

FEAR NOT; FOR BEHOLD, I BRING YOU

GOOD TIDINGS

OF *Great*
JOY

LUKE 2:10

which shall be to

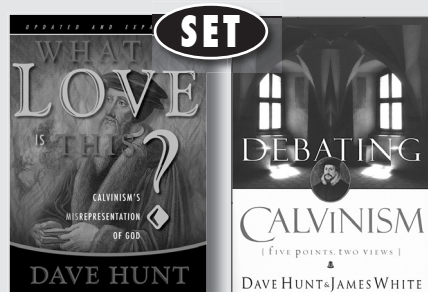
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Berean
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DECEMBER 2004

GOD SO LOVED...!

by DAVE HUNT



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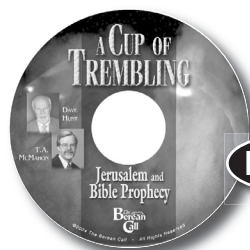
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The truth of God's gift of a Savior to "all people" of the world was announced at Christ's birth (Lk 2:10).

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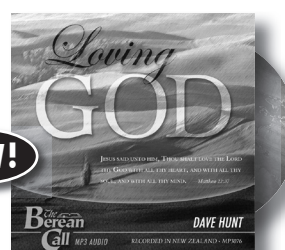
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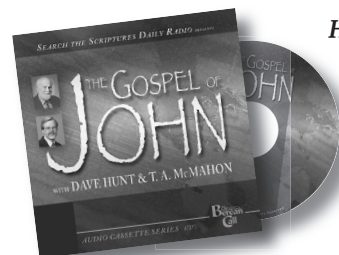
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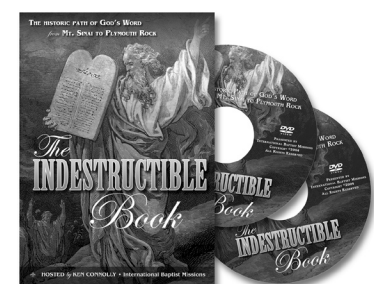
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THE BEREAN CALL

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December 2004

God So Loved...!

Dave Hunt

How wonderful to think that I am tenderly loved by God, the infinite Creator of the universe! That fact, if true, is so awesome that our finite minds are overwhelmed by the thought. But isn't this too good to be true? How can I be sure that God loves *me*? And what does that really mean?

When I was a boy in Sunday school, we used to sing in simple faith,

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Red and yellow, black and white,
All are precious in His sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Is this favorite song of children biblical? Indeed it is!

Mothers brought young children to Jesus and the disciples drove them away. Did the stern disciples think these children were not among the "elect"? No, the disciples had never been taught such a concept by Jesus. Their problem was the same pride and lack of love with which Christ indicted the Pharisees: "ye have not the love of God in you" (Jn 5:42).

Jesus took the children and blessed them, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mk 10:14).

Christ said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). Therefore, we know that the tender love and compassion toward these children displayed by Christ was the revelation of the Father's own heart of love toward all.

Is it possible that these particular children were a peculiar group in special favor with God? There is no indication of that at all. What Christ did and said for them could only have reflected His love for "all the children of the world," as the song says.

But when we are no longer innocent children—when we know we have sinned and are accountable for every thought, word, and deed—what then? Does God love us still, though we are hopelessly unworthy of His love? Could that be true? If not, there is no hope of salvation for anyone.

It is utterly impossible that finite, imperfect sinners could ever be worthy of God's infinite, perfect, and holy love. If God is to love us at all, it cannot be because of who *we* are, but *in spite* of who we are and only because of who *He* is.

"God is love" (1 Jn 4:8,16). Love is the very essence of His being. Therefore, He cannot but love all. And He has proved that fact by giving the Son of His love to die for the sins of the world.

The Scripture declares that the great manifestation of God's love is the gift of His Son: "For God *so loved the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son....God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us....In this was manifested the love of God toward us...God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him...hereby per-

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT
HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT
WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT
PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

—John 3:16

ceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us..." (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8; 1 Jn 3:16; 4:9,10, etc).

This truth of God's gift of a Savior to the world was announced at Christ's birth as "good tidings of great joy [for] all people" (Lk 2:10). Yet many claim that Christ died only for the sins of a select group called "the elect." They are thus the only ones to whom the birth of Christ could possibly be the source of "good tidings of great joy."

This teaching, which is growing in popularity and influence in the church, declares that "so loved the world" really means, "so loved *part* of the world." Clearly, if Christ did not die for all, then God couldn't have loved all, because the manifestation of His love is the death of His Son. There is no biblical basis for saying that God loves or ever loved those for whom Christ didn't die.

