

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

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

## Hymns That Glorify Our Savior

T. A. McMahon

A FEW YEARS AGO, I was in a major supermarket and I was shocked by what I heard coming from the store’s sound system. “Shocked” doesn’t describe my reaction unless you can find abundant joy in the term. What I was hearing were words like these: “I need Thee; O, I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee.”

To my utter delight, that hymn was followed by other ones also glorifying Jesus. *Wow!* I wouldn’t have been surprised to see the fruit and vegetables section “celebrating” His birth. After all, He’s their Creator! I spent a good part of the morning that day listening to the hymns that I’m sure I heard dozens of times. But this time I couldn’t help but focus on what the spiritual lyrics were teaching.

As you know, hymns, unless they are directly from the Scriptures, are not inspired (God-breathed). Nevertheless, they do teach biblical truth and comfort when they are indeed true to His Word. What the Lord put on my heart for this newsletter is to share with you some of my favorite hymns and I’m sure you’ll be blessed by how they glorify our Savior.

### “WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS” (JOHN 15:13)

*What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer!*

*Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness; Take it to the Lord in prayer!*

*Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge—Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In His arms He’ll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a solace there.*

### “O HOW I LOVE JESUS” (1 JOHN 4:19)

*There is a Name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth;  
It sounds like music in my ear, The sweetest Name on earth.*

*Refrain: Oh, how I love Jesus, Oh, how I love Jesus,  
Oh, how I love Jesus, Because He first loved me!*

*It tells me of a Savior’s love, Who died to set me free;  
It tells me of His precious blood, The sinner’s perfect plea.*

*It tells me of a Father’s smile Beaming upon His child;  
It cheers me through this little while, Through desert, waste, and wild.*

*It tells me what my Father hath In store for every day,*

*And though I tread a darksome path, Yields sunshine all the way.  
It tells of One whose loving heart Can feel my deepest woe;  
Who in each sorrow bears a part That none can bear below.*

*It bids my trembling heart rejoice; It dries each rising tear;  
It tells me, in a “still small voice,” To trust and never fear.*

*Jesus, the Name I love so well, The Name I love to hear:  
No saint on earth its worth can tell, No heart conceive how dear.*

*This Name shall shed its fragrance still Along this thorny road,  
Shall sweetly smooth the rugged hill That leads me up to God.*

*And there with all the blood-bought throng, From sin and sorrow free,  
I’ll sing the new eternal song Of Jesus’ love for me.*

### “THE SOLID ROCK” (MATTHEW 7:24-27)

*My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.*

*On Christ the solid Rock I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

*When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace.  
In every high and stormy gate,  
My anchor holds within the vale.*

*On Christ the solid Rock I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

*His oath, His covenant, His blood  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way  
He then is all my hope and stay.*

*On Christ the solid Rock I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

*When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
O may I then in Him be found;  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.*

*On Christ the solid Rock I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

### “NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD” (1 JOHN 1:7)

*What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

*Refrain: O precious is the flow That makes me white as snow;  
No other fount I know; Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

*For my pardon this I see: Nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
For my cleansing this my plea: Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

*Nothing can for sin atone: Nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
Naught of good that I have done: Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

*This is all my hope and peace: Nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
This is all my righteousness: Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

### **“BLESSED ASSURANCE” (ISAIAH 43:11)**

*Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine!  
O, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.*

*Refrain: This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.*

*Perfect communion, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight.  
Angels descending bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.*

*Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I and my Savior am happy and blessed;  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.*

### **“ROCK OF AGES” (ACTS 4:12)**

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in thee;  
let the water and the blood,  
from thy wounded side which flowed,  
be of sin the double cure;  
save from wrath and make me pure.*

*Not the labors of my hands  
can fulfill thy law's demands;  
could my zeal no respite know,  
could my tears forever flow,  
all for sin could not atone;  
thou must save, and thou alone.*

*Nothing in my hand I bring,  
simply to the cross I cling;  
naked, come to thee for dress;  
helpless, look to thee for grace;  
foul, I to the fountain fly;  
wash me, Savior, or I die.*

*While I draw this fleeting breath,  
when mine eyes shall close in death,  
when I soar to worlds unknown,  
see thee on thy judgment throne,  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in thee.*

### **“WERE YOU THERE?” (JOHN 19:6)**

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

*Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.  
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*

*Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?  
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?*

*Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.  
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?*

*Were you there when they pierced him in the side?  
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?*

*Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.  
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?*

*Were you there when the sun refused to shine?  
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?*

*Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.  
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?*

*Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?  
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

*Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.  
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?*

*Were you there when he rose up from the dead?  
Were you there when he rose up from the dead?*

*Sometimes I feel like shouting 'Glory, glory, glory!'  
Were you there when he rose up from the dead?*

### **“HE DIED FOR ME” (ACTS 4:12)**

*He died for me, the Son of God, He left His home in glory  
To bear the sin of all the world—Oh, sweet and tender story!*

*Refrain: He died for me! He died for me! He lives in light and glory!  
Oh, let me tell to all the world The glad and blessed story.*

*They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, For me He meekly wore it;  
They laid on Him the heavy cross, For me, for me, He bore it.*

*His love for me can never die, In Heaven He standeth pleading;  
He shows His side and wounded hands, Forever interceding.*

*Thou blessed Jesus, Savior mine, My life, my all I owe Thee;  
I long to love Thee more and more, I would that all might know Thee.*

### **“JOY TO THE WORLD” (PSALM 16)**

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,*

*And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n, and heav'n, and nature sing.*

*Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains*

*Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.*

*No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow*

*Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as, the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,*

*And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders, of His love.*

TBC

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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

or e-mail: [editorial@theberean.org](mailto:editorial@theberean.org)

**QUESTION: I struggle as a Christian to pray. I was looking at the idea of prayer beads. I know how Catholicism uses them and the other pagan religions—meditation, mantras, repetitive prayer, and mysticism. That’s not my aim. I simply think they could be an aid to me. Am I way off here, or is it possible to use them this way?**

**RESPONSE:** It is very difficult to see prayer beads as an aid when it clearly is one more thing between us and God. And in your letter, you point out that it is common to many pagan religions. That’s not surprising, for the adversary wants to keep us as distant from God as possible.

It is encouraging to remember that when the Lord died on the cross, the “veil of the temple” was ripped from top to bottom (Matt 27:51) as the Lord opened the way to “enter freely.”

With this in mind, Hebrews 4:14-16 shows just how open the way to the very throne of God is: “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Some may “feel” they have liberty to use prayer beads, but they will find their “aid” to be one more barrier between them and the Lord.

For Catholics or other users, their rosary is actually maintaining the “social distance” from the Lord. It is part of a false gospel.

**QUESTION: In Ephesians 6:11, Paul says to “put on” the armor of God. A few nights ago [someone] said she “prays on” the armor of God. This reminded me of when I was a teenager and our church youth group taught us to put on the armor of God by “praying on” the armor of God (for example, you put on the helmet of salvation by praying on the helmet of salvation, and so forth). I know in verse 18 Paul talks about praying in the spirit but is verse 18 telling us to “pray on” the armor of God? Is that even biblical? I did a little online research and could not find anything related to my question other than an overwhelming support for “praying on” the armor of God (with a few prayers even already spelled out). Something just seemed a bit off to me about this, but I want to be a Berean because the Word of God is so important to me.**

**RESPONSE:** To begin, the Scriptures tell us to “put on the whole armor of God,” not to “pray on” the whole armor. If the inspired Word of God tells us to “put on” the “whole armor,” it must be there to “put on.” In fact, each element is explained by Paul.

When Paul wrote his epistle to the Ephesians, he had the example of a fully equipped Roman soldier before him, which he clearly used in a metaphorical manner to illustrate the spiritual warfare we face every day.

As you pointed out, there are quite a few who teach believers to “pray on” the armor of God every day. While prayer must always be a priority, we need to be aware that “praying on” the armor of God may become a rote prayer or methodology. We have seen one positive confession advocate who has done so, and in a recent column admitted their inability to stop the negative thoughts clouding their thinking.

Ephesians 6:10-20 is a battle call. Praying for our understanding and putting on the armor. We still need to put it on. Satan, our opposition, is real. He and his forces want to damage our faith, to bring confusion and discouragement. But our Lord has already

won the victory.

