

THE BEREAN CALL

P.O. Box 7019 Bend, Oregon 97708

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Loving God

Dave Hunt

Jesus was asked by a lawyer who was trying to trap Him (insincerely addressing Him as “Master”), “[W]hich is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mt 22:35-40).

Christ was quoting scriptures (Lv 19:18,34; Dt 6:5) that divide the Ten Commandments into two parts: 1-3, which He designated as “the first and great commandment,” and 5-10, as the “second” commandment. The first three (Ex 20:2-7) involve reverence and worship of God; then comes the special treatment of the sabbath (8-11), which Christ purposely ignored; and the last six (12-17) deal with human relationships.

The fourth commandment, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex 20:8-11), was conspicuously absent from Christ’s teaching and example. He and His disciples were often accused of breaking the sabbath. Christ replied that the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath, and that He was Lord of the sabbath.

Resting on the seventh day was prescribed only for Israel (Ex 31:17; Ps 147:19-20; Mal 4:4, etc.). The other nine commandments are written in every conscience: “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law [the entire law given to Israel alone], do by nature the things contained in the law [they] shew the work of the [moral] law written in their hearts...” (Rom 2:14,15). But God has not written in *anyone’s* conscience to keep the sabbath holy.

Resting on the sabbath reminded Israel that God created the universe in six literal 24-hour days and rested on the seventh. This commemoration of the old creation was given to Israel, to whom God promised a special place on this earth in Christ’s millennial kingdom. Those in the church (whether Jew or Gentile), who are “new creatures” in Christ (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15) and look forward to the destruction of the old and the creation of the “new heavens and new earth” (2 Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1), do not celebrate the old creation. Instead, following

the example of the early church (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2), they meet together to worship on the first day of a new week, the day of our Lord’s resurrection as “the firstborn from the dead” (Col 1:18), looking forward to their own resurrection to be forever with and like Him.

Christ’s declaration that “on these two commandments [which do not include keeping the sabbath] hang all the law and the prophets” tells us a great deal. Unfortunately, Seventh-day Adventists have so emphasized keeping the sabbath (though they don’t keep it as commanded to Israel) as to make it not only their distinctive but the litmus test of who is following Scripture. They even declare that “Sunday worship” is the “mark of the Beast.” Then the early church, including Paul, took that mark!

Inasmuch as to love God with all one’s heart, mind, and soul is, according to Christ, the greatest commandment, surely not to do

churches requires giving “worshippers” what they want. But isn’t a large church to be preferred over a small one, and wouldn’t the ends justify the means? That idea is not found in Scripture.

It should be obvious to any thinking observer that today’s “worship music” is designed to please man, even the carnal and unsaved, and not God. In *The Purpose Driven Church* (p. 279), Rick Warren boldly declares, “We use the style of music the majority of people in our church listen to on the radio...contemporary pop/rock.” This is the world’s music, and it draws the worldly into the church.

In plain words, the music in purpose-driven churches is not chosen because it pleases God, but man. Purpose-driven worship is less about worshiping God than about entertaining the “worshippers.” That is its deliberate design. Thus, the music and the entire “program” (like any secular performance) must appeal to the audience rather than to the One whom they are supposedly worshipping!

In *Born After Midnight*, A.W. Tozer declared, “Much singing...has in it more of romance than it has of the Holy Ghost. Words and music [don’t reflect] the reverent intimacy of the adoring saint, but the impudent familiarity of the carnal lover.”

Nor are those churches that are driven by the new “purpose,” which has become the vision of tens of thousands of today’s pastors, the only ones that have turned worship upside down and inside out. The same is true of thousands of other churches that have forgotten the fact that worship, far from being for *our* enjoyment, is supposed to be directed toward *God*! Rare is the awesome reverence that befits those bowing in His presence to sing His praise. The attitude, dress, and sensuality of many “worship teams” and their “music” would not be tolerated for a moment by God before His throne!

Worship on earth should be the beginning of what we will continue for eternity in heaven. Any “worship” that would not be appropriate before God’s throne should not be allowed in any church. Our song throughout eternity will be “unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Rv 5:13). Instead, the contemporary Christian music industry is almost all about money, popularity, and glorifying the “artists.” It is a performance. Is God as interested in performance as are the fans? Or does He desire our worship?

