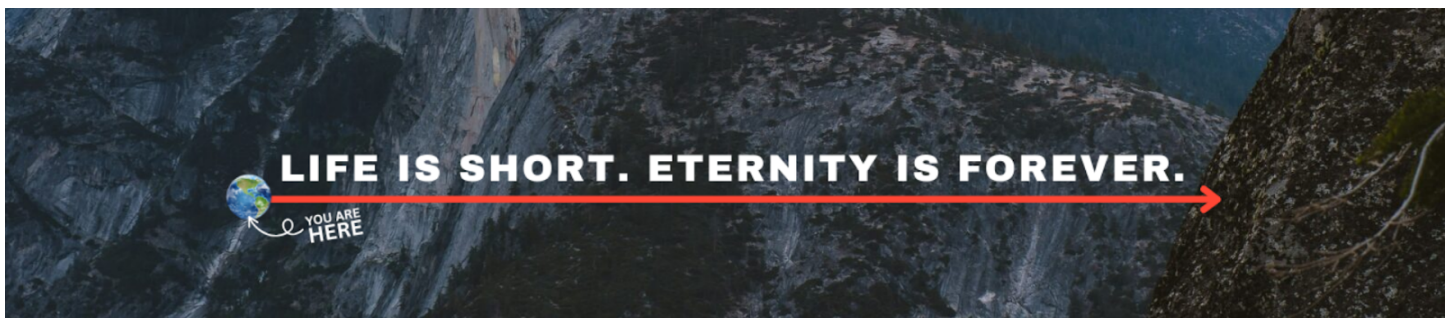


THINK ABOVE THE BOX
Bible Study Guide for
The Paradise of Children
by Nathaniel Hawthorne*
[The Story of Pandora's Box]



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens



2 Corinthians 4:18 TLB So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.



THE PARADISE OF CHILDREN

Long, long ago, when this old world was in its tender infancy, there was a child named Epimetheus who never had either father or mother; and that he might not be lonely, another child, fatherless and motherless like himself, was sent by the gods to be his playfellow and helpmate. Her name was Pandora.

The first thing that Pandora saw when she entered the cottage where Epimetheus lived was a great box. And almost the first question that she put to him was this, "Epimetheus, what have you in that box?"

"My dear little Pandora," answered Epimetheus, "that is a secret, and you must be kind enough not to ask any questions about it. The box was left here to be kept safely, and I do not myself know what it contains."

It is thousands of years since the myths tell us that Epimetheus and Pandora lived; and the world now-a-days is a very different sort of place from what it was then. There were no fathers or mothers to take care of the children, because there was no danger or trouble of any kind, and no clothes to be mended, and there was plenty to eat and drink. Whenever a child wanted his dinner, he found it growing on a tree. It was a very pleasant life indeed. No labor had to be done, no tasks studied, all was sport and dancing and the sweet voices of children talking, or caroling like birds, or laughing merrily all day long.

But Pandora was not altogether happy on account of Epimetheus' explanation about the box.

"Where can it have come from?" she continually asked herself, "and what on earth can be inside it?" At last she spoke to Epimetheus.

"You might open the box," Pandora said, "and then we could see its contents for ourselves."

"Pandora, what are you thinking of?" Epimetheus exclaimed. And his face expressed so much horror at the idea of looking into a box, which had been given him on condition that he never open it, that Pandora thought it best not to suggest it any more. Still she could not help thinking and talking about it.

"At least," she said, "you can tell me how it came here."

"It was left at the door," Epimetheus replied, "just before you came and by a person who looked very smiling and intelligent, and who could hardly keep from smiling as he set it down. He was dressed in an odd kind of a cloak, and had on a cap that seemed to be made partly of feathers so that it looked as if it had wings."

"What sort of a staff had he?" asked Pandora.

"Oh, the most curious staff that you ever saw!" cried Epimetheus. "It was like two serpents twisting around a stick, and was carved so naturally that I, at first, thought the serpents were alive."

"I know him," said Pandora thoughtfully. "Nobody else has such a staff. It was Mercury, and he brought me here as well as the box. No doubt he intended it for me, and most probably it contains pretty dresses for me to wear, or toys for us both, or something nice for us to eat."

"Perhaps so," answered Epimetheus, turning away, "but until Mercury comes back and gives his permission, we have neither of us any right to lift the lid."

One day not long after that Epimetheus went to gather figs and grapes by himself without asking Pandora. Ever since she had come he had heard about that box, nothing but the box, and he was tired of it. And as soon as he was gone, Pandora knelt down on the floor and looked intently at it.

