

“[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily,

[to see] whether those things were so.” —Acts 17:11

Authority and Responsibility

Dave Hunt

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THERE ARE THREE closely related statements by Christ to His disciples which have created much controversy over their interpretation: 1) “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19, 18:18); 2) “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching [concerning] any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:19); and 3) “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained” (John 20:23).

In seeking to understand any passage in Scripture, one rule must govern: whatever the Bible declares, the Bible itself (not some outside authority) must interpret. It is from the Bible that we learn the gospel, about the church Christ established, about discipleship and the responsibilities, authority and power He has given to His own. Therefore, it is to the Bible that we must look to understand these things—and the Bible is understandable.

God’s Word is presented to all mankind. Never does the Bible suggest that a special rank of spiritual leaders must explain it to the rest of mankind; and that without such help ordinary people could not understand it. In fact, the opposite is taught in Scripture. Consider a few examples: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3, quoted by Jesus at Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4); “Blessed is the man...[whose] delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalms 1:1-2); “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalms 119:9).

Notice that in each case an ordinary man (or woman), and even a young man/woman, meditates upon and obeys God’s Word. There is no hint that the persons mentioned needed to consult any special teacher concerning the Scriptures. Therefore, we must conclude that to be the case for everyone.

The New Testament also supports this conclusion. Consider Christ’s rebuke of the two on the road to Emmaus for not knowing and understanding the Scriptures. That neither of them was part of the inner circle of disciples is clear, because they hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the eleven (Judas was dead) of Christ’s appearance (Luke 24:33-34). Yet Jesus rebuked these ordinary people: “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken” (Luke 24:25). He would not have used such harsh language, holding them personally accountable to know all that the prophets had said, unless the Scriptures were understandable to ordinary people.

Those in the city of Berea (both Jews and Gentiles) “searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things [which Paul preached] were so” (Acts 17:11). These ordinary people were praised for not automatically accepting the great Apostle Paul’s

biblical interpretation, but for checking it out for themselves from the Scriptures. From these and many other examples that could be given, we can only conclude that it is the responsibility of each individual to know and understand God’s Word based upon what it says, not upon what some religious authority claims it means.

This fact exposes as totally spurious the claim by the Roman Catholic Church that its magisterium (the hierarchy of bishops, in concert with its pope) alone can interpret the Bible. That Church did not even exist for the Bereans to consult, much less for the two on the road to Emmaus or for anyone in Old Testament times. Likewise, the claims of any other church or cult that its leaders alone can interpret the Bible are also exposed as contradictory to Scripture.

Three things are abundantly clear: 1) the Bible has been given by God as His Word to all who will receive it; 2) it is intended to be understood by ordinary people, even by youths, without special training or looking to religious leaders for interpretation; 3) everyone is accountable to know God’s Word personally, and that responsibility cannot be passed off to pastor, priest, pope, or anyone else.

With this understanding, we may now consider the controversial passages mentioned above. To support the Catholic concept of a pope as Peter’s successor, it is claimed that the promise in Matthew 16 of the keys of heaven and binding and loosing was addressed to Peter alone. Even if that were true, the promise of the keys is linked with the promise of binding and loosing, and in Matthew 18:18 and John 20:23 Christ gives the power of binding and loosing, and remitting and retaining sins to all of His inner circle of disciples. That fact eliminates any special priority or authority to Peter and is of vital importance to our understanding of these scriptures. Why? Because whatever responsibility and authority Christ bestowed upon His original twelve was passed on to every true Christian.

That conclusion follows directly from Christ’s command to His disciples to “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15); “...Teaching them [who believe the gospel] to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:20). Thus all of the promises Christ made and all that He taught His original disciples and commanded them to do was to be passed on to every Christian throughout history, including to us today. Obviously, the “all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” which every new disciple would be taught to observe, included the promises concerning the keys of heaven, binding and loosing, and remitting and retaining of sins—and the authority and power to do so.

New disciples were to make more disciples and to teach them also to observe all things Christ had commanded the original twelve—which included making more disciples. As a result, an unbroken chain of discipleship has come down through the centuries. Every Christian, being a disciple of a disciple of a disciple (all the way back to the first disciples), is a successor of the Apostles and is indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit to act accordingly.