Some who hold this doctrine, however, attempt to say that God really loved everyone but not with the special love

He reserved for those for whom Christ sacrificed Himself upon the Cross. But a professed "love" that does not do all it can to rescue the one loved is not truly love. It is like hypocritically saying to the "naked and destitute...depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled" but not giving them what they need (Jas 2:16).

Worse yet, many who hold this doctrine unashamedly declare that God predestined multitudes to eternal torment before they were even born—multitudes He *could* have saved had He so desired. They say that God's love is displayed in His patience and temporal kindness toward all. No matter how much sunshine and rain, however, or other earthly blessings He might have given these non-elect, it would be irrational to say that God loved them in any way whatsoever.

Christ declared, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Lk 6:36). There is no question that we are to be merciful to all, even to those who hate and mistreat us. This can only be because God is merciful to all. If not, then in emulating our Father in heaven we need not be merciful to all either. Nor can it be said that it is merciful for God to fail to provide salvation for all who need it. Therefore, we can be certain that God loves all and has provided salvation for the entire world.

Another children's song says,

O if there is only one song I can sing,
When in His beauty I see the great King,
This shall my song in eternity be,
"O what a wonder that Jesus loves me!"

What a wonder indeed!

Paul exulted, "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20)! How could Paul be certain that God's love was for him? Did He have a special revelation that he was among "the elect"? Or had he simply embraced a love that the Bible declares is for all? It is of little value to exult in God's love unless one can be certain that this love is indeed for him.

Always a mixed multitude gathered to hear Christ. They were not confined to a select group called the elect. Many never would believe the gospel and are in hell today. Yet to all of them Christ said, "Love your enemies, bless them

that curse you, do good to them that hate you..." (Mt 5:44). This command was based upon the glorious truth that such is God's attitude toward all.

Christ declared that even sinners love and are kind to those who love and are kind to them. Surely God, who is infinite in love, would be no less benevolent to sinners and to those who make themselves His enemies than He commands us to be. We see this love in Christ, who prayed to the Father to forgive those who crucified and mocked Him (Lk 23:34). For that prayer to be answered, the Father had to make Christ's payment for sin available to all who would accept it.

Numerous scriptures declare that God loves all and desires the salvation of all. Such scriptures are adroitly sidestepped by those who deny that Christ died for all. Even such crystal clear scriptures as the following are explained away: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth...who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tm 2:4,6).

Regarding that verse, Spurgeon complained, "I was reading just now the exposition of [one] who explains the text so as to explain it away [as] if it read, 'Who *will not* have all men to be saved....'[In fact], the passage should run thus—'whose wish it is that all men should be saved....' As it is *my* wish...so it is God's wish that all men should be saved; for, assuredly, he is not less benevolent than we are"

(Charles H. Spurgeon, "Salvation by Knowing the Truth," (www.apibs.org/chs/1516.htm, 16 January 1880).

Scripture makes it abundantly clear that the only reason all are not saved is not because there are some whom God did not desire to save, but because they refused the salvation He provided in Christ. As the Law was for all, so salvation is provided for all those who break the Law and who thereby come under God's judgment.

Surely the Ten Commandments are not for a select group but for all mankind. Indeed, Paul declares that "the Gentiles which have not the law...shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness..." (Rom 2:14,15).

The very first commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Mt 22:37,38). It is unreasonable as well as unbiblical that God should command those to love Him with all their heart for whom Christ did not die and to whom, therefore, God did not manifest His love. How can they (whom

God does not love) be commanded to love Him?

The Bible declares, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19). The only way anyone can love God is in response to His love. Thus, if there are those for whom Christ did not die (and to whom, therefore, God's love was not manifested), they are under no obligation to love God. Yet all are so commanded. Therefore, Christ must have died for all.

Scripture assures us repeatedly that Christ "is the Saviour of all...specially of those that believe" (1 Tm 4:10); that Christ "by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb 2:9). The reference is not merely to physical death but to "the second death...[eternity in] the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rv 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). Only God could take that punishment for the world. Only He could "[bear] our sins in his own body on the tree [Cross]" (1 Pt 2:24) and thereby "take away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29).

This is why the Savior had to be "The mighty God, The everlasting Father" (Is 9:6). Jesus said, "I and my Father are

AND HOPE MAKETH NOT ASHAMED;
BECAUSE THE LOVE OF GOD IS SHED
ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY
GHOST WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO US.

—Romans 5:5

one" (Jn 10:30). To pay the penalty that His own infinite justice demanded for every sin from Adam to the end of the world, He had to endure the second death of eternal punishment in separation from God for all mankind who would ever exist. This He did on the Cross in those hours of darkness when He was heard to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1; Mt 27:46)!