**He sheweth his word unto Jacob,
his statutes and his judgments
unto Israel. He hath not dealt so
with any nation...**

Psalm 147:19-20

so would be the greatest sin—a fact that must concern us all! Yet this vital truth is rarely emphasized in pulpits, on Christian radio, television, or in Christian books. How can that be? Surely each one of us must share some of the blame and repent before the Lord for failing to love Him as we ought.

Part of the explanation for this glaring deficiency is that to love God one must know Him intimately—and that takes more time than most Christians are willing to devote to their Lord and Savior out of their busy and worldly schedules. Not that love for Christ is entirely lacking—it just doesn’t rate very high on the “to-do list” of most church-goers. Nor does attending church each Sunday change that outlook.

Today’s great emphasis upon “growth” has all but crowded out fervently loving God in “seeker friendly” churches. Humbly worshipping “in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:23), with all honor given to God and none to man, doesn’t attract so-called “seekers.” The wisdom of the hour, influenced by the world’s marketing and promotion techniques, dictates that creating large

Seemingly forgotten, in church as well as in daily life, is the command to love God with all of one's heart, mind, and soul. Undeniably, this *command* (God did not give us *suggestions*) is to all mankind, not just to an "elect" who have been pre-chosen for heaven. A command requires obedience and commitment; it does not wait for feelings. Loving God is not a Hollywood romance—"falling in love" only to fall out again. Obedience begins with a determination to obey.

There is a popular teaching that multitudes, whom God could have saved had He so desired, have been predestined to eternal torment before they were born. If that is true, it cannot be said that God loves those whom He has thus doomed. Nor is it reasonable that these whom God, according to this teaching, does not love should be commanded to love Him! Are ungodly sinners to be more loving than God?

John declares: "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19). Thus, those whom God does not love have no basis for obeying this command. But the command is for all, proving that God indeed loves all and truly desires all to be saved. The command to love God is an invitation to rebellious sinners to repent and return to Him.

That all are commanded to love God makes it very clear that the Father did not send the Son to die in a limited atonement for only a select group but for all. Yet there are those who insist that when the Scriptures say "who will have [desires] all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tm 2:4), what is really meant is "not all men but all *kinds* of men"—or that God "has two wills: a will of desire and a will of decree." Because all are to love Him, we know that the God who *is* love indeed loves and desires the salvation of all.

Yes, God loves even a Hitler as well as an innocent child, because He *is* love (1 Jn 4:8, 16) and cannot but love man whom He created, no matter how rebellious and hateful toward God. Surely the love of the infinite God must itself be infinite. That fact was proved at the Cross, where Christ paid sin's penalty for all mankind, asking His Father to forgive even those who nailed Him there and who mocked Him in His agony. It is only in gratitude for such divine love that we can love God as we ought.

The command is to love God "with all thine heart." We are to be devoted wholly to God! The hundreds of usages of this word in the Old and New Testaments make it clear that the "heart" was created in man so that he could willingly and lovingly yield it to God in response to His love. Man is not a puppet. He is a voluntary, knowing participant *with* God.

To be saved, one must believe the gospel

with one's whole heart (Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9). In the gospel, which we must believe to be saved, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).

There are those who deny that man has a will and who insist that God must *cause* him to do whatever he does. Neither Scripture nor human experience supports this belief. In fact, Scripture presents both sides: God moving upon the heart, and man willingly giving himself in obedience and love.

The Psalmist prays to God, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies" (Ps 119:36); but he also says, "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end" (Ps 119:112). Deuteronomy 30 begins, "the LORD... will circumcise thine heart... to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and... soul" (v. 6). But the rest of the chapter is all about man's willing response: "If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments... if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul" (v. 10); "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee... to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways... that thou mayest live and

My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.
Proverbs 23:26

multiply.... But if thine heart turn away... ye shall surely perish.... therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the LORD thy God... and obey his voice, and... cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" (15-20).

Sometimes both sides are given in the same verse: "...every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even everyone whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it" (Ex 36:2).