Thus, the authority and power which Christ gave to the original disciples of using the keys in binding and loosing, and remitting and retaining of sins, does not belong to an elite class of leaders, but to each one who is born again of the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ. But “binding and loosing” what? Christ said, “whatsoever.” That’s broad indeed. Was He, at least in part, referring to demons? Surely one would not turn demons loose! Nor is there even one example in the Bible prior to the Millennium of demons (or “territorial spirits”) being “bound.” Even Christ allowed those He cast out of a man to go into a herd of swine (Mark 5:1-13). Then what is meant?

Christ gave all of the twelve the promise of binding and loosing (Matthew 18:18) and then He repeated the promise in different words in verse 19: “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching [concerning] any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” Verse 20 follows: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Here, at least, we understand that the binding or loosing of “whatsoever” is to be effected by asking the heavenly Father to bring to pass that which two or more Christians have agreed upon on earth, meeting in Christ’s name with Him in their midst.

The promise of having from the Father what two or three agree upon echoes Christ’s similar promises concerning prayer, such as, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7). All of these promises—binding and loosing, agreeing upon a request, or simply believing—seem very much alike. But what is meant? Christ surely does not mean that no matter what we bind, loose, agree upon, or ask, God will grant it like an overly indulgent grandparent. It is axiomatic that God has not turned His universe or mankind over to us to do with as we will.

James declares that God, far from giving us a blank check, does not indulge our selfish desires: “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:3). John writes, “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight...if we ask anything according to his will...we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (1 John 3:22, 5:14-15).

Clearly, prayer requests are granted for those who please God, and only according to His will. Who would want it otherwise? Similar limitations upon prayer must apply even to the broadest promises, such as, “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matthew 21:22); “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mark 11:24); “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you” (John 16:23).

Even these broad promises involve two conditions: believing (i.e., faith in God), and asking in Christ’s name. These are limiting indeed. Faith is not a power of the mind so that by believing something will happen we bring it to pass. Faith must be, according to Christ, “in God” (Mark 11:22). Thus faith is not believing that prayer will be answered, but believing that God will answer it. Inasmuch as God “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Ephesians 1:11), genuine faith that comes from God could never believe God for anything contrary to His will.

As for asking “in Christ’s name,” that phrase, sadly, is tacked onto many prayers as though it were an “Open Sesame” magic formula. On the contrary, to ask in Jesus’ name is to ask in His interest, to His glory, as He would ask—and His will is always conformed to the Father’s. Prayer, then, is not a means of forcing one’s will upon God. Instead, it is the gracious opportunity He allows us to have a part in furthering His will.

So it must be that in using the keys of the kingdom in binding or loosing, and remitting or retaining sins, Christ’s followers act only as the agents of His power and only according to His will.

Can we be still more specific? Christ said, “whatsoever... whosoever.” Inasmuch, however, as it can only be according to His will, He must reveal the specifics when the occasion arises. The important point is that this power and authority was not just to Peter or just to the original twelve, but has been passed to us today, along with everything else Christ taught and commanded them.

Additionally, when Jesus healed the woman “which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years,” He said to her, “Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity” (Luke 13:11-13). So by the gift of healing, the disciples could loose the sick from their bondage to illness; and by casting out demons they loosed souls from that form of bondage. Every Christian has the power, in the name of Jesus (as He would and to His glory), to do the same today.

How would one loose from and remit sins? Scripture is clear that all sin is against God, not just against another human. Therefore only God can forgive sins in the ultimate sense. Furthermore, forgiveness of sins and man’s eternal destiny are a matter not only of God’s love but of His justice. God Himself cannot (and would not) overrule His own justice. God can forgive sins only because Christ paid sin’s penalty demanded by His infinite justice (Romans 3:23-28). And forgiveness is only for those who believe the gospel. Christ made that clear: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:3-5, 36).

The scripture which Christ read in the synagogue in Nazareth and declared to be fulfilled through His ministry foretold the Messiah declaring, “...the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings [the gospel]...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:16-21). Isaiah and Christ are saying that the loosing of those bound by sin is only brought about through the preaching of the gospel. And what else but the gospel, which is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16), could be the “keys of the kingdom”?