The Old Testament sacrifices in Israel were a picture of the sacrifice that "the Lamb of God" (Jn 1:29, 36) would make of Himself to satisfy God's judgment upon sin. He alone could "through the eternal Spirit [offer] himself without spot to God" (Heb 9:14, 25), He "the just for the unjust [us], that he might bring us to God" (1 Pt 3:18).

God's relationship to Israel presents a picture of the relationship God desired for all mankind. Espoused to God, Israel committed adultery with many lovers—yet He begged her to come back and He would forgive and restore her (Jer 3:1-3; 4; etc.). That He loved her and desired to

bless her but could not because of her rebellion is repeatedly made clear: "O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways" (Ps 81:8-16); "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Is 1:2)!

God calls Israel His vineyard and indicts her for producing wild grapes in spite of the tender care He has showed upon her. Hear the cry of His heart: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" (Is 5:4). Such a question would be a mockery if Israel had not acted in willful disobedience but was actually doing what God had decreed!

Christ uses the same illustration: "Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down....And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not...cut it down" (Lk 13:7-9). The rabbis knew that He was indicting them. At the same time, He was reaffirming God's willingness to forgive if they would repent and turn to Him.

What a statement by Christ: "For God *so loved the world*..." (Jn 3:16)! That phrase, "*so loved*," indicates a love so fervent that it is beyond expression. Christ said, "The Father loveth the Son" (Jn 3:35; 5:20), and He refers fondly to "the love wherewith thou hast loved me" (Jn 17:26). This must be an infinite love.

The love of God to all mankind also had to be infinite to cause Him to give His only begotten Son to die for us "that we might live through him" (1 Jn 4:9). Paul exults in "...the great love wherewith he [God] loved us" (Eph 2:4). As great as His love for His Son is, so great must be God's love for all mankind to sacrifice His Son for our salvation.

John exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God" (1 Jn 3:1). How important that we revel in and understand and experience the love of God and, in the power and assurance of that love, declare it to the world.

Isaiah declares, "It pleased the Lord to bruise him" (Is 53:10). The Father was pleased to bruise Christ with the judgment we deserved for our sins, because He so loved us. May we stand firmly upon God's Word and declare this infinite love without compromise to all mankind through the gospel! TBC

Quotable

What is the reason that so many Christians are wasting their lives in the terrible bondage of the world instead of living in the manifestation and the privilege and the glory of the child of God...? There is one answer: it is *self* that is the root of the whole trouble...the life of Christ must take the place of the self-life; then alone can we be conquerors....If you trusted God and Jesus, you could not fall—but you trust yourself.

Andrew Murray, from a series of addresses in 1895 later revised and published as *The Indwelling Christ*, n.d., pp. 27-28

Many would like to unite church and stage...When the old faith is gone, and enthusiasm for the gospel is extinct, it is no wonder that the people seek something else in the way of delight. Lacking bread, they feed on ashes; rejecting the way of the Lord, they run greedily in the path of folly."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "Another Word Concerning the Down Grade," *The Sword and the Trowel*, 1887

God save you from the sin of paring down the gospel to suit the pride of men; God grant that you may deliver your message straight and full and plain. Only so, whatever else you may sacrifice, will you have one thing—the favour of the Lord Jesus Christ.

J. Gresham Machen

Q&A

Question: I've heard that Rick Warren is a graduate of Robert Schuller's Institute for Church Growth and that his teaching is merely Schuller's Possibility Thinking slightly reworded. Internet sites accuse Warren of continuing to teach at and to support Schuller's annual leadership Institute. Is that true?

Answer: The correct name of this annual event is the Robert H. Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership. As far as I know, Rick Warren has had nothing to do with this event since he was a keynote speaker in January 1997.

No reflection on Warren, who didn't invite them, but that conference was attended by more than 80 gay and lesbian pastors and lay leaders from the Metropolitan Community Churches, who took Schuller's training to help their churches grow. Schuller has also embraced Unity

(one of the most deceptive and anti-Christian cults) and spoken at the dedication of at least one of their churches (in Warren, Michigan) as well as at their headquarters in Lees Summit, MO, sharing his church growth techniques to help Unity deceive more of the gullible in their slide into hell.

Rick and his wife, Kay, attended Schuller's Institute for Successful Church leadership during his last year in seminary. "He had a profound influence on Rick," Kay says. "We were captivated by his positive appeal to nonbelievers" (*Christianity Today*, 11/18/2002).