It was made of a beautiful kind of wood, and was so highly polished that Pandora could see her face in it. The edges and corners were carved with the most wonderful skill. Around the edge there were figures of graceful men and women and the prettiest children ever seen, reclining or playing in gardens and forests. The most beautiful face of all was done in high relief in the centre of the box. There was nothing else save the dark, rich smoothness of the wood and this one face with a garland of flowers about its brow. The features had a kind of mischievous expression with all their loveliness and if the mouth had spoken it would probably have said, "Do not be afraid Pandora! What harm can there be in opening a box? Never mind that poor, simple Epimetheus. You are wiser than he and have ten times as much courage. Open the box and see if you do not find something very pretty."

And on this particular day, when Pandora was alone, her curiosity grew so great that at last she touched the box. She was more than half determined to open it if she could.

First, however, she tried to lift it. It was heavy, much too heavy for the slender strength of a child like Pandora. She raised one end of the box a few inches from the floor, and then let it fall with a pretty loud thump. A moment afterward she almost thought that she heard something stir inside the box. She was not quite sure whether she heard it or not, but her curiosity grew stronger than ever. Suddenly her eyes fell on a curious knot of gold that tied it. She took it in her fingers and, almost without intending it, she was soon busily engaged in trying to undo it.

It was a very intricate knot indeed, but at last, by the merest accident, Pandora gave the cord a kind of twist and it unwound itself, as if by magic. The box was without a fastening.

"This is the strangest thing I ever knew," Pandora said. "What will Epimetheus say? And how can I possibly tie it again?"

And then the thought came into her naughty little heart that, since she would be suspected of looking into the box, she might as well do so at once.

As Pandora raised the lid of the box the cottage was suddenly darkened, for a black cloud had swept quite over the sun and seemed to have buried it alive. There had, for a little while past, been a low growling and grumbling which all at once broke into a heavy peal of thunder. But Pandora heeded nothing of all this. She lifted the lid nearly upright and looked inside. It seemed as if a sudden swarm of winged creatures brushed past her, taking flight out of the box while, at the same time, she heard the voice of Epimetheus in the doorway exclaiming as if he was in pain, "Oh, I am stung! I am stung! Naughty Pandora, why have you opened this wicked box?"

Pandora let fall the lid and looked up to see what had befallen Epimetheus. The thundercloud had so darkened the room that she could not clearly see what was in it. But she heard a disagreeable buzzing, as if a great many huge flies or giant bees were darting about. And as her eyes grew accustomed to the dimness she saw a crowd of ugly little shapes, looking very spiteful, and having bats' wings and terribly long stings in their tails. It was one of these that had strung Epimetheus. Nor was it a great while after that before Pandora herself began to cry. An odious little monster had settled on her forehead, and would have stung her very deeply if Epimetheus had not run and brushed it away.

Now, if you wish to know what these ugly things were that made their escape out of the box, I must tell you that they were the whole family of earthly Troubles. There were evil Passions. There were a great many species of Cares. There were more than a hundred and fifty Sorrows. There were Diseases in a vast number of strange and painful shapes. There were more kinds of Naughtiness than it would be of any kind of use to talk about. In short, everything that has since afflicted the souls and bodies of mankind had been shut up in the mysterious box given to Epimetheus and Pandora to be kept safely in order that the happy children of the world might never be molested by them. Had they been faithful to their trust all would have gone well with them. No grown person would ever have been sad, nor any child have had cause to shed a single tear, from that hour until this moment.

But it was impossible that the two children should keep the ugly swarm in their own little cottage. Pandora flung open the windows and doors to try and get rid of them and, sure enough, away flew the winged Troubles and so pestered and tormented the people everywhere about that none of them so much as smiled for many days afterward. And the children of the earth, who before had seemed ageless, now grew older, day by day, and came soon to be youths and maidens, and men and women, and then old folks, before they dreamed of such a thing.

Meanwhile, the naughty Pandora and Epimetheus remained in their cottage. Both of them had been painfully stung. Epimetheus sat down sullenly in a corner with his back to Pandora. As for poor little Pandora, she flung herself upon the floor and rested her head on the fatal box. She was crying as if her heart would break. Suddenly there was a gentle little tap on the inside of the lid.

"What can that be?" cried Pandora, lifting her head.

But Epimetheus was too much out of humor to answer her.

Again the tap! It sounded like the tiny knuckles of a fairy's hand.

"Who are you?" asked Pandora, "who are you inside of this dreadful box?"

A sweet little voice came from within saying, "Only lift the lid and you shall see."

"No, no," answered Pandora, "I have had enough of lifting the lid. You need never think that I shall be so foolish as to let you out."

"Ah," said the sweet little voice again, "you had much better let me out. I am not like those naughty creatures that have stings in their tails. They have no relation to me as you would soon find out if you would only lift the lid."

