



Diakrisis (Australia)

'But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [diakrisis] both good and evil', (Heb.5:14)

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teaching, informing and equipping the church.

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Brisbane Seminar

Sept.21st (Sat.2-5pm) Seminar:
The Sovereignty of God: Arminianism, Calvinism, hyper-Calvinism: the history; what they teach; what is predestination, election, free will...what is biblical?

Venue: Corinda Brethren Assembly, Hassall St, Brisbane
Ph.(07)37256458

Sept.22nd (Sun) 9.30am service
Corinda Brethren Assembly.

The Night is Far Spent, the Day is at Hand

Well, Paul did warn us didn't he? That times would come when great 'peril' would arise? That people in the 'last days' would be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, and unholy. They would show no natural affection, be trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying any power thereof? (2Tim.3)

And yet, haven't human beings always displayed these traits? Haven't times past been even more evil than they are today? Yes, but surely Paul was speaking of a peculiar time, a time able to be distinguished from historical epochs of war, famine, economic depression and misery? A time unique. A time when humanity would take a sudden plunge down into stark iniquity?

It would surely necessitate a global declension - during which people would be incredulous at such developments... in what was, up until a short time ago - a relatively sane world?

Paul was shown a world so distracted by wealth and pleasure, that for probably only the second time in history, had the luxury to fully indulge the fallen human flesh? A time at the extremity of one of the longest periods in modern history without global warfare, a time of great wealth in the western nations, of easy money, relaxation and ease.

Surely that's what would be required for the sudden 'peril' to appear? A world largely ignorant of history, asleep to events surrounding them, unaware of a stage being set behind a curtain as a snare? Akin to the 'Days of Noah'.

Are we living in such a time? Undoubtedly. Largely unnoticed by the slumbering masses the global stage has been furnished, already nearly complete for the final curtain call for the 'Last (of the last) Days' to commence.

One can sense a force of 'restraint' being applied... an unseen hand allowing everything to progress - but only so far. Crises come and go, skirmishes break out, thousands die - and then simmer and not explode. With hardly a whimper, Americans, Europeans and Antipodeans have had so many of their freedoms stolen. Our cities bristle with security cameras, every movement we make is tracked. E-mails are intercepted and private mail photographed. Police resemble standing armies. Drones buzz overhead and our conversations, texts and tweets are scrutinised. Cash transactions have become anachronistic and treated with great suspicion. Data chips are being inserted into willing recipients, and personal security fear overrides any sense of caution or alarm.

A small minority have somehow persuaded the world that 'marriage equality' must be legalised and passed into legislation. To dare mention what the Word of God says of it brings harsh retribution and legal action.

Geopolitically the world resembles a scene straight from the Biblical prophets...Israel is back in her land, Jerusalem is under siege, her neighbours

are in confederation against her. The alliance of nations as depicted in scripture for the final days are arguably in place. The old names are all in prominence. Egypt, Syria, Ammon, Assyria, Persia.

All these things considered....there has never been a time quite like it.

But what of the 'visible' church? It is largely in shambles. A century or more of 'decisional regeneration' has wreaked 'unbelieving' carnage in the pews. Mega churches around the globe attract millions to their 'services' where the prosperity gospel is espoused and 'church growth' is of paramount importance. The gospel of repentance and forgiveness has been largely abandoned.

The likes of Joel Osteen, Rick Warren, Brian McLaren, Brian Houston and Phil Pringle have replaced the Howard Browne's, Copeland's, Arnott's, Hagin's and Swaggert's of the past - and so the apostasy continues and deepens. No matter that Rome ratified her curses against the Biblical gospel - (first at the Council of Trent and during Vatican II) - yet these luminaries claim Rome to be a part of the Christian church and many have rushed to meet with the Pope.

As the last days of the church age rush in upon us so does the fulfilment of all that scripture has to say of these times. The love of God's Word amongst His people has grown cold. In great disobedience the leaders of Christendom embrace same sex relationships - within the 'church' and without. Some even apologise for their former and biblical stand for truth.