Further, God calls us to pray at all times (Ephesians 6:18). And prayer is the key to winning the spiritual battle. But this prayer is not reciting a methodology, but an active life of prayer. Ephesians 6:18 tells us to be “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

Again, we are not simply to “pray on” the armor but to “put on the whole armor of God.” Then and only then do we walk out the door to enter the battle, which is simply life in a corrupt world. Ephesians 6:17 tells us to take up “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” That requires action on our part, and Paul certainly urged us to be faithfully in the Word.

**QUESTION: You keep expressing the idea that “people need to be Bereans.” This is misleading and unscriptural. Nowhere in the Bible does it say, “You must be a Berean.” In fact, the term “Bereans” is not even found in the King James or New King James versions or the Geneva Bible (which predates the KJV Bible). Berea only occurs 3 times in the King James and New King James versions and the Geneva Bible: Acts 17:10, 13 and Acts 20:4. While I agree it’s true that born again Christians need to diligently search and study the Bible daily, asserting that people “need to be Bereans” goes against Paul’s warning about preaching any other gospel as stated in Galatians 1:8-9.**

**RESPONSE:** To begin, your statement that there is no place in the Bible where it says “You must be a Berean” is true. But on its own, the statement becomes a false premise without “rightly dividing the Word of truth.” This opens the way for all sorts of unbiblical arguments. In an exchange with a JW, for example, does their similar ploy bring us to the point of saying, “Yes, the word Trinity is not in the Bible. Guess you win...”? I don’t think so.

From the beginning of the ministry we have stated (written in 1993), “That is our heart cry and calling here at The Berean Call: that we would see people developing personal discernment and, like the Bereans in Acts 17:11, searching the Scriptures daily ‘to see if these things be so.’ Ultimately, each must arrive at his own position, for each is accountable to God for what he believes, not for what someone else proclaimed or taught.”

That’s what we have written to folks who ask, “What does it mean to be a Berean?” That includes letters, emails, phone calls, or answering the question in newsletter Q&As. It is certainly not “misleading and unscriptural.”

Consequently, to “be a Berean” simply means that we are understanding and following the biblical example of those in Acts 17, whom Luke spoke of as he was moved by the Holy Spirit.

You say, “...asserting that people ‘need to be Bereans’ (i.e., following their example) goes against Paul’s warning about preaching any other gospel as stated in Galatians 1:8-9.” We’d appreciate you giving an example of someone claiming to follow the example of the Bereans and yet “preaching another gospel....” If we find one, we better correct him!

Quite to the contrary, Paul in Romans 10:17 tells us, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” And in Acts 17:12, we read, “Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.”

The example of the Bereans going to the Scriptures confirmed the gospel which Paul had preached to them. It wasn’t preaching another gospel.



# LETTERS

To connect with TBC, write: PO Box 7019 • Bend, OR 97708  
or e-mail: [editorial@theberean.org](mailto:editorial@theberean.org)

**Dear TBC,**

I love Dave Hunt as a good preacher of the faith who tells it like it is, and I am a pastor. God called me to the ministry at an old school Christian Center. I took over from when my grandpa was a minister, and now I'm a minister of the Word of God at the old school Christian Center service... [We] do street work meetings 24/7. God has called me to the ministry...to expose false prophets. We can't cover up false teachers no more. Pastor ML (email)

**Dear TBC,**

Amen and Amen for your honesty about Rome! The reprint of Dave Hunt's "GOD's Nonnegotiable Gospel" in the June newsletter is of course timeless in its truth (see—[www.bit.ly/40ZVtE2](http://www.bit.ly/40ZVtE2)). Personally, as one dear soul saved out of Rome in the early 1980s, the statement that hearing the true gospel away from Catholicism is SO true. When I heard/read Ephesians 2:8-9 for the first time in a Bible church, my only thought was "where has this been in my then 30-plus years of living?" I certainly never heard it at Mass nor in 11 years of Catholic school. The answer of course is that these verses had always been available and Praise the LORD for His salvation! Thank you again for being Bereans and for sharing the truth about Rome. KS (email)

**Dear TBC,**

My pastor of our church fellowship does expository preaching by going through the Books of the Bible, verse by verse. We are currently in the Book of Acts. I love the Word of God and certain passages really reach out to my soul. I loved how Paul in Athens engages with the people there and their reactions. Acts 17 is a great lesson for all times, especially today. DK (email)