Yes, there are some verses that sound as though God must do it all: To Israel in the wilderness of Sinai He says, "Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive... eyes to see... ears to hear" (Dt 29:4); "God gave him [Saul] another heart" (1 Sm 10:9); of those who followed Saul in the early days, "whose hearts God had touched" (1 Sm 10:26); David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps 51:10), etc.

But there are many more verses that place the responsibility fully upon man: "with perfect heart they offered willingly

to the LORD" (1 Chr 29:9); "thy law is within my heart" (Ps 40:8); "My heart is inditing a good matter" (45:1); "The fool hath said in his heart" (53:1); "My heart is fixed, O God" (57:7); "pour out your heart before him" (62:8); "set not your heart upon..." (62:10); "even to such as are of a clean heart" (73:1); "I will praise thee, O Lord... with all my heart" (86:12); "Harden not your heart" (95:8); "Blessed are they that... seek him with the whole heart" (119:2), etc.

There are many similar scriptures that put the responsibility for loving and obeying God squarely on man without any hint of God causing or even helping the willing and loving heart. For example: Ex 35:5, 21, 29; Lv 1:3; 19:5; 22:19, 29; Dt 10:12, 13; 11:13; 13:3; Jos 22:5; 1 Kgs 11:2; 1 Chr 28:9; Ezk 33:31; Dn 1:8; 1 Kgs 7:37; 1 Pt 1:22, etc. But tragically, this God-given ability to choose has been perverted by some who are highly honored in the church.

In his book, *If It's Going To Be, It's Up To Me* (pp. 142, 146), Robert Schuller has said: "Connect with this Higher Power. Listen to the call of your heart of hearts to become a believer in God... Connect with me and come to love and listen to the God within you." Yet God says, "The heart is deceitful... and desperately wicked" (Jer 17:9), and Christ declared, "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries..." (Mt 15:19).

God's loving offer of salvation is not to a select elect but to all. In love, He calls the most ungodly sinners to repent and to turn to Him with the whole heart: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Is 55:7); "ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer 29:13).

Christ promises salvation to all who will come to Him in faith: "If *any man* thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (Jn 7:37); "Come unto me, *all* ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). Surely such love ought to awaken within each of us the passion to love God with our whole heart!

Hymns written by those who knew and loved the Lord intimately and expressed it eloquently and with sound doctrine have been cast aside. This rich heritage has been replaced by shallow, repetitive lyrics joined to the pop/rock that Rick Warren says the world loves. We need to recover this spiritual treasure and to sing again in loving gratitude and with reverent awe of "the love that drew salvation's plan... the grace that brought it down to man... the mighty gulf that God did span, at Calvary!"

TBC

Quotable

Let me state the cause of my burden. It is this: *Jesus Christ has today almost no authority among the groups that call themselves by His name....* “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” is the church’s national anthem and the cross is her official flag, but in the week-by-week services of the church and the day-by-day conduct of her members someone else, not Christ, makes the decisions [and] decide[s] the moral standards...objectives and all methods employed to achieve them. Because of long and meticulous organization it is now possible for the youngest pastor just out of seminary to have more actual authority in a church than Jesus Christ has....

The Lordship of Jesus...has been relegated to the hymnal where all responsibility to it may be comfortably discharged in a glow of pleasant religious emotion....That the Man Christ Jesus has absolute and final authority over the whole church and over all its members in every detail of their lives is simply not now accepted as true by the rank and file of evangelical Christians.

A.W. Tozer, The Best of A.W. Tozer, 1978, pp. 88-89

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you...” John xiii, 34.

“Even as I have loved you...” is the command of Him who asks nothing that He has not provided, and now offers to bestow. It is the assurance that He expects nothing from us, that He does not work in us. “*Even as I have loved you* and every moment am pouring out that love upon you through the Holy Spirit, **EVEN SO** do ye love one another.” The measure, the strength, and the work of your love you will find in Christ’s love to you.

Andrew Murray, Like Christ, 1895, p. 127

Q&A

Question: Why do the terrorists behead the hostages? Is that just for the effect it causes, the horror and fear it creates, or is there some other reason?