The 'church' has abdicated responsibility to defend God's Word, to preach the salvific gospel, to urge upon people the need for repentance and forgiveness. This has been largely replaced by sentimentality and shallow human values. The 'Love' of God is spoken of but His anger against sin ignored. The 'god' presented today wants you to have 'your best life now', to be comfortable, wealthy, to approve depraved lifestyles, to pay no heed to the difficult demands of a holy and mightily offended creator.

And yet, a snare is being set which the Lord allows to occur. It will soon close in upon the unaware, upon those slumbering in their ease. A strong and restraining hand is holding back war, financial collapse, tyranny, misery and despair. It is all sitting there waiting to be released. Where will you stand when this occurs? There will be great anguish and wringing of hands. Nothing is as painful as losing all you have strived for, craved for.

This is what occurs when events come suddenly - as many found to their horror this last century alone. 'It could never happen here' is practically the catch-cry of that time. But happen it did and it will happen again. It is time to arise from sleep. To shake those around you, to warn, cajole, beg and weep for them to open their eyes and cry out to God for mercy and forgiveness before it is too late. *'And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light'* (Rom.13:11,12)

Mike Claydon (Editor *Apostasy Alert*, Australia)

Catholics, Lutherans and Reformation Anniversary



*‘Catholic-Lutheran commemorations of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation **must recognise the harm caused by the split in Western Christianity**,’ said a new document, reports the Catholic News Service. **‘From Conflict to Communion**’ a document... by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian*

Unity and the Geneva-based Lutheran World Federation, outlined ideas for joint commemorations in 2017...It addressed the differences and ‘the progress made through 50 years of ecumenical dialogue’.

*The 99-page document, written by the **Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity**, looks at the central points of Luther’s call for the reform of the church, the points addressed later by the **Council of Trent** and the **anathemas pronounced there against the doctrines of Grace**, especially the **Second Vatican Council** and **issues that still divide Catholics and Lutherans**.*

*‘Luther had no intention of establishing a new church but was part of a broad **many-faceted desire for reform**’ the document said...‘**No one who is theologically responsible can celebrate the division of Christians from one another.**’*

(Catholic News Service, 14 June 2013; Apostasy Alert, June/2013)

Editor’s comment: How can two walk together when they don’t agree? (Amos 3:3) The issues at the Reformation are still in existence. The Roman religion has *not* changed any doctrines which caused the Reformation split. Luther’s ‘95 theses’ were his early protest against the wicked practice of people paying money for ‘indulgences’ (so they or their relatives could get out of an invented ‘Purgatory’). The Pope recently granted an ‘indulgence’ to the *World Youth Day* participants for attending the July Rio De Janeiro event upon communion and confession. The indulgence is applicable to deceased souls and their sins (Vatican CNA/EWTN news July 9th). The Bible condemns this practise (Acts 8:20-22; 1Pet.1:18,19; Ps.49:6-8). How can there be true ‘unity’ when the gospel of Rome contradicts the gospel of scripture? ‘Protestants’ have come full circle back to Rome!

Theologians Approve Pope John Paul II’s Second Miracle



‘A second miracle performed by the Blessed John Paul II has been approved. Now it is up to the cardinals and bishops to give the go ahead for sainthood, reports Vatican Insider...the ‘Congregation for the Causes of Saints’ medical commission recognised a healing performed on a woman by John Paul II as inexplicable...’

(CNA, 14 June 2013; Apostasy Alert, June, 2013)

Editor’s comment: The Bible calls *all* believers ‘saints’ (Eph.1:1; Phil.1:1; Rom.1:7; 16:15; 1Cor.1:2...). God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

