was going to leave the "King of the Jews" notation. But Gower is going totally the wrong way with it.

Gower is Free-mason/Satanist who Promotes False Religions

Pg 182 Once again, Gower is suggesting that the Jewish people had to learn metal-working from the Kenites whom he claims to be descendant from Cain. *He adds to that the suggestion that Jewish metal-smiths placed on their forehead the mark of a metal cross which he says to have been God's mark on Cain after he killed Abel. Ouch! Who is Gower studying with? That has got to be Freemason lies!

Pg 254-256 I have noticed that Gower is much more willing to speak now that he is in the middle of his book here. He has just cut the reins loose and is running wild with accusations. Of course, Gower tries to justify the confusion caused by the various sects in Israel. But while doing this, he also makes an accusation against other people when he says the following: "They found the world a good place in which to live and were interested in the here-and-now rather than believing in a resurrection, a judgment, or an afterlife. They rejected ideas of resurrection in favour of the Greek idea of immortality of the soul and believed they could show that the idea of a bodily resurrection was ridiculous." Gower says this as though it were similar to his own belief, or at least that he understands both the principle and the criticism of it. *But then Gower goes a step further by accusing Paul of exploiting his occasion in court in Acts 23:6 to create division among them over this very principle of resurrection. Paul was not guilty of creating division, which he could prove by witnesses, and challenges the Jews because they could not prove that he was creating trouble so that their supposed witnesses didn't even bother to show up at the court hearing in Caesarea six days later. Paul was a high level Pharisee and he had turned to a belief in the resurrection, so this was reason for their hatred of Paul in regard to Jesus. Apparently Gower accuses Paul of trying to create a new religion and use it to cause division for his own power or gain; otherwise how does he conclude that Paul was exploiting this situation? What Gower is really saying here is that he believes the doctrine of the resurrection to be the cause of division. Look at Acts 24:17-23 about the court case and Paul's defense if you're confused by this accusation against Paul; he was not contentious about it. Paul actually was convinced by the Truth and trying to help

others see it. Look at his more thorough explanation of his faith in Acts 26. Also look at the way the rulers lied to the Roman governor and in their blind hatred made an oath not to eat or drink until they killed Paul. I'm pretty sure they started eating and drinking again very shortly after this attempt failed; they really didn't care about truth that much, just their own power.

*By stacking this third subject about Jesus, Ralph then accuses Jesus of being an agitator for creating this new belief, because he refuses to recognize that the religious rulers were knowingly corrupt and covering their crimes, while trying to destroy Jesus for exposing their evil. Their threat of death against Jesus had very little to do with belief in resurrection, since they wanted to pretend that there is no true life in Christ merely for the sake of control of two different groups of people.

Pg 373 How can Ralph Gower end his book by talking about Greek and Roman religion? I have found that most people who have a nostalgia for false gods are actually just keeping the myths alive because they want to believe them to be of useful comparison to the one true God to suggest that God is like them. If they could figure out how to do away with all of the mythical gods and God, then they would not need the old myths anymore. What they don't realize by doing this is that they are just making themselves a slave of sin and the devil instead. It is not actual freedom to "kill off" God, if it were possible, which it is not. *And then Gower says "there were many people who were dissatisfied with this form of religion" as if that might also be applied by Gower toward dissatisfaction with the Jewish religion as the catalyst to start "Christianity". Gower continues: "Emperor worship developed at Rome, philosophy took its place alongside religion in Greece so that a form of atheism developed, and in Athens people were beginning to consider the possibility of an unknown god (Acts 17:23)." So Gower is saying exactly what I just thought – that he thinks Paul was able to start a new religion (Christendom) with the possibility of an unknown god and Gower then references Paul's sermon about this being the One True God, because the Athenians did not know the True God. Notice that Gower does not capitalize "god", which means Gower does not believe this to represent the One True God. Gower sees this "unknown" (to Athenians) God as another "idea" of God.

Then Gower says this (NOTE THIS): Mystery religions began to develop in which people were admitted to successive degrees of understanding as they undertook rites that brought them into closer communion with the god or gods." And with that Gower has finished his book... by promoting demonic communion through the modern mystery religions. That is literally the last page aside from one more page of his "Now look at your Bible" mix-ups. How can Gower end his book this way unless Gower himself promotes and has joined this type of religion as the solution? It has been my contention all along in this book that he has taken on Satanic meanings of things and even shows strong signs of free-masonry and other cult beliefs. This is not a right way of ending this book, but I think it does show the heart of the man quite well.

And so I end my commentary on The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times with these Scriptures from Matthew 12. Matthew 12:30-37 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. Either make (identify) the tree good and its fruit good, or else make (identify) the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." Matthew 12:30-37