**Dear TBC,**

Luke 1:28: "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art

thou among women." The angel was greeting Mary and didn't say that she was "full of grace" or that she was blessed above women. Verse 48 says, "For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden..." Mary herself said she was of low estate and a handmaiden. The Roman Catholic Church has elevated Mary above God Himself. It is blasphemous. As a born again Bible believer, I honor Mary, I love Mary, but I don't pray to her, no statues of her, no rosaries or scapulars. She is not appearing all over the world. We know that Satan himself appears as an angel of light. I pray that the Catholic people would turn to the Holy Scriptures for the truth. Amen. LF (email)

**Dear TBC,**

I don't let Hollywood, Sports, Political, or Spiritual stars determine what I believe. I go to what the Bible says in Scripture—not what these "leaders" are trying to convince us of. Jesus (when referring to Himself) said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6). We do not get there (eternal salvation) through a Catholic priest, a Protestant pastor, or a Muslim imam. Please, people; listen to what is being exposed in this YouTube video [At Home in Rome, see—[www.bit.ly/HomeInRome](http://www.bit.ly/HomeInRome)]. There is no such Biblical truth as "Unity Through Community" as these false teachers like Rick Warren, Dallas Jenkins, or Jonathan Roumie are trying to tell you in their false teaching. Anon. (email)

**NOTE:** Our purpose in this section is to simply show what kind of feedback we receive. We may respond to some of them in private whether or not we agree with their views.

## QUOTABLE .....

### *"Be Still, My Soul"*

Be still, my soul; the Lord is on thy side;  
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.  
Leave to thy God to order and provide;  
in every change He faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul; thy best, thy heav'nly Friend  
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.  
Be still, my soul; thy God doth undertake  
to guide the future as He has the past.  
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;  
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.  
Be still, my soul; the waves and winds still know  
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.  
Be still, my soul; when dearest friends depart,  
and all is darkened in the veil of tears,  
then shalt thou better know His love, His heart,  
who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.  
Be still, my soul; thy Jesus can repay  
from His own fullness all He takes away.  
Be still, my soul; the hour is hast'ning on  
when we shall be forever with the Lord,  
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,  
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.  
Be still, my soul; when change and tears are past,  
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

—CATHARINA VON SCHLEGEL (1752);  
TRANSLATED BY JANE BORTHWICK (1855)

## TBC NOTES

### HAS THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION CHANGED YOUR HOPE?

In last month's newsletter I asked the question to all who voted, "Did the election results change their hope?" My purpose was to get the reader to think about what he or she was placing his hope in. Sadly, many have put their hope in results that have no eternal value. Neither presidential candidate could go beyond the temporal issues of life. If that's the case regarding our hope as believers, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:19, "If in this [temporal] life **only** we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." No. We have God's promise, to those who put their trust in Him, that we are going to be with Him forever. Titus 1:2 tells us, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." As believers in Jesus, we believe His Word—certainly His promise. Again, "Has the outcome of the election changed your hope?"

T. A. McMAHON  
PRESIDENT

# NEWSWATCH

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

## HOW TO FREEZE A TURTLE

*CREATIONMOMENTS.COM, 8/27/24, "HOW TO FREEZE A TURTLE" [EXCERPTS]:* After mid-June, painted turtles begin to lay their eggs. Each nest holds from seven to nine eggs. Some females will make two nests. The eggs are buried, safely out of sight of predators, and the mother turtle returns to her normal habitat. The young hatch in ten or eleven weeks. However, they remain buried in the ground, and therefore safe from predators, all winter. The problem is that turtles freeze solid at the temperatures found at nest depth in the winter. When living cells freeze, the long, sharp ice crystals that form in them puncture the cell membrane, killing the cell.

As the baby turtles freeze, even the heart and brain eventually freeze. There is no breathing and no heartbeat. Only a tiny bit of electrical activity in the frozen brain reveals that life remains in the body. Why don't ice crystals rupture the cells? The young turtle's liver makes special proteins that are circulated to every cell in the body. These proteins ensure the formation of very small ice crystals that cannot become large enough to puncture delicate cell walls.

Only God could have invented such a unique method of protecting tiny painted turtles. Even scientists marvel at this.