John MacArthur Conference Takes on Charismatic Movement



‘John MacArthur...author, pastor...has organised...a controversial conference...He and several other evangelical Christian ministers will gather in October at his Sun Valley, California church to take a corrective stance against what he describes as ‘strange fire’ practices in the Charismatic movement. MacArthur explains: ‘There is a dramatic account of God’s judgement in Leviticus 9 and 10...They had standards by which they were to come before God and offer Him their worship. In the 9th chapter, they came according to God’s law, a sacrifice was offered, and God sent down miraculous fire and consumed the sacrifice. In chapter 10 (vs.1-3), however, another sacrifice was offered, and God consumed the offerers because they violated His standard and offered strange fire...But it’s in the context of Leviticus 9 and 10 that I want to direct your attention toward strange fire that’s being offered to God today, and it could well bring His judgement. What I’m talking about is the Charismatic movement that offers to God unacceptable worship, distorted worship. It blasphemes the Holy Spirit. It attributes to the Holy Spirit even the work of Satan. People are caught up in it, deceived, led astray...This is about honouring the Holy Spirit, rather than blaspheming him...worship is a very serious matter. How you come before a Holy God is the most important thing you will ever do...’

*The Strange Fire conference, to be held at MacArthur’s Grace Community Church in Southern California from Oct. 16-18, features the following speakers: Dr. R.C. Sproul, Conrad Mbewe, Dr. Steven J. Lawson, Tom Pennington, Phil Johnson, Nathan Busenitz, Justin Peters, Todd Friel and Joni Eareckson Tada. (Nicola Menzie, *Christian Post*, June 15, 2013; *Apostasy Alert*, June/2013)*

Islamic-Roman Catholic Liaison

The Islamic-Catholic Liaison Committee held its 19th Meeting in Rome, on June 18,19th, 2013...presided over [by Catholic] His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the ***Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue***, and presided over [by Muslim] H.E. Prof. Dr Hamid bin Ahmad Al-Rifaie, President of the ***International Islamic Forum for Dialogue***. The theme of the meeting was: ***‘Believers confronting materialism and secularism in society’***...*The participants **agreed** [and signed] upon the following [excerpted]:*

*‘Christianity and Islam affirm the inseparability and complementarity between the material and spiritual domains. **Our responsibility as believers is to reconcile these dimensions of life. We recognise our common responsibility as believers in God to do all that is possible to protect vulnerable people...***

The participants were...received in audience by His Holiness Pope Francis, who encouraged them to continue their efforts...between believers for the peace and prosperity of our world...

*(Vatican City, June 26, 2013; cited in *Apostasy Alert* June/2013)*

‘The Bible’ TV Miniseries

‘*The Bible*’ Miniseries has taken the church world by storm. Churches are adopting the series with enthusiasm. But the lack of discernment amongst church leaders is today all too common. There have been numerous and scathing criticisms of this series by both Christian and secular reviewers. *Even some secular reviews have discerned the whitewash of Bible truths.* This mini-series contains unbiblical heresies, changes a great deal of the Bible’s details and purposely takes out parts of the Gospel to do with sin, forgiveness and thus the very reason why Jesus came to earth. This should not surprise viewers, when the producers of the film, as well as the ‘spiritual advisors’, are noted.

The Producers

The creators of the series are Mark Burnett (responsible for *Survivor*, *Celebrity Apprentice*, *The Voice*) and wife Roma Downey. Downey has been on the cover of the New Age *OM* magazine. She is known for her role in the 90’s drama ‘*Touched By An Angel*’ in which she played an angel who comes to earth to help people with problems. *She is more involved with New Age mysticism than Biblical Christianity.* In 2010 Downey graduated from The University of Santa Monica with a Degree in Spiritual Psychology (the school is dedicated to ‘*Soul-centred Education*’). The University describes ‘Spiritual Psychology’ as: ‘*surrendering*’ and ‘*sacrificing*’ is work that can and has been called ‘*healing*’ on the physical, mental, and emotional levels in service to the deeper revelation of who we truly are as loving, peaceful, compassionate, and joyful beings. This level of ‘*awareness*’ is the ‘*Authentic Self*’...‘*Spiritual Psychology is a technology that empowers students to convert their everyday life experience into rungs on the ladder of Spiritual Evolution*’. (1)

Such ‘self realisation’ is a New Age term for achieving godhood. The famous psychic medium, John Edward, collaborated with Roma Downey on his book on occult prayer. Downey featured on his television show where she contacted her dead mother. (Contacting the dead and ‘necromancy’ is forbidden in the Bible - Is.8:19-20; Dt.18:10-12; Lev.19:31; 20:6).