Answer: There is a precise reason: beheading is prescribed by the Qur’an for the purpose of forcing the entire world into submission to Allah. It is the penalty meted out to those who refuse to become Muslims: “Now when ye meet in battle those who disbelieve, then it is smiting of the necks...” (Surah 47:4). That is why beheading of non-Muslims was practiced by Muhammad and his early followers, and all through the

history of Islam in its slaughter of millions, from France to China. The same is true today in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Sudan, Nigeria, Afghanistan, and anywhere else Muslims have the power to do so. Those who perpetrate this outrage against human rights and dignity are zealous Muslims who would deny that they are terrorists. They simply claim to be following Allah’s command and the example of Muhammad and his successors.

If the hostages who’ve been executed by terrorists in Iraq or elsewhere had been willing to become Muslims, they would have been spared. However, that option was probably not even offered, because it would undermine the threat of death used for bargaining purposes. The practice of beheading is a public notification that these are Muslims acting in obedience to Allah with the intention of terrifying the entire world into converting to Islam.

Question: Hank Hanegraaff states that “All the promises to Israel have already been fulfilled according to Joshua 21:43-45.” Is that correct?

Answer: Absolutely not. Even a superficial reading of the passage, along with minimal biblical knowledge and a little common sense, reveals the fallacy of this claim by so many who believe that the church has replaced Israel! Joshua 21:43-45 simply declares that all of God’s promises to Israel about giving her the land of Canaan had been fulfilled. But there are hundreds of other promises to Israel contained in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, et al., which were not even given until centuries after Joshua and, therefore, could not possibly have been fulfilled in Israel’s initial conquest of Canaan. Moreover, there were many other promises from God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob long before Joshua, which were not and could not have been fulfilled in Joshua’s day.

Consider God’s promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, “In thee [and in thy seed] shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gn 12:3; 26:4; 28:14), referring to the Messiah, who came more than 1,000 years after Joshua. And what of the promises of Messiah’s coming to redeem Israel and all mankind given to Israel by her prophets centuries after Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land? Surely their fulfillment was yet future in Joshua’s day. Indeed, the promise of redemption through the Messiah has not yet been completely fulfilled even today, as the gospel is still going out around the world.

God gave the land of Canaan to Abraham and to his seed “for ever” (Gn 13:15) by “an everlasting covenant” (Gn 17:

7, 19; 1 Chr 16:17, etc.) for “an everlasting possession” (Gn 17:8)—and, by their very nature, it will take eternity to fulfill those promises. These (and many others) were promises for Israel and could never apply to the church, yet that is the claim of those who, like Hank, teach that God is finished with Israel and that the Great Tribulation occurred under Nero.

Hundreds of other promises were given to Israel centuries after Joshua’s day and thus could not have been fulfilled at that time: “the time of Jacob’s trouble... he shall be saved out of it” (Jer 30:7); two thirds of all Jews will be killed (Zec 13:8,9)—this, the worst tribulation that Israel and the world will ever have seen, must be “shortened [or] there should no flesh be saved” (Mt 24:21,22). Moreover, God promised Israel and David that his throne would be established “for ever” (2 Sm 7:12-16) in Jerusalem, which, though destroyed (Dn 9:26; Mt 24:2; Lk 21:6, etc.), would be restored (Jer 31:38-40; Ezk 37:26-28; Zec 14:11-16, etc.)—clearly not fulfilled in Joshua’s day, when Jerusalem didn’t yet belong to Israel.

None of the many promises God made long after Joshua died regarding Jerusalem could have been fulfilled at the time of Joshua 21:43-45. Jerusalem became the subject of numerous promises to Israel, which are still being fulfilled: “the city of God...God is in the midst of her” (Ps 46:4-5); “the joy of the whole earth...the city of the Lord of hosts...God will establish it forever” (Ps 48:1-8, etc.), “trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Lk 21:24). And what of the many prophecies that Israel would be scattered among all nations (Dt 28:64; Neh 1:8; Am 9:9, etc.), preserved and brought back (Dt 30:3, etc.), and that “all Israel shall be saved” (Rom 11:26)? Clearly, none of these had come to pass at the time Hank says all promises were fulfilled. Many promises are still future and could not possibly apply to the church but only to Israel.