(<https://bit.ly/3O0RXkQ>)

## COLUMBIA STUDENTS "TAKE OUT" JEWISH PROFESSOR

*THECOLLEGEFIX.COM, 8/27/24, "IMAM TELLS COLUMBIA STUDENTS TO 'TAKE OUT' JEWISH PROFESSOR" [EXCERPTS]:* An imam told Columbia University students to "take out" a Jewish professor during an event last week hosted by a pro-Palestinian group, according to a video on X.

A few days later, the Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine said Instagram "permanently" banned it from the platform. It is not clear if the two incidents are related.

Shai Davidai, a Jewish professor at the Columbia Business School, posted the video. He wrote on X that Students for Justice in Palestine is a "pro-terror organization" and should be permanently banned from campus.

Davidai said the comments targeting him occurred during a public webinar

titled "Islamic Political Activism" on Aug. 20 with Imam Tom Facchine. He posted a screenshot of a poster advertising the event on the Columbia Students for Justice in Palestine's Instagram page.

According to the professor's post, Facchine mentioned Davidai by name during the event and told students to "create a situation" to get him "in trouble." Davidai is Israeli and calls himself a Zionist on his X profile.

"How do we create a situation in which [his professorship is] in jeopardy?" Facchine said in the video.

(<https://bit.ly/4fEmD7g>)

## THE ENDLESS PURSUIT

*INTRUTHSHEDELIGHTS.COM, 5/28/24, "THE ENDLESS PURSUIT OF GOD'S PRESENCE IN THE HYPER-CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT" [EXCERPTS]:* If you know anything about the hyper-charismatic movement, then you know one of the things it stands out for, is its fervent pursuit of God's presence.... Yet, beneath the surface of this passionate quest lies a subtle danger. The danger of it becomes an all-consuming obsession that leads believers into a relentless cycle of seeking more and more spiritual highs and emotional experiences.

An experience-driven faith can indeed lead believers into a labyrinth of pitfalls. The first of which is the creation of a dependency on emotional highs for spiritual validation. Having a relationship with God becomes synonymous with the intensity of emotional fervor or the frequency of spiritual encounters.

However, when believers come to equate God's presence solely with intense emotional or supernatural experiences, they inadvertently set themselves up for a shallow and unsustainable faith.

This experience is profoundly wearisome and stands in stark contrast to the rest that Christ promises. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus extends the following invitation, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Here, Jesus offers a different kind of relationship. A relationship characterized by rest rather than striving and exhaustion.

(<https://bit.ly/40DPKDM>)

## THE BEREAN CALL

Founder: Dave Hunt  
President: T. A. McMahon  
Director: Rob Yardley

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### DONATIONS

The Berean Call (TBC) has always operated on the belief that God will provide as we seek His face, so we do not make appeals for financial help. Although the ministry operates primarily on donations, these are freewill and not solicited. Through the years, TBC has seen God "do exceeding abundantly above" all that was asked or thought.

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# A RETURN TO BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

## PART ONE

EXCERPTED FROM *BEYOND SEDUCTION\** BY DAVE HUNT

IT IS THE TASK of Christians, so we are told, to take *dominion* back from Satan and (as the rightful gods of this world, according to some) to restore planet Earth to the beautiful paradise that it once was before Adam and Eve sinned. However, man has not lost the dominion that God gave him “over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26,28; Psalm 8:6). To speak of *restoring* dominion to man is therefore meaningless. The problem is not man’s *loss* of dominion but his *abuse* of it. Nor was dominion intended to be exercised by some men over other men, but only by man over creatures under him. Showing the contrast between His kingdom and the kingdoms of this world, and indicating that dominion is far from the goal of salvation, Jesus reminded His disciples:

Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:25-28).

Jesus said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight...but now is my kingdom not from hence” (John 18:36). To His disciples (and to us today) He declared: “Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world” (John 15:19). And to His Father, speaking of His disciples (and of us today), Jesus said: “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.... I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.... They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.... As thou has sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world” (John 17:6,9,16,18). We have been sent by our Lord into all the world to “disciple all nations” (Matthew 28:19). This sending forth has been known as “the Great Commission,” and it seems quite clear, from this and many other Scriptures, exactly what Christ meant.