Indeed, there was a kind of cheerful witchery in the tone that made it almost impossible to refuse anything which this little voice asked. Pandora's heart had grown lighter at every word that came from the box. Epimetheus, too, had left his corner and seemed to be in better spirits.

"Epimetheus!" exclaimed Pandora, "come what may, I am resolved to lift the lid."

"And as the lid seems very heavy," said Epimetheus, running across the room, "I will help you."

So, with one consent, the two children lifted the lid. Out flew a sunny and smiling little personage and hovered about the room, throwing light wherever she went. Have you ever made the sunshine dance into dark corners by reflecting it from a bit of looking glass? Well, so appeared the winged cheerfulness of this fairylike stranger

amid the gloom of the cottage. She flew to Epimetheus and laid the least touch of her finger on the inflamed spot where the Trouble had stung him and immediately the pain of it was gone. Then she kissed Pandora on the forehead and her hurt was cured likewise.

"Who are you, beautiful creature?" asked Pandora.

"I am to be called Hope," explained the sunshiny figure, "and because I am such a cheerful person, I was packed by the gods into the box to make amends for the swarm of ugly Troubles. Never fear! We shall do pretty well in spite of them."

"Your wings are colored like the rainbow," exclaimed Pandora, "How beautiful!"

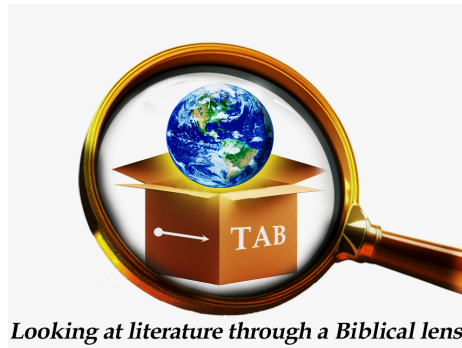
"And will you stay with us," asked Epimetheus, "forever and ever?"

"As long as you need me," said Hope, "and that will be as long as you live in the world. I promise never to desert you."

So Pandora and Epimetheus found Hope, and so has everybody else who has trusted her since that day. The Troubles are still flying around the world, but we have that lovely and lightsome fairy, Hope, to cure their stings and make the world new for us.

The End

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1. What is **MYTHOLOGY**? First, let's start this study off with the definition of *myth* by **Britannica**:

*"**Myth**, a symbolic narrative, usually of unknown origin and at least partly traditional, that ostensibly relates actual events and that is especially associated with religious belief. It is distinguished from symbolic behavior (cult, ritual) and symbolic places or objects (temples, icons). **Myths** are specific accounts of gods or superhuman beings involved in extraordinary events or circumstances in a time that is unspecified but which is understood as existing apart from ordinary human experience. The term mythology denotes both the study of myth and the body of myths belonging to a particular religious tradition."*

- Richard G. A. Buxton

Some mythical terms have made it into our speech even today, such as *Achille's heel, Herculean, the Midas touch, sour grapes, between a rock and a hard place, crying wolf, rising from the ashes* and even from this story, *Pandora's Box*.

EXTRA CREDIT: explain the above *metaphorical idioms*!

*"The God of the Bible is 'serenely supreme,' unable to be manipulated, and perfectly moral. It's **not** hard to see why cultures **wouldn't** make up a God like this. A being who is before all and knows all, and who can't be swayed from His righteousness and justice, is a frightening one. Frightening, that is, without grace."*

- Amy K. Hall
[emphasis added]

Deuteronomy 12:29-32 ERV "You are going to take your land from other people. The LORD your God will destroy these people for you. You will force them out of that land, and then you will live there. But be careful that you don't fall into the same trap they did! Don't go to their false gods for help. Don't say to yourself, 'They worshiped these gods, so I will worship them too.' Don't do that to the LORD your God! These people do all kinds of bad things that the LORD hates. They even burn their children as sacrifices to their gods! You must be careful to do everything I command you. Don't add anything to what I tell you, and don't take anything away."

Ancient Myths vs. the Bible

That's all well and good, you might say. But lots of people and many of our cultural icons also place the Bible on the *Mythology shelf* in their minds...

Luke 1:1-4 NIV Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled [*been surely believed*] among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses

and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

*“That the Bible originated in the mind of God makes it not only unique among all books, it is unique among all the treasures on earth. President Abraham Lincoln appropriately referred to the Bible as ‘the best gift God has given to man.’ Indeed it is. It reveals God’s eternal plan of redeeming the fallen human race. Yet even though billions of copies of it have been distributed throughout the world, many continue to question its truth. **Is the Bible a book of mythology, or is it the true, inspired Word of God?** This question is of the greatest importance to every person, whether they know it or not...Unlike mythology, the Bible has transformed a countless number of lives. Yet many people allow the views of others—who have never seriously studied the Bible—to shape their own opinions. Each of us needs [to] study it for ourselves. Put it to the test. Live by the Bible’s precepts and experience for yourself the dynamic and transforming power of this amazing Book.”* [emphasis added] - [GotQuestions](https://www.gotquestions.org)

How do I know the Bible is not just mythology? | GotQuestions.org

Psalms 115:4-7 NIV But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats.