The ‘spiritual advisors’

The co-producer, Mark Burnett, says ‘*We weren’t qualified to teach the Bible, but we knew plenty of people who were*’, speaking of the panel of ‘*spiritual advisors*’ who helped make the series. But a look at the Board of Advisors is revealing. Joel Osteen, pastor of the largest church in the U.S., professes not to mention sin in the gospel and is sympathetic to universalist ideas, (see separate article on him in this newsletter). There is Prosperity Gospel preacher T.D. Jakes who is yoked with New Age promoter Oprah Winfrey. Rick Warren promotes mergers with other religions. Other advisors are Roman Catholic. This admixture is obviously not skewed toward a Biblical world-view.

The Errors

The start of the miniseries includes an on-screen statement: *'This program is an adaptation of Bible stories that changed our world. It endeavors to stay true to the spirit of the book'*. But is the case?...

*Noah and the Ark...*Noah is seen fixing a leaky boat (did God not design the boat well enough?). Noah then leaves out vital detail in telling the story of Adam and Eve from Genesis. *There is no mention of the promised Redeemer* (Gen.4:14,15) which is crucial to the book of Genesis, being the prophecy concerning future salvation! Instead Noah says humanity has made *'bad choices! Bad decisions!'* The word 'sin' is not uttered in the first two episodes. The main message of the Bible and the Gospel is here lost. The movie ignores detail of Adam and Eve's sin and God's animal sacrifice and its skins to cover their shame. Instead, Adam and Eve are banished from the Garden with no repentance or redemption, contradicting Scripture. The movie also has Noah's sons as children; yet the Bible has them as grown married men with wives.

*Abraham and Lot...*Abraham, the father of the faith, tells God 'no' and is portrayed as a poor nomad in survival mode. Yet the Bible has Abram as *'very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold'* (Gen.13:2). Lot tells Abram to divide the land so he can move on to a new area for himself and his wife. Everyone looks greatly unwashed and Neanderthal. Biblically, Lot and Abraham did not decide to 'divide the land'. Ishmael moved East and Abraham remained where he was.

*Sodom...*The angels are made to look like armed Ninja's and get beaten, contrary to the Bible - in which God pronounces His judgment upon the wicked city of Sodom, and sends angels to rescue Lot before the city is destroyed for its wholesale sexual immorality and rebellion (Gen.19:1-7). But in the movie Lot discovers the wounded, beaten angels who beg for safety in his home. *This horribly demeans the real angels of scripture!* In the Bible they were never scared of, or harmed by, the Sodomites! It was the angels who struck the men with blindness! The movie also leaves out the *homosexual sin* of Sodom and instead portrays the men of Sodom more as promiscuous *heterosexuals* who wanted to fight with the angels. Even non Christian critics have questioned this change. And during the escape from Sodom the angels engage in martial arts and sword play with the men of Sodom?...

What right does anyone have to add to God's word in this way? Will this not be judged? (Deut.4:2; 12:32; Prov.30:6; Rev.22:18,19).

*Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac...*In the Bible Abraham never doubted God, yet the miniseries portrays Abraham as somewhat of an insane weakling. Abraham is seen horrified and weeping at what God is making him do in sacrificing his son Isaac. He says *'No! No! Have I not done enough?'* Yet this

doubt and rebellion is never seen in scripture.

Sarah... Sarah hears news of the sacrifice and runs to the mountain screaming at Abraham to stop. Isaac is seen as a boy (he was a man) and struggling with Abraham...*all contrary to scripture*. The Bible has Abraham as a great man of faith and Sarah nowhere attempting to stop him. Yet in the miniseries Abraham is left looking like a deranged human and his wife in conflict with him. What spirit would have this film change the 'type' here of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ? Hagar is shown to be the 'victim' of Sarah's hatred and rejection. Yet the Bible depicts her as someone who despised Sarah.

Jesus... After viewing the Old Testament sections we should not trust the accuracy of the all important accounts of Jesus and the New Testament to come. The series has Jesus depicted in the Roman Catholic medieval image which opposes the look of Jews of the day (Jesus did not have long hair, etc).