And what of Jerusalem being made a “cup of trembling unto all the people round about when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem” and “a burdensome stone for all people” (Zec 12:2,3)? And what of God making the governors of Judah like “a torch of fire in a sheaf [to] devour all the people round about” (12:6) and God bringing “all nations against Jerusalem to battle” (14:2), the Messiah returning to rescue Israel (12:9,10), every Jew being supernaturally brought back to Israel with not one left among the nations (Ezk 39:28; Mt 24:30,31)? And what of Christ establishing His rule over the earth on David’s throne, with Israel being fully restored to sinless fellowship with Him and to her land with endless peace (Is 2:1-5;

9:6-7; Ezk 34:11-16, 23,24; 36:8-12, 15, Zec 14:9-21)? These were all fulfilled at Joshua 21: 43-45? Hardly!

The astonishing claim that all of God's promises to Israel had already been fulfilled in Joshua's day reveals the depths of the delusion that grips those who insist that Israel no longer has any significance in God's purposes.

Question: You said that the blood of Jesus shed during the beatings by Roman soldiers was not efficacious for our salvation but that the blood shed on the cross was. Since that, too, was caused by Roman soldiers driving nails into His hands and feet, and a Roman spear piercing His side, why did the blood shed on the cross cleanse our sins but the blood of the scourging did not?

Answer: I did not suggest that Christ's blood that was shed through His scourging and the crown of thorns had *nothing* to do with our salvation. I simply stated that it was not *sufficient* for our redemption. I pointed that out because Gibson's movie gives the false impression that Christ's suffering, endured at the hands of Roman soldiers, paid for the sins of the world. In fact, it was Yahweh who laid upon Christ our sins; and it was God's bruising of Christ that meted out the penalty that purchased our redemption. "Stripes" is a wrong translation in the KJV, as elsewhere. The Hebrew word is singular and indicates one blow from God in bruising Christ "for our iniquities" (Is 53:5).

For that position, I was criticized by a number of "experts" who wrote to correct me. Thankfully, some genuine Hebrew experts (from Seminary professors who teach Old Testament Hebrew, to Jews who are fluent in Hebrew, to other scholars) wrote to declare unequivocally that the Hebrew word translated as "stripes" is indeed singular (See TBC Extra).

Scripture is clear that Christ "made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20). Whenever the shedding of blood is mentioned, it means the death of the victim: "Christ *died* for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3).

Question: I've heard prophecy teachers say that New York (and perhaps even America as a whole) is "mystery Babylon," the woman riding the beast in Revelation 17 and 18. They point to the evil of America, the Statue of Liberty (a pagan goddess) guarding New York harbor and supposedly blessing America, etc. What do you think of this?

Answer: America may be Sodom prophetically, but it is not "Mystery Babylon"

depicted by the woman riding the beast. The truth is rather simple. First of all, the woman is a *city*, not a country: "that great *city*, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rv 17:18). This fact alone eliminates the United States. God's people are warned, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (18:4). Must we all move out of the United States? Hardly. The reference is to a religious system in which Christians are to have no part, not to a geographical location one must leave.

That the United Nations has its headquarters in New York does not mean that the city of New York rules over the world. Rome of the Caesars, followed by Rome of the popes, ruled over the known world of its day for many centuries. New York is of recent origin. Ancient Babylon in Iraq has been in ruins for 2,300 years, so it doesn't qualify either, even if rebuilt.

The angel tells John, "I will tell thee the mystery of the woman..." (17:7). There are 14 identifying features given in these two chapters that make the identity of the woman very clear. We deal with them in *A Woman Rides the Beast*. (See offering list.)

Question (From three Muslims): In Christianity, it is taught that everyone is born a sinner. If that is true, then how can God accept us in heaven [since] that is a sinless place? According to what standard are we judged worthy or unworthy to enter paradise/heaven? What is good enough? God requires sinless perfection, which we can never attain to by our works. Will He accept something less? How can He?

Answer: Your question goes to the very heart of the difference between true biblical Christianity and Islam (and all other religions). The issue is God's infinite justice in relation to man's undeniable sin and outright rebellion against God. As the Bible says, "All have sinned [and] the wages of sin is death" (Rom 3:23; 6:23). Even if it were possible, living a perfect, sinless life in the future could never pay the penalty for sins of the past. Justice does not work that way.