Isaiah 44:9 AMPC All who make graven idols are confusion, chaos, and worthlessness. Their objects (idols) in which they delight do not profit them, and their own witnesses (worshippers) do not see or know, so that they are put to shame.

Exodus 20:3-4 ERV “You must not worship any other gods except me. “You must not make any idols. Don’t make any statues or pictures of anything up in the sky or of anything on the earth or of anything down in the water.”

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 NLT ... for they keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the living and true God. And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God’s Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.

“‘False Idols’ by Much More isn’t just a worship track—it’s a spiritual wake-up call. With raw honesty and lyrical boldness, it tears down the illusion of modern-day idols—those lifeless things we cling to for meaning, security, or control. The band doesn’t just name the problem—they proclaim the answer: Yahweh, the only God who saves.” - Faith in Music



FALSE IDOLS - MUCH MORE LYRIC VIDEO



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: So how does God handle these false gods? Does He just ignore them or send a message to them and their followers?

Exodus 12:12 GW “On that same night I will go throughout Egypt and kill every firstborn male, both human and animal. I will severely punish all the gods of Egypt, [because] I am the LORD.”

“Modern skeptics of the Bible, including skeptics within the church, often deny the Bible’s description of God’s actions in the ten plagues against Egypt. However, our growing knowledge of ancient Egypt tells us that the plagues described in the Bible were exactly what God Himself said that they were. They were indeed the true God’s judgment against the false gods of Egypt.”
- Ian Taylor

One God against the gods | Sermons | Creation Moments

2. Did any Biblical parallels enter your head as you read this story? Perhaps Adam and Eve, a snake and an apple?

*“In the Pandora narrative, hope is present yet ambiguous. In Scripture, hope is central, culminating in the promise that creation will be renewed and that ultimate restoration is assured. As recorded in **Revelation 21:4**: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain...” This consoling vision answers humanity’s deepest longing for relief from suffering, bridging the gap between the reality of evil and the intention for restoration.”*
- [Bible Hub](#)

What is the story behind Pandora's Box?

Let’s dive a little deeper into this box!

*“In Genesis we have an all-powerful Creator who deals with sin but also provides for forgiveness and deliverance (**Genesis 3:15**). In the story of Pandora’s Box, Zeus is a limited and somewhat petty god who gives Pandora the box in order to try to trip up people on earth. The God of the Bible does not want people to sin; the chief god of the Greeks was laying a trap for humanity. We do not know if the people of ancient Greece believed the story of Pandora’s Box to be literal history, but the Genesis account is presented as actual history throughout the rest of Scripture.”*
- [GotQuestions](#)

What is the myth of Pandora’s Box, and how does it relate to the biblical creation account? | GotQuestions.org

*“The legend of Pandora’s box is a story about a girl who needed to keep a box full of dark and horrible things closed. If she opened the box, they would come out and curse the planet. Happy story, huh? However, I feel that we, as regular non-ancient Greek people, have a different relationship to boxes. And keeping them closed and things. As I got older, I realized that my temptation was to put Jesus **inside** the box of my mind. I decided I understood Him enough to not need to get to know Him better. I didn’t need to grow, I got the gist of all of it. And as a result, my faith stagnated. There’s a difference between knowing Jesus and knowing all of Jesus. We know Jesus as Savior and Lord and Friend. But we don’t and will never know Him completely. Isaiah 55 says that His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. And that gives us cause for joy. So I wrote a song about that. I hope you enjoy it.”*
- Sam Bowman

Isaiah 55:8-9 GW “My thoughts are not your thoughts, and my ways are not your ways,” declares the LORD. “Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.”



▶ **Sam Bowman - PANDORA'S BOX (LYRIC VIDEO)**

EXTRA CREDIT: Have you ever heard the myth of Icarus? He and his father Daedalus attempted a prison escape using wings made of wax and feathers. He is actually alluded to in the song above!

*“I made friends with condescension / **Flew on waxen wings** / Tried, but never reached the heavens / You’ve persuaded me”* [emphasis added] - Sam Bowman

“Today, the same temptation exists, to have that person you shouldn’t have, to visit that website you shouldn’t visit, to drink that wine, or claim that deduction, or criticize that colleague. Don’t fly too close to the sun; it’s always better to be where God wants you to be.” - John Bradshaw

▶ **Don’t Fly Too Close to the Sun**

JUST FOR FUN DEPARTMENT: for our visual learners!