Schuller calls Muslims "Christians," says we should not try to change anyone's "religion," went to Rome with plans of the Crystal Cathedral to obtain the "Holy Father's" blessing before building it, has shared his pulpit with Catholics, atheists, agnostics, and occultists, some of whom, such as Larry King, a Jewish agnostic, Schuller has asked to pray (See *TBC* reprints for further information).

Schuller has denied the gospel and the Lord so many times that it is difficult to understand how any Christian leader could ever consent to be on the same platform with him, much less speak in his church. Nevertheless, the keynote speakers announced for January 24-27, 2005 include Jack Hayford, Bill Hybels (as usual), Ruth Graham, and Kirbyjon Caldwell (an attendee for many years and whose 1999 Schulleresque book, *The Gospel of Good Success*, does not contain the gospel of salvation—see *TBC* 6/01). The theme for 2005 is "Finding and Fulfilling Your Mission: Proven Principles for Success."

The similarity between Schuller's teachings and Warren's "Purpose Driven" ideas cannot be denied. Warren has obviously patterned his approach to a "successful church" after what he learned from Schuller.

Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life*, which has sold more than 20 million copies and has been followed in its "Forty Days of Purpose" program by thousands of congregations, tells the reader that he is exactly the person God made and intended him to be. Missing is anything to convict the sinner of his rebellion against God and the coming judgment. It is all about success and fulfillment in this life. This humanistic approach is very appealing. No wonder corporations and athletic teams study it (NASCAR, Coca Cola, LPGA, Oakland Raiders, etc.). It echoes Schuller.

Consider the following from Schuller: "I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and, hence, counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise than...attempting to make people

aware of their lost and sinful condition" (*Time*, March 18, 1985). "To be born again...we must be changed from a negative to a positive self-image—from inferiority to self-esteem..." (Schuller, *Self-Esteem: the New Reformation*, p. 68); "If Christianity is to succeed...it must cease to be a negative religion and must become positive" (p. 104); "The classical error of historical Christianity is that we have never started with the value of the person. Rather, we have started from the 'unworthiness of the sinner...'" (p. 162).

Warren begins *Purpose* with "the value of the person," a theme repeated throughout. Although not guilty, as is Schuller, of outright contradiction of the gospel, Warren does a masterful job of removing from it anything that those who need it might find offensive. Anyone familiar with Schuller's writings recognizes an undertone of the same compromise in *The Purpose-Driven Life*.

We're not suggesting that Warren holds any of Schuller's heresies. Yet, like Hybels and other "church growth" gurus, he has definitely adopted many of Schuller's compromises and methods. When Schuller claims that he is the father of the church-growth movement, it is no idle boast.

The watered-down Schuller approach, designed to offend no one, is even reflected in Saddleback's doctrinal statements regarding, for example, "sin": "Every person, although endowed with the image of God, inherited a disobedient heart from Adam, the very first man. This attitude of disobedience (called sin in the Bible)—unless rectified through Christ—forever keeps man from forming a relationship with his Creator."

Missing is any explanation of Christ's payment on the Cross for sin. Nor does not "forming a relationship with his Creator" even come close to "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jn 3:36); "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rv 20:15).

Like Schuller, Warren encourages everyone to attend his pastor-training programs, including Mormons, Catholics, Jews, and women pastors, in spite of the SBC ban on the latter. "'Why be divisive?' he asks, citing as his model Billy Graham..." (See News Alert).

Question: I live in Bermuda and read with interest what you said in *Occult Invasion* (p. 43) about Henry Gross dowsing over a map of Bermuda while in Kennebunkport, Maine, and locating three well sites on the map, which were drilled and which produce much of Bermuda's water today. Yet many people here have their own private wells.

Answer: The plaque citing this event has been on that wall in Kennebunkport for many decades, and I have never heard of its claim being challenged by any authority.

My wife, Ruth, and I were recently in Bermuda, where I was the speaker at a church conference. While there, I talked with Mark Rowe, the head hydro-geologist for the Bermuda Water Works. He knew the story of the three well sites allegedly located by the dowser and said that two were very productive, but the water in the third was brackish. These remain the major sources of public drinking water, but they cannot supply the need.

As you know, every home has a specially designed roof for catching rain water that is piped into storage tanks below, supplying much of the drinking water consumed. Imported bottled water is in huge demand.

Yes, there are about 3,000 private wells, but it is unlawful to drink from any of them. The water they supply can only be used for non-drinking purposes, whereas the wells located by Henry Gross as he dowsed over the map produce drinking water. Other dowsers have in like manner located buried cities and minerals on maps.

There is no rational or scientific relationship between lines drawn on paper forming a map and anything in the ground the map represents. Such information can only come from a nonhuman source. Inasmuch as God has forbidden divination such as dowsing (Dt 18, etc.), the data must come from a demonic source.