Islam (like every other world religion, and much that calls itself Christianity) urges its followers to do good (the greatest "good" is to die in *jihad*) in the hope that their good deeds will outweigh their bad ones in the "last day" judgment. Of course, there is no court of law on earth that would release anyone from the penalty prescribed by the law because they had done "more good than evil." Nor will God accept such a plea from anyone, including Muhammad. As for suicide bombers, they cannot pay

for their sins by committing suicide, and especially not by killing innocent people in the process. It does not speak well for either Muhammad or Allah to make Paradise the reward for committing murder!

Jesus Christ, who is God, became a man through a virgin birth, lived a perfect sinless life (in contrast to Muhammad whom the Qur'an commands to confess his sins), and died for our sins on the cross, paying the penalty that God's infinite justice demanded for the sins of all mankind, and resurrected from the dead. On this righteous basis, God offers a just pardon of all sins for those who believe that Christ paid that penalty and rose from the grave.

News Alert

Israel Christian Nexus, 8/20/04: THE PRESBYTERIAN INFAMOUS RESOLUTION—Some Presbyterian leaders have hijacked the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to pass an outrageous anti-Israel resolution. There is not the slightest doubt that this resolution is bound to inflame Anti-Semitism. Is this what guided the "resolution-leaders"?!

The overwhelming majority of Christian churches, both Protestant and Catholic, are now promoting friendship and brotherhood love toward the Jewish People after 2,000 years of hatred and violence. "Jesus tore down the wall of hatred which separated gentiles and Jews and made us one," said St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (Chapter 2, verse 14). Not for the Presbyterian "resolution leaders." The root cause for promoting the Anti-Israel resolution is the old vicious Anti-Semitism.

- Millions were killed in Africa—but these "resolution leaders" did not raise their voices!

- Sudan promotes genocide against Black Christians, but not a word of condemnation by these "Presbyterian" Elders.

- A genocide of black people continues uninterrupted in Darfur, Western Sudan—no mention in a Presbyterian resolution!

- Moslem terrorists continuously and brutally killed Christians (even before the State of Israel was established)—yet the Presbyterian resolution leaders are not even shocked!

Only Israel disturbs their peace of mind! Why? Because those who resettled Israel are Jews, many of them are holocaust and Moslem-terrorism survivors.

Peel off the varnish and ugly Anti-Semitism appears! This is the real cause of the Anti-Israel resolution! Never mind what St. Paul said to the Ephesians. Never mind "Christian Love." The "resolution leaders" prefer "Christian hatred."

Dave's Itinerary

Nov. 11-15	Vienna, Austria 011 43-1-87893-721
Nov. 17	Mission Valley Christian Fellowship Meeting at First United Methodist San Diego CA 619-683-7729
Nov. 19-20	Calvary Chapel Chino Hills Chino CA 909-393-7100
Nov. 21 am	Calvary Chapel Hemet Hemet CA 909-927-6117
Nov. 21 pm	Calvary Chapel Chino Valley Chino CA 909-464-8255
Nov. 28	Bayside Community Church Tampa FL 813-837-6007 (Sundays 9-10 a.m. only)
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

To Whom It May Concern:

As an evangelical Christian, I am shocked that so few Christians are discerning. The clamoring by churches all across America for such a questionable movie [*The Passion of the Christ*] is disconcerting at best. I am puzzled at how Bible-believing pastors across this land could show such irresponsibility. Are we so thirsty for entertainment that we will take any form of it, regardless of the inconsistency and inaccuracy of such a venture?...I am thankful for ministries such as yours, and I stand with you as we contend for the faith. DD (IN)

TBC,

Being a Calvinist by conviction, I cannot wholeheartedly support all your work, but do feel you have a lot of good to say and so I pray for your ministry (in everything else—ha ha!). JH (SD)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