It is a delusion, then, to imagine that God has put in the hands of any man or church the power to decide who goes to heaven or hell. Indeed, how could he? In the cross of Christ alone “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Ephesians 1:7). No one, not even God Himself, can remit sins on any other basis. The gospel alone opens the door to heaven, the very gospel which Christ told His first disciples to “go into all the world, and preach” (Mark 16:15). And, as we have seen, the responsibility and privilege of preaching it has been passed down to us today.

It is of the utmost importance to remember that every Christian has the power to release souls from sin’s penalty through proclaiming the gospel to those who will believe. This is the good news of God’s grace which looses from Satan’s bondage those who believe.

The “keys” are not magic. Faith is still required. God desires “for all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4) and He “is not willing that any should perish” (2 Peter 3:9). Yet many will indeed perish, because they persist in their rebellion and rejection of Christ. God Himself cannot force anyone to love Him, because the power of choice He gave us is essential for love.

It should be our passion, therefore, to persuade as many as we can to accept God’s love and forgiveness and the gift of eternal life. How tragic that so many Christians who know the gospel so often fail to present it to those around them. As our Lord moves our hearts with love and compassion for the lost, may we respond in His love and use the keys of the kingdom ever more urgently and effectively to the salvation of many souls!

TBC

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Submit your own questions to: PO Box 7019 • Bend, OR 97708

or email: editorial@theberean.org

QUESTION: During the past Sunday evening Bible study, the following was presented: Some [astrological] constellations corresponded with the tribes of Israel: Judah—Leo; Dan—Scorpio; Benjamin—Gemini. Further, the tribes in the wilderness were arranged around the Tabernacle according to the “mirror reflection” of where their corresponding constellation was located in the heavens. How does one research whether or not these things are true?

RESPONSE: First of all, is this idea anywhere taught in Scripture? Certainly not! Secondly, it has been pointed out numerous times that the “Signs of the Zodiac correspond to the position of the sun relative to constellations as they appeared more than 2,200 years ago” (<https://bit.ly/3CsoGxi>). However, practitioners of Astrology, and in particular those who make their living on it, would say (without any evidence) that this makes no difference. Further, their argument is in direct conflict with verifiable science as much as it is with the Word of God.

Indeed, the Lord says in Jeremiah 10:2, “Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.”

Regarding science, over the centuries the position of the “Zodiac” has changed, since “The first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere was once marked by the zero point of the Zodiac. For instance, those born between March 21 and April 19 consider themselves to be Aries. Today, the sun is no longer within the constellation of Aries during much of that period. From March 11 to April 18, the sun is actually in the constellation of Pisces!” (<https://bit.ly/3CsoGxi>)

While some writers in the *Talmud* consider this to be a biblical use of “astronomy,” it is clear that other influences crept in. This has been a deviation from Scripture for many with even believers such as astronomers Sir Isaac Newton and Johannes Kepler having some regard for astrology and actually sought to reconcile it with the Bible. The Wise Men who came from the East who saw the star and came to see the newborn King still needed the Scriptures to learn where He was born.

QUESTION: Why is Jesus called the Everlasting Father in Isaiah 9:6?

RESPONSE: It is true that Isaiah 9:6 says that Jesus’ name will be called “Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father,” etc. What it does not say is that Jesus *is* the Everlasting Father. As God, He obviously has the characteristics of God. Simply put, Jesus being part of the godhead has the attributes of God. This includes everlasting or “eternal life.”

Micah 5:2 agrees with this: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

It has been asked why if Jesus’ name is “Everlasting Father,” then why don’t we call Jesus “Everlasting Father”? Or why not call him “Wonderful Counselor” or “Mighty God” or “Prince of Peace”? Isaiah 9:6 speaks of a “name,” and there are four characteristics associated with that name. Again, this reveals it is the *characteristics* of the coming Messiah that is in view here. The fact that the Messiah is God is shown in Hebrews 1:3 when it says, “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his

power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high....” Why shouldn’t the Lord subsequently say, “...He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (Jn 14:9)? Jesus is the “express image” of God the Father as His prophesied name establishes.