When Jesus produces the miracle of the haul of fish for Peter, the film changes the script and instead of Peter worshipping at the feet of Jesus and saying '*depart from me, for I am a sinful man*' (Lk.5:8), Peter asks '*How did this happen? What did you do?*' Jesus responds: '*I am giving you the chance to change your life...giving up catching fish and I will make you a fisher of men*' and '*change the world*'. There is no mention of sin, acknowledging of Jesus as God in the flesh, or a real salvation message. Instead it is a social gospel. Jesus Christ did not come to change the world, He came to save it from sin!

Rather than adhering to the Bible and evangelism by word and preaching, churches with 'itching ears' are turning to fables like this Bible Miniseries. *But why should we ever expect a godless Hollywood to present the gospel or the Bible accurately?*

The message of the Bible involves the sin of humanity and God's plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. *People will not be saved by the miniseries message* but only if they hear the true Gospel and the word of God presented accurately; and repent of their sins and turn in faith to Jesus as Saviour.

Some readers will charge me with being pedantic, but what does God say about those who add to, change, or manipulate His word for entertainment or any other reason? His judgement is as for '*liars*' (Pr.30:6) with promises of '*destruction*' (2Pet.3:16) and judgements as of '*plagues*' (Rev.22:18,19). This is no small matter!

'For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables' (2Tim.4:3-4).

'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world' (1Jn.4:1).

Terry Arnold

(1) <http://www.universityofsantamonica.edu/What/>

What Does the Pastor of the Biggest U.S. Church Believe?

Joel Osteen is senior pastor of the Lakewood Church in Houston. His book *'Your Best Life Now - Seven Steps to Living at Your Full Potential'* was number one 'New York Times' best-seller. Recently I went back and viewed an interview Joel did with *CNN Larry King Live* (2005). Since then nothing has changed in what this pastor teaches today, as he continues to echo the flavour of current social opinion. What is stunning about this interview below is what Joel *could not* or would not answer when asked questions every pastor should have answers for! Keep in mind that this pastor has the biggest and fastest growing church in the USA. with an average attendance of 45,000 each Sunday.

Excerpts of this revealing interview are below. **[Editor's comments in bold and brackets]**

...LARRY KING: *But you're not fire and brimstone, right? You're not pound the decks and hell and damnation?*

JOEL OSTEEN: *No. That's not me. It's never been me. I've always been an encourager at heart. And when I took over from my father he came from the Southern Baptist background and back 40, 50 years ago there was a lot more of that. But, you know, I just - I don't believe in that. I don't believe - maybe it was for a time. But I don't have it in my heart to condemn people. I'm there to encourage them. I see myself more as a coach, as a motivator to help them experience the life God has for us.*

KING: *But don't you think if people don't believe as you believe, they're somehow condemned?*

OSTEEN: *You know, I think that happens in our society. But I try not to do that. I tell people all the time...I'm for everybody. You may not agree with me, but to me it's not my job to try to straighten everybody out. The Gospel is called the good news. My message is a message of hope, that God is for you. You can live a good life no matter what's happened to you. And so I don't know. I know there is condemnation but I don't feel that's my place.*

[Editor: The Gospel is only 'good news' when the bad news of sin is understood. No one can be truly saved if they do not know what they are saved from. The idea of 'straitening everybody out' is a strawman diversion.

And what gospel is this?: 'You can live a good life no matter what's happened to you?' Osteen admits there is a future 'condemnation', but he will not preach this? The Bible preaches a condemnation (Jn.5:24; Rom.5:16-19; 3:18,19). If Osteen is a minister of the Gospel and 'knows' there 'is condemnation' why is it that he can say 'I don't feel that's my place' to preach that message?]

....KING: *Is it hard to lead a Christian life?*

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OSTEEN: *I don't think it's that hard. To me it's fun. We have joy and happiness...I'm not trying to follow a set of rules and stuff. I'm just living my life.*

KING: *But you have rules, don't you?*

OSTEEN: *We do have rules. But the main rule to me is to honor God with your life. To live a life of integrity. Not be selfish. You know, help others. But that's really the essence of the Christian faith.*

[Editor: Is this really the 'essence of the Christian faith'? Is it about us and our works, or God's glory? Which 'gospel' is this?]