▶ **Pandora’s Box – A Magical Storytelling Song for Kids!** 📦 ✨ 🎵

3. After reading this story, one might think that curiosity in and of itself is bad, but God created us with inquiring minds, which can be used for good *or* evil!

Deuteronomy 29:29 AMP “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, **but** the things which are revealed *and* disclosed belong to us and to our children forever, so that we may do all of the words of this law. [emphasis added]

Proverbs 2:3-5 GNT Yes, beg for knowledge; plead for insight. Look for it as hard as you would for silver or some hidden treasure. If you do, you will know what it means to fear the LORD and you will succeed in learning about God.

*“As Christians, we can support and engage in curiosity-based research because it is part of our innate human nature, our **imago Dei** [believers are created in the image of God], and because it leads to worship. Even if our research does not result in medical cures or ingenious inventions, we can be confident it is valuable because it enables us to understand a little better the beauty and glory of the mind of God, and because he is a God who calls us to know him.”* - Andrea E.

A Biblical Defense of Curiosity

Pandora became obsessed with what might be in the box and kept pursuing Epimetheus with questions, hoping to get him to break down and open the box with her, but to no avail. She finally couldn’t take it anymore...

“And then the thought came into her naughty little heart that, since she would be suspected of looking into the box, she might as well do so at once.”

Most people have moments in their life like this - some yield to it and some stay strong.

"There was nothing else save the dark, rich smoothness of the wood and this one face with a garland of flowers about its brow. The features had a kind of mischievous expression with all their loveliness and if the mouth had spoken it would probably have said, 'Do not be afraid Pandora! What harm can there be in opening a box? Never mind that poor, simple Epimetheus. You are wiser than he and have ten times as much courage. Open the box and see if you do not find something very pretty.' And on this particular day, when Pandora was alone, her curiosity grew so great that at last she touched the box. She was more than half determined to open it if she could."

Genesis 3:6 AMPC And when the woman saw that the tree was good (suitable, pleasant) for food and that it was delightful to look at, and a tree to be desired in order to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave some also to her husband, and he ate.

Ecclesiastes 1:8 TLB everything is unutterably weary and tiresome. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied; no matter how much we hear, we are not content. History merely repeats itself. Nothing is truly new; it has all been done or said before. What can you point to that is new? How do you know it didn't exist long ages ago? We don't remember what happened in those former times, and in the future generations no one will remember what we have done back here.

"Curiosity killed the cat, and it has not served man well, either. The quest of the curious is to see behind the veil. Lacking something, or so it seems to their inquiring minds, the curious embark upon the journey to know the hidden things. The curious have an insatiable lust for secret knowledge...God has revealed the essential things for humanity to know. Man, however, is agitated by the limits of divine revelation, and the devil makes men curious, "Did God say..." This was true for Adam and Eve, and it is true for us. Curiosity is driven by unbelief."

- David Norczyk

The Bad Record of Curious Malcontents in the Bible | by David Norczyk

EXTRA CREDIT: Define *pecuniary* and *vanity fair*.



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: So, what do you think? Is a curious quest for knowledge a good thing or a bad thing? Can it swing both ways depending on the person's disposition and beliefs?

"Curiosity, the desire to know or learn something, is a trait that can lead to both positive and negative outcomes according to biblical principles. In Scripture, curiosity is often depicted in the context of seeking wisdom and understanding, but it also serves as a cautionary element when it leads to disobedience or distraction from God's commands."

- **Bible Hub**

Topical Bible: Curiosity

"Life, ooh life is a curious thing / Well, I know that it can be demanding / I know that it can be unkind / I don't really understand it / but Lord sure knows I try / Life is a curious thing / Life, ooh life is a curious thing..." - Amy Grant



■ **Amy Grant - Curious Thing (2022 Remaster/Visualizer)**

4. But *who* could have left that box chock full of troubles?

"It was left at the door," Epimetheus replied, "just before you came and by a person who looked very smiling and intelligent, and who could hardly keep from smiling as he set it down. He was dressed in an odd kind of a cloak, and had on a cap that seemed to be made partly of feathers so that it looked as if it had wings." "What sort of a staff had he?" asked Pandora. "Oh, the most curious staff that you ever saw!" cried Epimetheus. "It was like two serpents twisting around a stick, and was carved so naturally that I, at first, thought the serpents were alive."

Pandora recognizes the stranger as Mercury, who bears a striking resemblance to Satan, serpents and all! Just as Eve found the offer of forbidden fruit irresistible, Mercury must have known that his box would get opened eventually by one of the children.