QUESTION: Can you help me with this question: “If Jesus died for all and has legally purchased all through substitutionary atonement, then how can those people go to hell? That would be a ‘Double Jeopardy’ of the sins of those people being paid for twice.” This is my husband’s main question and I would really appreciate help with it based on Calvinism.

RESPONSE: The Bible says that God wants all to be saved: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9). But the Bible also says that not all will be saved (Matt 7:21-23; Lk 13:22-27, etc). Nevertheless, the Bible also tells us that God is all powerful (Ps 147:5; Jer 32:17; Matt 19:26, etc).

Calvinism has its own explanation. They strive to make things add up. “If God is all powerful,” the reasoning goes, “and God wants all people to be saved, then all people will be saved. Since not all people will be saved, Christ must have died only for some; God must not want all to be saved.”

This is unbiblical according to the much-explained John 3:16 (what “world” means), and the blunt statement of 1 John 2:1-2: “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” But to some, it makes nice, theological sense. This is, however, putting one’s reason above God’s Word; believing what makes sense rather than believing all of what God has said.

As Dave Hunt wrote in *Calvin’s Dilemma: God’s Sovereignty vs. Man’s Free Will* (pp 9-10), “William L. Pettingill wrote, ‘God insists upon His sovereignty and also upon man’s responsibility. Believe both and preach both, leaving the task of ‘harmonizing’ with Him.’ In a similar vein, A. T. Pierson, although a leading Presbyterian, declared that both ‘the sovereign will of God and the freedom of man’ are taught in Scripture and that ‘if we cannot reconcile these two, it is because the subject is so infinitely lifted up above us. Man is free.... Thus the last great invitation in God’s Book is an appeal to the *will*.’

“Unfortunately, neither John Calvin nor many of his followers today have been willing to accept both sides of this biblical teaching. The result has been devastating in its consequences for the gospel: that man can only reject Christ; he cannot accept and believe in Him unless he is sovereignly regenerated by God. Calvinism refuses to accept what so many great evangelists have recognized is vital. Edgar Mullins expresses very well the essential balance that is missing:

“Free will in man is as fundamental a truth as any other in the gospel and must never be canceled in our doctrinal statements. Man would not be man without it and God never robs us of our true moral manhood in saving us.... The decree of salvation must be looked at as a whole to understand it. Some have looked at God’s choice alone and ignored the means and the necessary choice on man’s part.”

A SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FROM T. A. McMAHON

“Three Words”

As I look back over the decades since I started The Berean Call (TBC), there are three words that come to my mind: “Thank you, Jesus!”

Whoa! Hold on a moment. Many have mistakenly thought that Dave Hunt was the head of TBC because they misunderstood the ministry’s major function. From the beginning, its purpose was to free Dave up to do research, write books, write articles, debate those opposed to the gospel, confront those changing the gospel, and expose those deceiving the body of Christ with “oppositions of science falsely so called” (such as psychotherapy) as indicated in 1 Timothy 6:20. That enablement and God’s grace helped Dave lead the way in exposing some of the major deceptions of the last two centuries.

In fact, TBC started with someone who was a Hollywood screenwriter: me.

What follows are general remembrances of an 80-year-old, as well as some moments of the Lord’s divine orchestration.

Soon after I gave my life to Jesus Christ, I saw a Christian-produced documentary at an evangelical church. Technically, it was one of the worst film productions I had ever seen. On the other hand, it had one of the most powerful messages I had ever experienced on screen. It had to do with men having their lives miraculously and completely changed in prison.

Being a “Hollywood guy,” it immediately came to mind: *These guys could use my help.*

The producer of the film introduced me to a man who believed the Lord was encouraging him to write a story to be made into a feature film. After reading his brief outline of his story, I admitted to him—quite sadly—that I was sorry I couldn’t help him. His story was exciting, but I had no clue as to what he was talking about. I thought it was going to be about Christianity, about which I only had a perspective as a former Roman Catholic. Instead, it had UFOs, psychic phenomena, Eastern mysticism and gurus, levitation, and yoga. The man’s name was Dave Hunt, and he said he could explain to me what it had to do with Christianity, especially a “new age” false Christianity. What Dave wasn’t able to do, however, was write a script for such a film. He then asked me if I’d consider working on it with him.