Occultists have a tendency to exaggerate. In this case, however, the story seems to be basically true.

Question: What do you think of the Euro coins issued by the Vatican containing the image of Pope John Paul II?

Answer: The Vatican is not only a city but a state as well. Every state in the EU is allowed to have the images it desires on its own money. Far more interesting are the Euro coins, paper bills, and stamps with pictures of a woman riding a beast.

Question: Sir, if today you die, are you 100 percent sure you would go to heaven? How can I, a Muslim, have that assurance?

Answer: I am 100 percent certain because of the teaching in the Bible. I know the Bible is the Word of the one true God for many reasons: it is archaeologically and historically verifiable, it has hundreds of prophecies that have been fulfilled centuries and even thousands of years after they were recorded, it rings true to

the conscience, and I have experienced in my own life the fulfillment of the salvation it offers.

There is no way that any sinner could pay the infinite penalty for his sins. All religions attempt to appease the gods or spirits with various occult ceremonies and sacrifices—but such efforts wouldn't even pay for a traffic ticket and surely won't be accepted by God. It is a matter of justice. The "ticket" has been written out on every one of us because of our sin, and the penalty has to be paid.

Islam has no solution for sin. No one in Islam paid the penalty for mankind. The Qur'an commands Muhammad to confess his sin, but that wouldn't remove his guilt. Muhammad couldn't even pay for his own sins, much less for those of others. Dying as a suicide bomber won't pay for sin. Any religion that offers paradise for committing suicide and murdering innocent women and children in the process is false and ought to be condemned.

We have the record of eyewitnesses and many proofs that Jesus Christ is God come to earth through a virgin birth and that He paid the penalty for our sins in His death, literally resurrected, ascended to heaven, and is coming again. He offers forgiveness of sins and an eternal home in heaven to all who will believe on Him. There is no other way.

Question: If only those in the church are resurrected and taken to heaven at the Rapture, when do Old Testament saints get resurrected? If at the Rapture, then wouldn't they be in the church?

Answer: Before Christ's resurrection, the souls and spirits of Old Testament believers went, upon death to "Abraham's bosom" (Lk 16:22,23), where Christ's soul and spirit went upon His death as did the believing thief crucified with Him: "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Lk 23:43). When Christ ascended to heaven after His resurrection, He took these believers with Him.

It cannot only be those who died in faith in Christ since His resurrection, but Old Testament believers as well, who are described as the "saints" who come back with Christ at the Second Coming to the Mount of Olives (Zec 14:4,5; Jude 14), "those who sleep in Jesus" (1 Thes 4:14) and "the dead in Christ" (v. 16) resurrected at the Rapture. If Abraham, who "rejoiced to see [Christ's] day" (Jn 8:56) and David and Isaiah, who foretold the Crucifixion and Resurrection, are not raised from the dead at the Rapture, they never will be resurrected.

The only other mention of a resurrection of believers is of those who "were beheaded [by antichrist]...which had not worshiped the beast" (Rv 20:4), completing

the "first resurrection" (Rv 20:5). Old Testament saints must therefore be resurrected at the Rapture, and are in the church.

All Jews and Gentiles who believe on Christ before the Second Coming are in the church. Those who (whether Jews or Gentiles) only believe when they see Christ return at Armageddon will continue alive into the Millennium as the earthly people.

News Alert

EVANGELICAL PREACHES AT SALT LAKE TABERNACLE (www.deseretnews.com, November 15, 2004). Taking the pulpit [in the Salt Lake Tabernacle for an "Evening of Friendship,"] to speak of the event's historic nature, Fuller Theological Seminary President Richard Mouw addressed a capacity crowd of several thousand, offering a stunningly candid apology to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and noting that "friendship has not come easily between our communities." He dubbed the evening "historic" and apologized that Evangelicals "have often misrepresented the faith and beliefs of the Latter-day Saints."

"Let me state it clearly. We evangelicals have sinned against you," he said, adding both camps have tended to marginalize and simplify the others' beliefs.

Historical animosity dating back to the founding of the LDS Church by Joseph Smith in 1830 has heightened in recent years between the two groups, particularly in the 1990s, when several high-profile evangelical leaders asserted that "Mormons are not Christians."

Mouw noted the 200th anniversary of Joseph Smith's birthday next December and several scholarly events planned to celebrate during the coming year. "I hope many in the evangelical community will take part in those events," he said.