### A NEW AGENDA FOR THE WORLD?

A new meaning, however, has now been given to the “Great Commission.” It is found in the popular assurances (heard repeatedly on some Christian radio and television programming and presented in some Christian books and magazines) that Christianity is on its way to conquering the world. It is just a matter of raising enough money to get enough Christian television stations, programs, and satellites to saturate the airwaves, and of organizing enough conservative voters to put sufficient qualified Christians in key political offices. While we ought to use every legal means to influence the moral climate for good and to improve the government, we must also remember that political organization and social action in themselves will never

fulfill the “Great Commission.” We must beware that “cleaning up society” does not become a substitute for preaching the gospel of Christ.

As for the Christian’s role in changing or governing this present world, Christ’s total silence toward an evil Caesar and the corrupt and oppressive Roman presence in Palestine contrast sharply with His continual and stinging reproof of Israel’s religious leaders. He mentioned Caesar on only one occasion: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s, and unto God the things which be God’s” (Luke 20:25). Both Paul, who testified under oath of his obedience to Roman law (“nor yet against Caesar have I offended anything at all”—Acts 25:8), and Peter urged Christians as “strangers and pilgrims” in this world to “be subject” and “submit to” earthly governments and to set an example of “good works” (Romans 13:1-10; 1 Peter 2:11-20). Obedience, holy and exemplary living, self-sacrifice, loving neighbor as oneself, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, using the sword of God’s Word, and praying seem to be the weapons of transformation which the Christian is to aim at this world. Paul sums it up:

I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting (1 Timothy 2:1-4,8).

Although Christ assured His disciples that the world would treat them as it treated Him, it is now being suggested that a “positive approach” using “tested concepts and principles for church growth”<sup>16</sup> will enable Christians to become the dominant force in society. Desirable though that may sound, the Bible sets no such goal and makes no such promise. Although church growth ought to be pursued, it too often becomes an end in itself, with success determined by *quantity* rather than *quality*. And to fill churches with “Christians” whose passion is to become the world’s dominant political force rather than to call out of the world disciples who will submit to the truth which sets men free would be destructive of God’s real purpose. It is tragic that for growing numbers of “Christians,” *rescuing the lost* has somehow metamorphosed into *taking over the world*. Derisively calling the rapture “God’s helicopter escape,” a recent ad for a series of four books declared:

A new vision has captured the imaginations of a growing army of registered voters.... It’s called *dominion*. For the first time in over 300 years, a growing number of Christians are starting to view themselves as an army on the move. This army will grow. This series [of books] is designed to help it grow. And to grow tougher.

The authors of this series are determined to set the agenda in world affairs for the next few centuries.... We are calling the whole Christian community to debate us, just as Luther called



them to debate him when he nailed the 95 theses to the church door, over four and a half centuries ago.

If we're correct about the God-required nature of our agenda, it will attract a dedicated following. It could produce a social transformation that will dwarf the Reformation [emphasis in original].<sup>17</sup>

One gets the impression that *registered voters* effecting *social transformation* are more important than *disciples* preaching the *gospel*. Yet Christ never promised that the *world* would be won even with the gospel of His grace; much less did He intend that the church's weapon would be political/social action. We ought to be sincerely concerned with the feeding and clothing of the poor, but if we follow Christ's example our primary concern will be to present to them (as to all men) the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet the concern for social justice is now becoming paramount, and... [is] the rallying point for uniting all of the world's religions.<sup>18</sup> It is a dangerous suggestion, yet a small but growing group of evangelical socialists is advocating a similar ecumenism.

### **THE GOSPEL OF A FALSE PEACE**

The early Christians went forth "preaching peace by Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:36), not crusading against weapons or demonstrating for a humanistic "peace." Their message was that we have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1) because He "made peace through the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:20). This simple gospel that brings *peace with God* into individual hearts is the only hope for peace among nations; yet many well-meaning Christians have relegated it to second place in their zeal to join in activist programs to promote world peace—something unknown to Christ or the apostles. Social activism has become "the larger mission of the church" and is expected to bring peace, love, and brotherhood to a world that is still at war with God. It is like offering an aspirin when open-heart surgery is required. We dare not join in the world's clamor for peace on a humanistic basis. Instead, like Jeremiah we ought to rebuke the false prophets who cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11).