That was the start of nearly 40 years of assisting Dave Hunt, primarily through The Berean Call. THANK YOU, JESUS!

It all began in Southern California where Dave and I both lived. He was an established author and I was a documentary filmmaker (*The Godmakers*) and a novice book-writer. Dave nevertheless encouraged me to collaborate with him on *The Seduction of Christianity*, which became a best-seller published by Harvest House.

When Harvest House then moved to Oregon, Dave asked me to join him there to work with our publisher. When I mentioned that I heard that it snows there (my family and I were beach people), his ploy and sense of humor was classic Dave Hunt. He said it gets a light dusting of snow in the morning and usually melts sometime in the afternoon. He was correct...sort of. Our first winter in Bend started with a

“dusting” of two-and-a-half feet one November morning, and finally melted one late afternoon in March. Again, Dave was only partially correct...and our kids loved it! They forever called him “Uncle Dave.”

I mentioned that I turned 80 not too long ago, and it reminded me of what a TBC board member did when he entered his 80s. He was a godly man, as well as full of wisdom from the Holy Spirit. His name was William MacDonald, author of *Believer’s Bible Commentary*. However, at my young age, I wasn’t happy with a particular decision he made. He told me he would be stepping down from the TBC Board and retiring from ministry. His reasoning was thus: he was thankful for how the Lord had used his life as a prolific writer of spiritually edifying books, and he did not want anything he might say or do in his later years to bring disrepute on what the Lord had brought to pass through him.

Now that I’m 80, while I don’t have the same concerns as Bill, I do have concerns. My health is certainly not what I would like it to be. My hope is that, before my health reaches a difficult stage, I can spend much of my time ministering to my family members as well as where the Lord guides, directs, and enables.

All of this has to do with a major transition now taking place for TBC, along with my retirement. It also involves making Rob Yardley (presently the head of The Berean Call Board of Directors) the new president of TBC.

Rob has known Dave and worked with him as a friend for nearly as long as I have known Dave, so there are few things Rob does not know about The Berean Call ministry. There’s no one else (other than myself) about which I can say that. Extensive discussions with Rob and Mark Vander Ark (TBC’s operations manager) give me assurance that the ministry will continue as it has been under my direction and Dave Hunt’s teachings.

Although my title as President and TBC’s authority will soon end, I’ve asked the leadership to give me a replacement title, a non-paid honorary one such as “Berean Emeritus,” meaning simply, “Once a Berean, always a Berean.” I believe that the Lord has given every true believer instruction in the practice of biblical discernment, as was the case in Acts 17:11: “In that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily [to know whether or not what they were being taught was true to the Word of God].” Additionally, I want to be available to assist the ministry in encouraging biblical discernment.

Also, to that end, TBC has had in the works an extensive digitizing program that has preserved the material produced by Dave Hunt, T. A. McMahan, and some of the major contributors to the ministry in a searchable format. Our goal is and has been to safeguard the biblical integrity of the ministry’s content and to keep it available for the church.

I covet your prayers that all this will be done in the Lord’s will. Amen.

IN HIS LOVE,

T. A. McMAHON

BEREAN EMERITUS

NEWSWATCH

News stories are selected for reader awareness and as an exercise
in discerning the times from a biblical perspective.

WHY STAY AWAY FROM THE BOOK OF ENOCH?

COFFEEANDCHRISTSHOP.COM, 10/1/23, "WHY STAY AWAY FROM THE BOOK OF ENOCH?" [EXCERPTS]: The Book of Enoch is an ancient Hebrew religious text that is not part of the biblical canon. It is a pseudepigraphical work, which means that it is falsely attributed to a famous author. In this case, the book is attributed to Enoch, who was the grandfather of Noah in the Bible.

The Book of Enoch was not included in the biblical canon for a number of reasons. First, it was not written by a prophet. Second, it contains some questionable content, such as the claim that angels slept with human women and gave birth to giants. Third, it was not widely accepted by early Christians.... The earliest Christian writings do not mention the Book of Enoch.

The Bible does not explicitly forbid the reading of the Book of Enoch. However, it warns against false teachers and doctrine (Matt 7:15-20; 2 Pet 2:1-22).