[TBC: This may be shocking to an evangelical only if he or she has been oblivious to the exponentially developing ecumenical movement in the U.S. and abroad. Richard Mouw was one of the signers of "Evangelicals & Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium." Fuller Theological Seminary has led the way in compromising the faith through its various missions and church-growth endeavors. Its most famous grad, Rick Warren, Ph.D., in his Purpose-Driven, church-growth seminars, has made "welcome Catholics, Methodists, Mormons, Jews and ordained women. 'I'm not going to get into a debate over the non-essentials. I won't try to change other denominations. Why be divisive?'" ("This evangelist has a 'Purpose,'" by Cathy Lynn Grossman, USA Today, 7/21/2003)]

Dave's Itinerary

Dec. 5	Calvary Chapel Fort Worth Fort Worth TX 817-838-8381
Jan. 12	Berean Calvary Chapel Kirkville NY 315-656-7107
Jan. 13-16	Calvary Chapel Finger Lakes Farmington NY 585-398-3550

Letters

Dear Sirs,

Please take me off your mailing list. You are way too radical. So you don't like Seeker Churches. I guess you don't care if those "seekers" go to hell. Not everybody is a Bible scholar. First you have to get people to come to your church. Then you can educate them. Contemporary churches can be a lot of fun. Whoever said that church can't be fun? God wants us to celebrate what He has done for us. But I guess you guys want to be some exclusive club. Don't think too much of yourselves. God wants *all* people to hear the Good News. I could write much more but I have no time. I have to prepare for my "Purpose Driven Life" study group. Wherever people come together to talk about who God is and who we are and what life is all about—that cannot be a bad thing. So please back off badmouthing contemporary churches. You have to give people a chance to grow. Not everybody grew up "in the church." SS (IA)

Dear Dave Hunt,

Thank you for your ministry. I think you come down hard sometimes on those you take to task, but maybe they deserve it. We've gone beyond "flabby" to seduced, as a church, and I appreciate your Berean spirit and prophetic voice. PB (TX)

Dear Berean Call,

My family and I were Christian missionaries in Costa Rica and Spain for twelve years....When we came back to the United States, we were in a spiritual "shell shock." Although there are many wonderful things that the Lord is doing, I find apathy, entertainment, and shallowness in the church today. I guess that's what happens when "the fire goes out." JH (WA)

Dear TBC,

I've recently encountered Calvinist folks, and it seems as if they [think they] are the only ones with the right theology and view of Scriptures. They even call themselves "Biblical Calvinists" or "Reformed Theologians"....I'm just simply disappointed

at this theological slant and I would like to educate myself more and try to educate others. Please extend my deepest heartfelt admiration to Dave Hunt for taking the stance that he does concerning this theological error of Calvinism. RR (IL)

To Dave and T.A. at TBC,

Just received your October 2004 *TBC*, ironically on my way home from a "Purpose Driven Life" small group. My now former church is doing a 40-Days-of-Purpose thing. My new church just preaches God's Word....They preach God's Word in season and out. During the small groups at my former church, we did not open our Bibles—just *The Purpose Driven Life*. God bless you, Dave and T.A. Your ministry is a much-needed wakeup call. Biblical preaching is fast disappearing these days. EP (CA)

To the Berean Call,

Please remove us IMMEDIATELY from your mailing list. Pastor Rick Warren is a true man of God. He is a mentor and wonderful example of true Christianity. JB (PA)

Dear Dave and Friends,

Thank you for your excellent articles, "The Vanishing Gospel," and "The Seeker Friendly Way of Doing Church." I really appreciate how you tell it straight and expose error. My church, too, fell prey to "Purpose Driven Church" principles and fell into awful apostasy. HL (Canada)

Dear Dave,

Thank you for your recent newsletters, which addressed the growing movements of the megachurch and "seeker" churches. We left a church five years ago for following Warren's book....A year ago we left our church for its constant referrals to psychology. We've been visiting "everything" for the past year and are so amazed that nothing seems to be sacred anymore. CG (AR)

Mr Dave Hunt,

In your September 2004 issue of *The Berean Call* in the Q&A column, a questioner challenged the singularity of the Hebrew noun for the English word "stripes." I called my Christian Hebrew friend who is an Israeli Sabra, now 25 years a believer in Messiah, as to the exact noun in the Hebrew scripture of Isaiah 53:5. He said it is singular, not plural, definitely, i.e., [it describes] Jehovah's stripe of judgment in the three hours of darkness and not men's wicked dealings, which could never answer to God's demands of righteousness. TK (NJ)

TBC:

Thank you so much for saying, in a very articulate way, what our spirit has been groaning for the last year and a half. Many of our so-called squared-away, biblically based churches in Southern California are embracing this junk wholeheartedly. In fact, we left our home church...for this very reason. But *rejoice!* The Holy Spirit directed us to a Bible-and-Bible-only-preaching church (Warren has ruined the word "purpose" for our pastor, who sent us your article "The Purpose and the Passion.") Keep up the good work and focus! (email)