2 Corinthians 11:14 AMPC And it is no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light;

*"Note that the Bible doesn't say Satan **is** an angel of light; it says he only masquerades as an angel of light. In other words, sometimes Satan puts on a disguise (as it were), and makes it look like he actually stands for good instead of evil. When the devil offered to feed Jesus by turning rocks into bread, he was masquerading as one who wanted to do good—or as an angel of light (see Matthew 4:1-11)."* [emphasis added] - **Billy Graham Evangelistic Association**

What does the Bible mean when it calls Satan an "angel of light"?

EXTRA CREDIT: Let's take a little deeper dive into Satan.

"...it's pretty easy to picture Satan as a little red imp with horns and a pitchfork, the kind of devil that shows up in cartoon shows to tempt a character to do something selfish and inconsiderate but that's not how the Bible describes him."
- Jeremy Lallier

▣ **Satan's Disguise as an Angel of Light (2 Corinthians 11:14-15) | Verse by Verse**



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: Have you ever experienced someone or something that, like Satan disguised as an angel of light, enticed you into doing something that was sinful by making it seem good and beneficial to you? Have you ever recognized a temptation such as this and refused it? What could help you discern trouble?

"But sin always promises a shortcut. If you'll picture God's word as this path and a sign saying this path will take you to whatever destination it is that you're wanting to go to, Sin is the little shortcut over here on the side that says, "Nah, don't take that path. It takes too long. It's too hard to climb. Take this path. It's quicker. It'll get you there faster." And you take the shortcut and it leads right off of a cliff into literally a dead end."
- **Necessary Food**

Romans 7:11 AMP For sin, seizing its opportunity through the commandment, beguiled *and* completely deceived me, and using it as a weapon killed me [separating me from God].

▣ **Sin is deceptive - Romans 7:11**

What's a sinner to do? **"IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, BREAK GLASS"** (on the following music video!) Just like the little fairy Hope in Pandora's box, there is hope for sinners everywhere.

PS: You might recognize the melody!

"Come, you unfaithful / Come, all you unworthy / Oh come, you with nothing to offer Him / Come, you unrighteous / Come, you undeserving / Rejoice, He came for you / Rejoice, He came for you / Rejoice, He came for you / Christ, the Lord."
- Michael Boggs



[Come You Unfaithful \(Lyric Video\)](#)

5. The intriguing box finally had Pandora justifying opening it. Bad idea! Look what was unleashed!

"Now, if you wish to know what these ugly things were that made their escape out of the box, I must tell you that they were the whole family of earthly Troubles. There were evil Passions. There were a great many species of Cares. There were more than a hundred and fifty Sorrows. There were Diseases in a vast number of strange and painful shapes. There were more kinds of Naughtiness than it would be of any kind of use to talk about."

Wow, sounds like the contents of someone's **Facebook** feed! We could think of social media as a modern day Pandora's box. What's a Christian to do? Do we justify our social media presence and time investment like Pandora did in deciding to open it?

"Jackie Hill Perry writes, 'It is not wise or healthy to disassociate what you say on social media from who you are. It seems as if many, including Christians, feel the freedom to be critical, divisive, harsh, and flat out wicked with speech via social media as if it is not AS damaging. Don't be fooled, you will be judged just as much for what you said with your mouth as you will with what you've typed with your hands.'"
- Randy Alcorn

Watching Our Words on Social Media - Walk Thru The Bible

Matthew 12:36 GNT "You can be sure that on the Judgment Day you will have to give account of every useless word you have ever spoken.

Proverbs 13:20 AMP He who walks [as a companion] with wise men will be wise, But the companions of [conceited, dull-witted] fools [are fools themselves and] will experience harm.

*"I have seen **The Social Dilemma** on Netflix (and if you haven't, you should) but the big idea it presented is that social media is designed from the ground up to **addict** you, in a way that no other tool of human invention ever has. Where I think the film fell short is that the problem was presented as a sort of Greek fatalistic tale of **Pandora's box** that can't be retracted or controlled. As Christians, we can't accept fatalism because we believe the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness therein (**Psalm 24:1**), and that what man intends for evil, God means for good (**Genesis 50:20**). I think social media can be redeemed as a tool for the gospel, through hospitality, as long as it's done carefully and intentionally...Are we viewing our social media accounts as a place to serve the needs of others, remaining conscious that we are ambassadors for the gospel? The reputation we build for ourselves online is the reputation that carries over into our in-person relationships, and by extension, is the reputation we build for the Church. We need to be strategic and intentional to live our online lives in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called (**Ephesians 4:1**)."* [emphasis added] - Rebecca Zion

Social Media to the Glory of God | The Bridge Church



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens

Think Above the Box: Take some time this week to ponder *your* social media presence. Are there posts that you would be ashamed to have Jesus scroll through? Are there some that would make Him proud? How can you use your posts to spread the Gospel to friends and followers?