Ultimately, whether or not to read the Book of Enoch is up to each individual. If you are a Christian, you should weigh the arguments for and against reading the book and make a decision that aligns with your conscience.

(<https://bit.ly/427ymvN>)

USING PUBLIC EDUCATION TO TRANSFORM AMERICA

MIDWESTOUTREACH.ORG, 10/3/24, "USING PUBLIC EDUCATION TO TRANSFORM AMERICA" [EXCERPTS]: For a quarter of a century, we have been pointing out that the cultural transformation that was coming had begun in the 1930s with John Dewey. Dewey recognized that in order to transform America into a Marxist nation and embrace abortion and euthanasia, the public schools would have to be taken over and educate the students on these beliefs.

Now that it has effectively been accomplished, others are catching on to what has happened. In "America's Current Schooling Catastrophes Were Set In Motion 100 Years Ago," Tim Goegle wrote:

"These radical changes also led to the dumbing down of the American populace, which is no longer equipped with the skills to determine truth from error or to be contributing members of society."

The Marxism/Progressivism in our churches and public and private institutions is not by accident. It was engineered

[by] those who rejected God and worked to replace Judeo/Christian ethics and morality. They have been pretty effective.

(<https://bit.ly/4gELAk1>)

DOES PAULI EXCLUSION RESCUE DINO PROTEIN?

ICR.ORG, 9/23/24, "DOES PAULI EXCLUSION RESCUE DINO PROTEIN?" [EXCERPTS]: Perhaps no other fossil discoveries have rocked the world of paleontology more than original organics like proteins in old bones. ICR helps curate a list of mainstream science publications that describe what's inside these fossils...The number exceeds 120, making the presence of proteins and similar finds an increasingly common occurrence.

Inevitable chemical reactions turn even the most resistant biological materials (or "biomaterials" for short) into dust in fewer than one million years *under ideal conditions*, whereas the fossils that contain them were supposedly deposited tens to hundreds of millions of years ago. Evolutionary workers strive to protect deep time from this chemistry. While the latest attempt describes how the front door to collagen longevity stands strong against destructive chemistry, it ignores a wide-open back door.

A key term in their report is the "Pauli Exclusion Principle." This refers to the status of electrons in an atom or molecule. When more than one electron occupies the same orbital, or zone, one electron always differs from its partner in at least one aspect—usually its spin direction. When it comes to collagen, its collection of electrons comes pleasantly partnered, beautifully balanced, and, in short, too happy with themselves to want to react with outsiders.

Then came the conclusion, which far overstepped the worthy results. The study authors wrote, "This discovery has implications for the stability of collagen, which is replete with $n \rightarrow \pi^*$ [contented electron] interactions and has remained intact for (at least) hundreds of millions of years, exceeding the half-life of a peptide bond by a millionfold or more."

Two clear points surface from this report. First, when it comes to evolutionary time, circular reasoning once again substitutes for good science. Last, even with the Pauli Exclusion Principle to ensure that the middle of collagen molecules resists water chemistry, chemical reactions still take place at their measured rates—rates that exclude millions of years.

(<https://bit.ly/4agrU3t>)

THE BEREAN CALL

Founder: Dave Hunt
Director: Rob Yardley
Berean Emeritus: T. A. McMahon

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A RETURN TO BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

PART THREE

EXCERPTED FROM *BEYOND SEDUCTION** BY DAVE HUNT

CHRIST DECLARED THAT in order to be His disciples we must be disciplined by His Word. This will require submission to His lordship in every detail of our lives, even to allowing Him to take us through trials of faith that are intended to mature and strengthen and deepen our understanding and fellowship with Him. Charles Colson reminds us:

Obedience is the beginning of the Christian life: obedience is essential to truly living as a Christian....