Dear Dave and All,

We were so thankful for the last issue's topic, "Taste and See," September '04. We were discussing in our Sunday class the revelation of how many self-described "born again" Christians do not hold to a biblical worldview. Only nine percent do. And we are losing our teens. Your topic is so current and, as always, right to the point—*The Message Bible*, *Revolve Bible*, etc. WD (OR)

TBC Notes

Less is More

If you were aware of Dave's printed itinerary over 2004, you noticed that some months it took up a half column or more. His travels this year had him away nearly as much as he was home. Although this was a blessing for those who got to hear him personally (as well as for him!), the trips took their toll on his writing productivity.

The goal for 2005 is to cut back appreciably on travel. Less time on the road reaching limited numbers of people means more time at home producing more resource materials, i.e., books, audios, videos, etc., that will reach a larger audience.

So, if your request to have Dave speak is regretfully turned down, don't take it personally. It has to do with him trying to be as fruitful and productive as he can be in these days when the need for spiritual discernment has reached an unprecedented level in the church.

T.A. McMahon
Executive Director

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CLEARLY, GOD IN HIS OMNISCIENCE has foreknown from eternity past who, when convicted of sin and drawn by His Holy Spirit, would willingly respond to the gospel. On the basis of that foreknowledge He predestined, or elected, those particular persons to special blessings: "...To be conformed to the image of his Son...unto obedience...." Paul adds another blessing: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1:4). Dave Breese writes, "We also notice that election in Scripture is not unto salvation, but 'unto obedience....' [In] Romans chapter 8...predestination is based upon the foreknowledge of God, and its object is not salvation but conformity to the image of Christ." *

- ✓ *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God....(1 THESSALONIANS 1:4)*
- ✓ *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. (1 PETER 1:2)*
- ✓ *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.... (2 PETER 1:10) **

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT

ELECTION

Paul and Peter are encouraging Christians with what God has in store for those who believe the gospel. As Paul declares, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit..." (1 Corinthians 2:9–10).

Furthermore, not only is predestination/election never said to be unto salvation, but Paul carefully separates predestination from salvation whether in its call, its justification, or its glorification: "whom he did predestinate, them he *also* [*kai*] called...them he *also* [*kai*] justified...them he *also* [*kai*] glorified" (Romans 8:30). The Greek *kai* shows that a distinction is being made: predestination is not the same as calling, justification, or glorification. Hobbs comments, "Predestination...simply means that God has predetermined that those who respond affirmatively to His call...will be justified...and furthermore will be glorified. All of this is 'according to His purpose'...." * The plain meaning of the text is clear.

Five scriptures that pertain to the general subject of election:

- ✓ *That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.... (ROMANS 9:11)*
- ✓ *There is a remnant according to the election of grace. (ROMANS 11:5)*

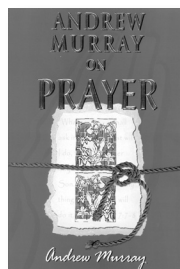
These scriptures present the following truths: (1) God works a definite purpose through election; (2) election involves not all mankind but a "remnant"; (3) election is according to God's grace; (4) election is "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"; and (5) some responsibility rests upon the elect to make their "election sure."

If election is to salvation by Irresistible Grace without any intelligent or moral choice on man's part, it would be impossible to be sure of one's election. But if election is to service and blessing, Peter is reinforcing in different words Paul's exhortation to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1–6).

Thus, to make one's election sure is to fulfill the responsibility that comes with election, not to somehow be sure that one is among the elect and thus eternally saved. Marvin R. Vincent, an authority on biblical languages explains, "*Ekloge*, election [is] used of God's selection of men or agencies for special missions or attainments.... [Nowhere] in the New Testament is there any warrant for the revolting doctrine that God predestined a definite number of mankind to eternal life, and the rest to eternal destruction." *

These quotations and surrounding context have been excerpted directly from the newly published hardcover edition of Dave Hunt's book, **What Love Is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God. The expanded and updated second printing is 576 pages and includes full footnotes, bibliography, and index.*

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



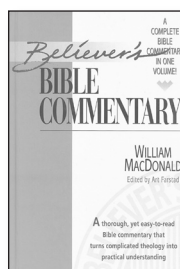
Andrew Murray on Prayer

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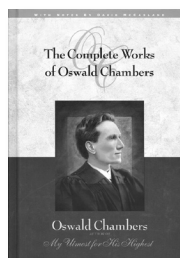


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Countdown to the Second Coming

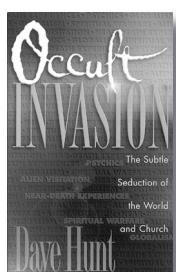
Hunt—Who is the Antichrist? How will he be recognized? How are current events indicators that we really are in the last of the last days? Using Scripture and up-to-date information,

Dave draws the exciting conclusion that time is indeed short. This book instructs, encourages, warns, and strengthens, urging readers to “walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5: 15,16). [Note: Hardcover edition limited to stock on hand; orders will be filled according to the date received. Limit 2 per person.]