I ordered your book *Debating Calvinism: Dave Hunt and James White*....I commend you for permitting James White to state his position completely. [I] have a thorough Calvinistic background in instruction and church attendance....I have read deeply into Dabney, Warfield, Maachen, Kuyper, Baavink, etc. Their writings have been a blessing to me. Nevertheless, you do bring out salient

points that Calvinists have not fully and honestly dealt with. First, the mean and vindictive spirit of John Calvin when he ruled Geneva with an iron hand....[In addition] the defense of decretal theology that makes God the author of sin, but not accountable for it, makes mincemeat of sensible discussion in the English language....JS (MI)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

Your book *A Woman Rides the Beast* was much help to me in 2002, when I was saved and making the decision to exit the Roman Catholic Church....Now I have the joy of the Lord. I know this book is controversial, but thanks for taking the risk in speaking the truth and warning Catholic people. LQ (MI)

Dear Dave,

The Berean Call is for me a most enjoyable learning experience. I read it "from A to Z" (or, in biblical terminology, from *Aleph* to *Tav*). SE (CA)

Dear Dave Hunt,

Our thanks to you and Mr. McMahon for your very helpful letter, *The Berean Call*. It helps us know what to make of what we see in Christendom with its proliferation of errors and selfisms in this day and age....I remember thinking at one time that the Calvinists kept in balance—or even held in check—the easy-believism of the late 1900s. But the more we learned, the more we realized that their teaching violated the Word of God and especially His gospel....But how could a man with as much discernment as Dave Hunt share a platform with them? Thankfully, you were also realizing the enormity of their error. I don't know how you read so much of their writings so quickly, assimilated it, got to the core of their teachings, saw things in perspective, and wrote a comprehensive book in such a short time. Surely the Lord gave you help....We are glad to see our Lord using your book to deliver people from [Calvinism's] cult-like grip. CS (ME)

Dear Berean Call and Brother McMahon,

Your book *Showtime for the Sheep?* is an excellent book for all Christians to read....You opened [my eyes] in chapter 6, "Lost in the Translation?" I gave a copy of your book to a fellow Christian at work who bought the movie....He said, "Yes, but I am not worshipping the picture of Jesus that I see." I told him that when he prayed, that picture would be in his mind. Later he came to me and said, "You're right. It does come to my mind." My brothers at Berean Call,

please continue to teach the Word of God in truth. GR (VA)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

In briefly browsing your Berean Call Ministry website recently, I couldn't help but notice your offer of *The Passion Challenge* in conjunction with the release of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* on DVD. Is it any wonder that I suspect you of "crying sour grapes" because you did not make this film first? Out of curiosity, how often have you tried to force the College of Cardinals to declare you Pope so that you could further your own delusions of Godhood? Also, what color(s) is/are the sky/skies in that little world of yours? A Concerned Catholic (CA)

TBC Notes

A Special Need

From time to time we learn of special needs of ministries that we believe succeed in making a valuable contribution to the body of Christ. Although we are reluctant to (and have yet to by God's grace) make a fund appeal for TBC's needs, we consider it a privilege to ask for financial assistance for others going through difficult times. One such ministry is World of the Bible. Under the direction of Randall Price, World of the Bible Ministries provides the latest information on biblically related developments in Israel and the Middle East. We offer a number of Randy's excellent resource materials dealing with the Dead Sea Scrolls, Bible prophecy, the latest archaeological findings, preparations for the rebuilding of the Last Days Temple, the methodical destruction of the Temple Mount antiquities by Muslims, and much more. Randy's input is always solid, reliable, and edifying to those who love God's Word.

We encourage you to sign up for his newsletter, pray for his ministry, and consider supporting his work financially as the Lord leads you. The ministry may be contacted online (worldofthebible.com) or by writing to: World of the Bible, PO Box 827, San Marcos, TX, 78667-0827.

T.A. McMahon
Executive Director

The Berean Call is a nonprofit 501 [c] [3], tax-exempt corporation registered in the State of Oregon. It is overseen by an independent board which has full and final authority over all corporate assets, personnel, and affairs. (11/04)

In the May 2004 issue of TBC in the Q&A section, Dave referred to the Hebrew word, chabburah (or chaburah), from Isaiah 53:5, noting that although it is translated “stripes” in the KJV, in the Hebrew, the word itself is actually singular. In the September 2004 issue, again in the Q&A section, a reader challenged Dave on this, stating that the word is “unmistakably plural” and demanding a retraction. Dave indicated that he had obtained his information from The MacArthur Study Bible. The Berean Call has received a number of letters from knowledgeable people who stand behind the singular ending. A sampling follows:

From Ret. Gen. Shimon Erem, President of Israel Christian Nexus, and WWII general who served in the Jewish Brigade of the British Army: Re *chabburah*, you are right: *Chabburah* is singular and *not plural*. Every Hebrew teacher (and speaker) will confirm it. (Anyone who denies [it] is not a Hebrew teacher.)