Philippians 4:8 TLB And now, brothers, as I close this letter, let me say this one more thing: Fix [and post!] your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about.

"I been hanging in the room / Watching everybody move / Instagram and YouTube / Scrolling on Facebook news / I got Christ on my side / How in the world could I lose / Got me saying to my God / Please remember me too /... / How many times did I turn on my phone / For reasons unknown / That it's an addiction and I can't admit it / But I got to know what's going on / Checking my likes to get the euphoria / How they got famous and watching tutorials ..."

- Young Zealous



▶ **Young Zealous - Social Media Addictions (Lyrics Music Video)**

6. *"So, with one consent, the two children lifted the lid. Out flew a sunny and smiling little personage and hovered about the room, throwing light wherever she went. Have you ever made the sunshine dance into dark corners by reflecting it from a bit of looking glass? Well, so appeared the winged cheerfulness of this fairylike stranger amid the gloom of the cottage. She flew to Epimetheus and laid the least touch of her finger on the inflamed spot where the Trouble had stung him and immediately the pain of it was gone. Then she kissed Pandora on the forehead and her hurt was cured likewise.*

"Who are you, beautiful creature?" asked Pandora. "I am to be called Hope," explained the sunshiny figure, "and because I am such a cheerful person, I was packed by the gods into the box to make amends for the swarm of ugly Troubles. Never fear! We shall do pretty well in spite of them." "Your wings are colored like the rainbow," exclaimed Pandora, "How beautiful!" "And will you stay with us," asked Epimetheus, "forever and ever?" "As long as you need me," said Hope, "and that will be as long as you live in the world. I promise never to desert you."

Did comparisons to the **Holy Spirit** come to mind while reading this part of the story? Someone who will always be at our side to guide, heal, direct and love us? Someone to give us *hope*?

Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Galatians 5:22-23 NLT But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Romans 5:5 ERV And this hope will never disappoint us. We know this because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts through the Holy Spirit he gave us.

Jeremiah 29:11 ERV I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD. They are plans for peace and not disaster, plans to give you a future filled with hope.

Romans 15:13 AMPC May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in believing [through the experience of your faith] that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound *and* be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope.

"Sometimes we hope for things in which there is no hope. A car can't bring true hope; it can bring a feeling of contentment and exhilaration, but not real hope. Financial stability can't bring true hope; it can bring security and a level of ease, but not true hope. A spouse can't bring true hope because a spouse's abilities are limited to what he or she can control. True hope comes from the One who created hope: God. True hope comes by trusting God even when circumstances are difficult. One way to know whether you're trusting God is whether you're obeying his Word. Trust produces obedience, which produces hope, which results in joy and peace; and that is the power of the Holy Spirit."

- [The Billy Graham Library](#)

5 Things the Bible says about Hope - The Billy Graham Library Blog

"I meet with You and my soul sings out / As your word throws doubt far away / I sing to You and my heart cries / 'Holy! Hallelujah, Father, You're near!' / My hope is in You, Lord / All the day long, I won't be shaken by drought or storm / A peace that passes understanding is my song / And I sing my hope is in You, Lord"

- Aaron Shust



▶ Aaron Shust - My Hope Is In You (Live)

REAL LIFE: Have you ever noticed that human beings are the only creatures on the planet that will stop to admire a breathtaking sunset, an amazing mountain vista, the vivid multi-colored autumn leaves or a baby's adorable face? Now other animals *may* stop to take a look, but not in awe and wonder! What's up with that? If we are all just here by chance, why should we care if we see beauty in the creation? Sometimes, people come to God by pondering this very question.

"...let me summarize for you the kinds of arguments that ultimately brought me around to the position of recognizing that belief in God was an entirely satisfying intellectual event, but also something that I was increasingly discovering I had a spiritual hunger for. And interestingly, some of the pointers to God had been in front of me all along coming from the study of nature."

- Francis Collins

Let's warm up to these concepts with a musical interlude:

"Praise Him all you creatures great and small / Praise Him summer, winter, spring and fall / Hollowing wind, rushing streams / Rolling hills and crashing seas / Lift your voice and worship your Creator / Praise Him gleaming moon and burning sun / Praise Him all you spinning spheres above / Shining stars, golden beams / Choir made of galaxies / Lift your voice and worship your Creator"

- Phil Wickham



▶ Phil Wickham - Creator (Official Music Video)

Want to impress your friends with how smart you are? Drop these three terms into one sentence: *singularity*, *multiverse* and *a priori*! Francis Collins will explain how he went from a staunch atheist to a believer in Jesus Christ using **SCIENCE**.