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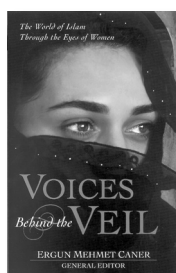
Occult Invasion

Hunt—There is not a person alive who has not been impacted in some way by the “invasion” documented in this book. You will find it indispensable as personal, almost encyclopedic reference to

a wide spectrum of occult thinking and practice wherever they exist. You will also find it an invaluable resource to lend or give to others who have been affected by the insidious incursion of a new and deadly “spirituality.” Harvest House Publishers, 599 pp.

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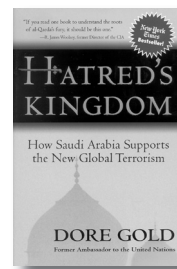
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Caner—How can we minister to more than half a billion women living their lives peering out from behind veils? To the outside world, their lives are mysterious, misunderstood, and often

marked by hardship and suffering. This groundbreaking work, written by Christian women intimately familiar with the world of Islam and Islamic women, looks at the real experience of Muslim women at every stage of life. Kregel, 218 pp.

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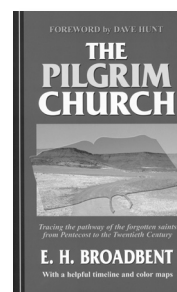
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Gold— Fascinating exposé of the political and religious origin of modern terrorism. Known in the West as Wahhabism, the “Oneness of God” alliance, formed in 1744 by two Saudi men, condemned

all who would not accept their doctrine, making it acceptable to kill them and confiscate their property. Oil, money, intrigue, world wars, terrorism, and the national security interests of the West are interwoven with the history of Saudi Arabia. Extensively documented with canceled checks, payment schedules to the families of suicide bombers, high-level intelligence reports and more. Dore Gold is the president of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and served as Israel's ambassador to the United Nations from 1997-1999. Regnery Publishing, Inc. 309 pp.

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The Pilgrim Church

Broadbent— This classic work demonstrates that the true heart of Christianity is not recorded in secular history or even in church history books. Who

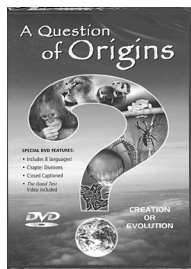
were the Waldensians? The Lollards? The Stundists? The Anabaptists? These names were given by their enemies to those who claimed only the name of Christ and who were prepared to suffer for His cause rather than submit to man's traditions, which contradicted the Word of God. Ruth Hunt says, “Many years ago, this book was my introduction to those faithful companies of believers who, from the first centuries, have existed apart from the Church of Rome. In peril of their lives, these persecuted Christians dared to believe and to preach the true gospel of Jesus Christ and often sealed their testimony with their blood. We're overjoyed to see this book available again after being out of print for some years. *The Pilgrim Church* is a classic. It has moved me as no other similar book has.” Gospel Folio Press, 422 pp.

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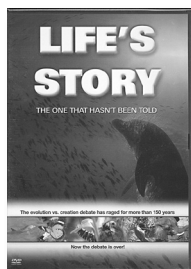
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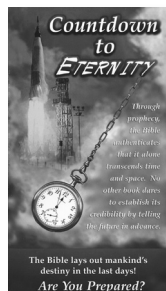
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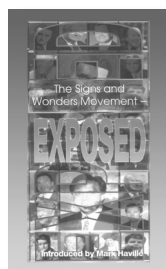


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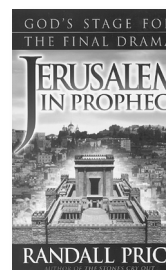


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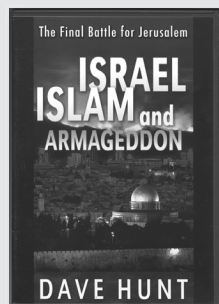
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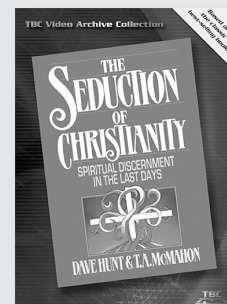
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