From Richard L. Mayhue, Th.D., Executive Vice President, The Master’s College and Seminary: As the managing editor of *The MacArthur Study Bible*, I was quite interested in the accusation that the note on Isaiah 53:5 was in error. We certainly would never claim that the notes are infallible. However, when they are correct, we believe it to be our responsibility to stand behind them and alert those who would take issue with them. Let me affirm, for the record, that the Hebrew noun translated “stripes” uses a grammatical singular ending immediately prior to the masculine possessive suffix. This has been validated by the able Old Testament scholars on our faculty....

A pastor sent the following: Even when the convincing word “unmistakably” is used [see Sept. ’04 Q&A], a good Berean knows better than to submit to such a claim. The following is from *The Analytical Hebrew Lexicon*:

בֹּשֶׁת—בְּחֻצוֹת

חֲבֵרָה [חֲבֵרָה] noun fem. sing. for [חֲבֵרָה] pref. בִּי for בֵּה
 חֲבֵרָה [חֲבֵרָה] noun fem. sing. with suff. pref. בִּי bef. (-) 3 p. s. m. from [חֲבֵרָה] dec. 10; י bef. lab. חֲבֵרָה

From a reader: I just read [your response to the] question in the September newsletter. John MacArthur is indeed correct, the Hebrew word in question is in the singular, not the plural. The following is...from the *Westminster Hebrew OT Morphology*...: **hr'WBx; noun common feminine singular construct, suffix 3rd person masculine singular.**

A pastor, citing *The Analytical Hebrew Lexicon*, stated: The fellow who challenged your Hebrew word *chabburah* is dead wrong. I teach Hebrew. It is a noun, feminine, singular. Plural would end in “oth” or “ot.” MacArthur is correct.

From a reader who cited the Hebrew/English dictionary and confirmed it with an Israeli Orthodox Jew who is a student of the Hebrew Scriptures: The word used in the Hebrew text of Isaiah 53:5 is a singular word related to *chaburah* (which means “wound”—singular). The actual form of the Hebrew in this verse is *chaburato*, which means “his wound.” (If it were “his wounds”—plural—the Hebrew would be, in the plural, *chaburataw*). The confusion concerning the word (whether it should be singular or plural) lies in the fact that this word is made up of the very same Hebrew letters (*chet-bet/vet-vav-raysh-hey*) as the word *chavurah*, which means “group” or “gang” (plural in meaning). Both words (*chaburah/chavurah*) are in the singular form. The plurals for both have a different ending: “ot”(thus, *chaburbot*—wounds) and “at” (*chavurat*—groups). The difference, when reading it in the Hebrew, is in the pronunciation—whether the sound of the letter “b” (bet) or “v” (vet). Both words are represented by the same Hebrew character (see below). The difference in the two is in the marking as to whether it is a “b” sound or a “v” sound. When no markings are present in the Hebrew, the reader would distinguish which word/meaning is being used (“wound” or “group”) simply by context.

ב Vet Bet

Another reader notes: When I looked at the Hebrew text, it appeared to be singular but could easily be mistaken for the plural form. The following references all confirm that it is singular: *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew Lexicon; Davidson’s Analytical Hebrew Lexicon; Englishman’s Hebrew-Chaldee Concordance; The Greek Old Testament Septuagint*. By the way, your reply was excellent.

From the person who originated the question in the September 2004 issue: I owe you an apology. Further stretching of my limited ability in Hebrew revealed that the word *chabburah*...is indeed in the singular construct form rather than the plural....You were right and I was wrong. I was waylaid by the placement of the *tau* and my own rustiness in that language. I am sorry I troubled you about that particular detail with such dogged vehemence.