Romans 1:20 ESV For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Isaiah 40:12 GW Who has measured the water of the sea with the palm of his hand or measured the sky with the length of his hand? Who has held the dust of the earth in a bushel basket or weighed the mountains on a scale and the hills on a balance?

"I began to realize that the evidence for the existence of God, while not proof, was actually pretty interesting. And it certainly made me realize that atheism would no longer be for me an acceptable choice. That it was the least rational of the options."
- Francis Collins

▶ **Top Scientist Explains WHAT Convinced Him Of JESUS (Powerful 19 Minutes!)**

APOLO-GET-ITS: Many degreed professors and non-believers say that the Bible is just a book of myths and while yes, we can learn some nice things about how to behave ourselves in life, not much else in it is as sophisticated as our modern scientific discoveries are. But not so fast! Learn how these Scripture verses were proven to be true hundreds of years after they were written.

Job 36:27-28 ERV For he draws up the drops of water; they distill his mist in rain, which the skies pour down and drop on mankind abundantly.

Ecclesiastes 1:6-7 TLB The sun rises and sets and hurries around to rise again. The wind blows south and north, here and there, twisting back and forth, getting nowhere. The rivers run into the sea, but the sea is never full, and the water returns again to the rivers and flows again to the sea . . .

Job 37:9 GNT The storm winds come from the south, and the biting cold from the north.

Job 26:7-14 NLT God stretches the northern sky over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing. He wraps the rain in his thick clouds, and the clouds don't burst with the weight. He covers the face of the moon, shrouding it with his clouds. He created the horizon when he separated the waters; he set the boundary between day and night. The foundations of heaven tremble; they shudder at his rebuke. By his power the sea grew calm. By his skill he crushed the great sea monster. His Spirit made the heavens beautiful, and his power pierced the gliding serpent. These are just the beginning of all that he does, merely a whisper of his power. Who, then, can comprehend the thunder of his power?"

"Long before modern instruments and discoveries, the Bible described scientific truths such as the water cycle and wind patterns with remarkable accuracy. Verses in Job and Ecclesiastes outlined these processes thousands of years before science confirmed them!"
- **Creation Moments**

▶ **When Science Finally Caught Up to the Bible**

LOVE TO LINK!

The depth of content offered in the Think Above the Box Study Guides would not have been possible without the many talents and Spirit-inspired links that are included for each book. Isn't it great that while you use the study guides you can click on a link and go to these great sites without searching for them?

We would like to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to all the Bible publishers, pastors, bloggers, filmmakers, musicians and Christian media websites for the vast amount of information they provide online. Your efforts are truly a blessing to all who access your sites!

TAB highly encourages students to explore each of the links at their leisure as it is like going down a holy rabbit hole!

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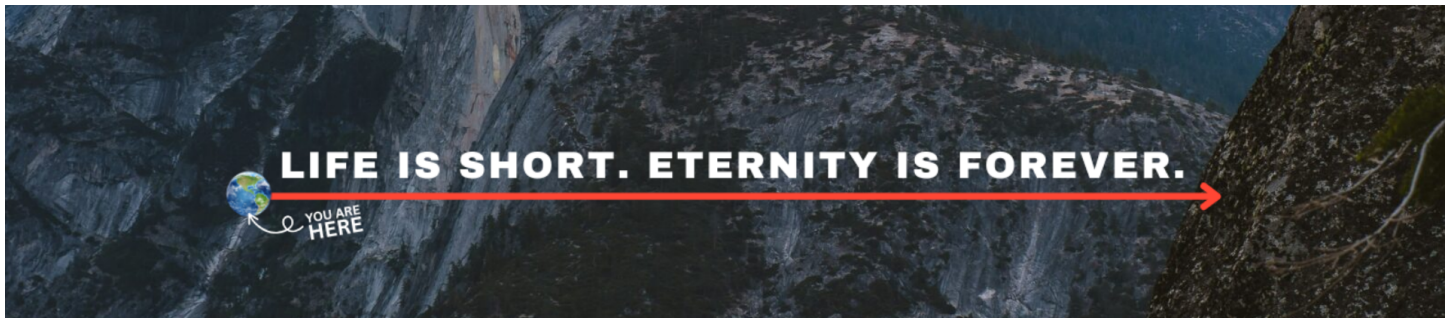
Afterword

Please check out [Think above the Box](#) for more study guides, blogs, and links to thought-provoking material.

*And please leave us a note on our site about your experience!
We would love to hear your comments!*



Looking at literature through a Biblical lens



2 Corinthians 4:18 TLB So we do not look at what we can see right now, the troubles all around us, but we look forward to the joys in heaven which we have not yet seen. The troubles will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.