It takes courage to be obedient, courage found only in total dependence on the Holy Spirit.²⁴

There is a tendency in the church today to emphasize unity and love at the expense of truth and to speak disparagingly of those who place great emphasis on doctrine in contending for the faith. Those who put “unity” ahead of truth and fail to rebuke today’s false values and superficiality among Christians (and especially the many charismatics who reject the call to repent of false teachings as “negative” and insist that we are now in the greatest revival in history) would do well to take seriously the prophecy spoken during the famous Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in 1906:

In the last days three things will happen in the Great Pentecostal Movement: 1) There will be an overemphasis on power, rather than on righteousness; 2) there will be an overemphasis on praise, to a God they no longer pray to; 3) there will be an overemphasis on the gifts of the Spirit—rather than on the lordship of Christ.²⁵

Keith Green warned about a “man-made unity [which] is not what God desires” because it is not based on holiness and obedience to God’s Word.²⁵ While we ought not to split hairs in disputing over trivial questions, we must also recognize that our Lord demands *obedience*. We dare not take lightly the call to obey His commandments—and we can hardly obey His Word if we are loose concerning doctrine. It is folly to imagine that we can love our Lord and worship Him without knowing and obeying His Word. Jesus solemnly said:

If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings (John 14:23-24).

Seeking promised blessings from God is biblical, but at the same time we must heed God’s *commandments*, exhort one another to *obedience*, and contend earnestly for sound *doctrine*. We do well to remember what the prophet Samuel told King Saul: “Rebellion [disobedience] is as the sin of witchcraft!”

Disobedience cost Saul his kingdom and his life. Saul had lost his earlier humility and had begun to think he was somebody. He had forgotten that his position as king had been given to him by God. “When thou wast little in thine own sight,” Samuel reminded Saul, “the LORD anointed thee king over Israel” (1 Samuel 15:17).

Saul mistakenly thought that offering a large sacrifice to God would take care of everything. We can easily enough understand God’s contempt for such an attitude. Is a mother who is neglected and exploited all year pleased when her husband and children “honor” her with a present on Mother’s Day? On the contrary, she is grieved and even insulted at such blatant hypocrisy. Nothing we can give God can substitute for *obedience*; and “love” without this vital ingredient is declared by Christ Himself to be unacceptable. We lack stability and strength and joy in our lives if we are not willing to submit to His daily discipline. It is through obedience to His Word that we are shaped and formed into the pattern He has planned so that He can use us for His glory.

It helps to remember that we are being disciplined by love for our good and that the ultimate purpose is that we might know Him who is love. As Hugh Black said: “Life is an education in love, but the education is not complete till we learn the love of the eternal.”²⁶ His love can only effect its purpose in our lives if we submit humbly and obediently and joyfully to His will. [Poet Martha Snell Nicholson] put it so beautifully:

When I stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ
And He shows me His plan for me,
The plan of my life as it might have been,
Had He had His way; and I see

How I blocked Him here, and I checked Him there
And I would not yield my will,
Will there be grief in my Saviour’s eyes,
Grief though He loves me still?

He would have me rich, and I stand here poor,
Stripped of all but His grace,
While memory runs like a hunted thing
Down the paths I cannot retrace.

Then my desolate heart will well nigh break
With tears that I cannot shed;
I shall cover my face with my empty hands;
I shall bow my uncrowned head.

Lord of the years that are left to me,
I give them to Thy hand;
Take me and break me, mold me
To the pattern Thou hast planned!

THE TRUE PATH TO VICTORY

What God can do *in* us is at least as important as what He can do *through* us. That we should be molded to God's will as we bow before His majesty in prayer is far more important than that He should grant our every request. The victory that Christ won over Satan came about through His submission to the Father's will: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). When we follow that same path, then His triumph is ours. This way of victory confounds not only Satan but also sincere Christians who mistakenly believe that God's purpose has been frustrated and the church defeated if we do not take over the world and set up His kingdom. They misunderstand true victory. For His own, Jesus conquered sin, death, and hell by allowing His enemies to kill Him (Acts 2:23). "This mystery all, *the Immortal dies!*" wrote Charles Wesley. Christ destroyed death and Satan by dying: "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil—and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15). As the old classic hymn, so long loved by the church, puts it:

By weakness and defeat
He won a glorious crown;
Trod all our foes beneath His feet
By being trodden down.