Sincere and well-intentioned Christians are being persuaded to join in activist causes with all who share "common social concerns," whether they be humanists, Moonies, or Mormons. Christians ought to stand for righteousness and oppose abortion, pornography, exploitation of the poor, and other evils. However, they should do so as *Christians*, for biblical reasons, and not join themselves in coalitions with those who, though they oppose the same evils, reject the only real and lasting solution, which is reconciliation to God through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. As Schlossberg reminds us:

To link humanitarianism with Christian social action is wholly untenable. They are completely at odds with one another.<sup>19</sup>

We must beware not to encourage the deadly delusion that there is any hope for peace except through transformation of the human heart through Christ. Indeed, if the world were seemingly able to solve all of its problems without embracing the true gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, that would be the greatest of all deceptions and precisely what Satan will seek to do through the Antichrist, whose world government will be a counterfeit of God's kingdom. Although they may not realize it, those who join, no matter how sincerely, in humanistic efforts to unite the world in a false peace are not furthering the cause of Christ but in the long run the cause of the Antichrist.

If we are to be biblical Christians, God's Word must be our guide in all we say and do, no matter how unpopular that makes us. We dare not compromise the message which Christ called us to proclaim. Only His truth can set men free, and it is this truth which the world does not want to hear that it desperately needs. The gospel was not designed to liberate men from the corrupt Roman Empire but from the far worse bondage of sin and its eternal penalty. Israel misunderstood the mission of the Messiah, thinking that He would free them from the yoke of Rome, when in fact their real enemy was within their own hearts, the *self* that had to be denied. It is no less erroneous to imagine that one's Christian mission is to set up God's kingdom by taking over the world for Christ, when in fact we are to call disciples (out of a world that is doomed by God's judgment) to become citizens of heaven.

### **A HOPELESS SCENARIO**

Today's world faces tremendous problems unknown to past generations. There are urgent social, economic, and political issues of crisis proportions which the church cannot ignore. Although we have not been able to deal with them in detail in this book, biblical parameters have been pointed out. At this critical juncture in history we must be very careful that our understanding of God's Word does not lose its eternal, heavenly perspective and become temporal and earthly in its application. Having lost this perspective, a popular Christian writer declares:

One of the basic themes of Scripture is that *salvation restores man to his original purpose*. In the beginning God created man in His own image in order that man would have *dominion*...

Ultimately, Biblical salvation turns back the Curse, brings back Edenic conditions, repairs personal and social relationships, and blesses the earth in every area. The whole earth will be saved, and remade into the Garden of God...the restoration of Eden is an essential aspect of the salvation that Christ provides.<sup>20</sup>

Such teaching sounds appealing. However, restoration of the Edenic state could hardly be the solution, since that is where mankind fell and sin began. If Adam and Eve failed so miserably in the Garden of Eden (with no one but themselves there and only one law—not to eat from a certain tree), what purpose would there be in "restoring the Edenic state" to billions of people now subject to the Ten Commandments and facing temptations that Adam and Eve never even imagined? This is not God's plan at all, and even if it were, the church could not accomplish it.

*[TO BE CONTINUED]*

### **FOOTNOTES**.....

16. Mark Virkler, *Dialogue With God: Opening the Door to 2-way Prayer* (Bridge Publishing, 1986), p. 173.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
18. Foster, *Celebration*, pp. 22, 36.
19. Joan Connell, "The Spiritual Frontier," in *San Jose Mercury News*, June 14, 1986, p. 1C.
20. Kenneth Copeland Ministries undated newsletter sent out early in 1986.

**\*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.**

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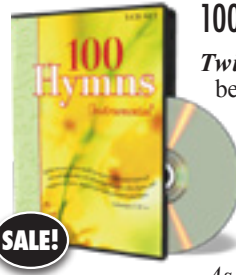
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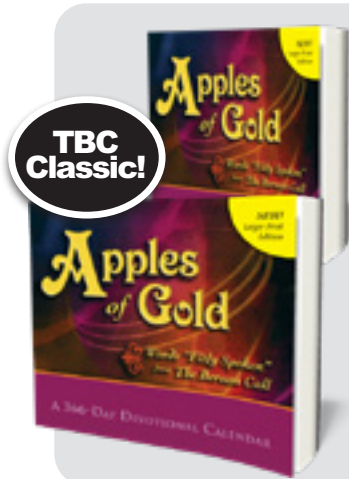
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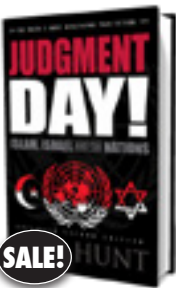


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