He Satan's power laid low;
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew.
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death by dying slew.²⁷

It is beyond our comprehension that the wounds inflicted in murderous hatred and contempt by thorns, lash, nails, and spear drew forth the blood that saves those who believe that Christ died for them. Who can fathom such grace and mercy! Prophetically the psalmist declared: "*Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other*" (Psalm 85:10). For evil He returned good; for hatred, love—and not mere sentimentality, but a pure and steadfast love that unswervingly obeyed His Father's will and satisfied the claims of divine justice.

It is this path of the cross that we must take if we are to be Christ's disciples. And only as His love is awakened in our hearts is this possible. Contrary to popular thinking, this way of the cross and the denial of self to know His resurrection life is the way of inexpressible joy! Describing the secret of victory over "that old serpent called the Devil and Satan," John writes:

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death (Revelation 12:11).

Victorious Christians are those who have gained such an insight into the cross that it has left its indelible stamp on their hearts and lives. Overwhelmed by the staggering realization that the Creator of the universe would become a man in order to bear the full weight of the eternal judgment that they deserved, they have been captured by His divine love. Gladly confessing that they no longer belong to self but to the One who has purchased them with His blood, they have been

freed from that inner tyrant and its self-centered anxieties that blinded them to the joy of surrender. Their lives are not their own, for they now belong to Christ totally and forever. They are securely under His care. He who has given them eternal life will never let them perish.

That divine love which has won their hearts and transformed their lives is to be the unmistakable mark of His true disciples. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," said Christ, "if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). John added this insight under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7).

Such love is described as "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22). Christ declared, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). It is Christ who produces in us the beautiful *fruit* of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23). The branch need not be concerned whether it rains or shines; it needs only to remain open to the flow of life and fruitfulness.

Without this simple abiding as branches in Christ "the true vine," the call for a return to biblical Christianity would generate the frustration of ineffective self-effort and a stifling legalism of words without the power of the Spirit. One can spend a lifetime attempting to "master the written Word," when what is needed is to be *mastered by Christ the living Word*. There is a simple faith in God that delivers from the sophisticated foolishness of this ungodly world; there is a love for the truth that deepens as we meditate upon the Word of truth and upon Him who is the truth; and there is a godly prosperity and success that is not temporary but eternal because it is not earthly but heavenly. The psalmist worded so beautifully what we have tried to say in calling the church back to biblical Christianity:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper (Psalm 1:1-3).

FOOTNOTES

24. Charles Colson, *The Role of the Church in Society* (Victor, 1986), pp. 37-38.
25. Jimmy Swaggart, "The Pentecostal Way," in *The Evangelist*, Dec. 1986, p. 6.
26. Keith Green, *Unity...At What Price? The Divisiveness of Truth* (Last Days Ministries, 1980), Tract LD #18.
27. Black, *Friendship*, p. 217.

***NOTE: *Beyond Seduction* by Dave Hunt is currently out of print with extremely limited copies available through used book sellers. TBC covets your prayers as we consider reprinting this classic book.**

SALE! WHAT LOVE IS THIS? EXPOSING THE TRUE BELIEFS OF CALVINISM



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Smith—Just as Hitler telegraphed his plans in *Mein Kampf*, so Antichrist has telegraphed his plans through his designated false teachers. Author Warren B. Smith is a former follower of this coming New Age “Christ.” *False Christ Coming—Does Anybody Care?* describes the deceptive teachings that undergird Antichrist’s deceptive “Peace Plan.” Smith’s book is a wake-up call to a church that remains strangely silent and in deep denial about the very deception that Jesus warned would come in His name (Matthew 24:3-5). Read this book and then warn your friends and family (2 Corinthians 2:11). —Mountain Stream Press, 159 pp.

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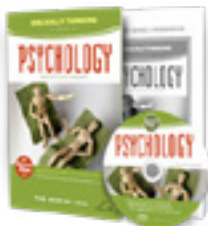
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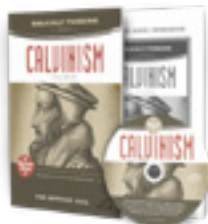


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for His forgiveness of their sins and their acceptance by Him. Jesus, however, set straight those who had the same belief: "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-29). Only Jesus, as God and Man, could (and did!) pay the penalty for the sins of mankind. Includes study guide and audio CD. Booklet 30 pp., Study Guide 13 pp., and CD 56 min.

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