...KING: *What if you're Jewish or Muslim, [and] you don't accept Christ at all?*

OSTEEN: *You know, I'm very careful about saying who would and wouldn't go to Heaven. I don't know...*

[Editor: What is this 'I don't know'? The Bible is clear and unambiguous about who goes to Heaven (Acts 4:12; Jn.3:3; 14:6); and ministers of the Gospel are called to preach it!]

KING: *If you believe you have to believe in Christ? They're wrong, aren't they?*

OSTEEN: *Well, I don't know if I believe they're wrong. I believe here's what the Bible teaches and from the Christian faith this is what I believe. But I just think that only God will judge a person's heart. I spent a lot of time in India with my father. I don't know all about their religion. But I know they love God. And I don't know. I've seen their sincerity. So I don't know. I know for me, and what the Bible teaches, I want to have a relationship with Jesus.*

[Editor: 'I don't know'?... 'I don't know' about other faiths?]

'Loving God' is not enough to be saved. It is *only* through believing in Jesus and His work that any will be saved. 'Sincerity' or 'loving God' does not get people to Heaven.]

...KING: *What is the prosperity gospel?*

OSTEEN: *I think the prosperity gospel in general is - well I don't know. I hear it too. I don't know. I think what sometimes you see is it's just all about money. That's not what I believe. It's the attitude of your heart, and so you know, we believe - but I do believe this, that God wants us to be blessed. He wants us to be able to send our kids to college, excel in our careers. But prosperity to me, Larry, is not just money, it's having health. What good is money if you don't have health?*

...KING: *How about issues that the church has feelings about? Abortion? Same-sex marriages?*

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OSTEEN: *Yeah. You know what Larry? I don't go there. I just ...*

[Editor: One guess why he does not 'go there'? This is the problem with many such pastors - they lack courage when society desperately needs to know what God has said and is saying.]

...KING: *What do you wonder about the most? Now, I mean, you accept things as they are: He gets cancer, she doesn't...what though, boggles your mind about this world?*

OSTEEN: *What do I wonder about? You know what, Larry? I don't know. I don't know. Nothing comes to the forefront of my mind. I just...*

[Editor: 'I don't know' seems to be his mantra? The pastor of the biggest church in the U.S. does not have answers to these questions?]

KING: *There's no great searching?*

OSTEEN: *There's no great thing...I have thoughts. I just, you know, I don't think that a same-sex marriage is the way God intended it to be. I don't think abortion is the best. I think there are other, you know, a better way to live your life. But I'm not going to condemn those people. I tell them all the time our church is open for everybody.*

[Editor: 'I don't think same sex marriage is the way God intended'? Abortion is not the 'best'? The Bible is much more sure than this - the former is an abomination judged with Hell (1Cor.6:9,10; Jude 7); the latter is murder of God's creation in His image (Ps.139:13, 16; 51:5; Jer.1:4,5).]

KING: *You don't call them sinners?*

OSTEEN: *I don't.*

KING: *Is that a word you don't use?*

OSTEEN: *I don't use it. I never thought about it. But I probably don't. But most people already know what they're doing wrong. When I get them to church I want to tell them that you can change. There can be a difference in your life. So I don't go down the road of condemning.*

[Editor: Shamefully this pastor has no doctrine of sin. He has no gospel that tells people what they can be saved *from*.]

KING: *You believe in the Bible literally?*

OSTEEN: *I do, I do.*

ON LINE CALLER: *...thank you, Joel for your positive messages and your book. I'm wondering, though, why you side-stepped Larry's earlier question about how we get to Heaven? The Bible clearly tells us that Jesus is the way, the truth and the light and the only way to the father is through him. That's not really a message of condemnation but of truth.*

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OSTEEN: *Yes, I would agree with her. I believe that...*

KING: *So then a Jew is not going to Heaven?*

OSTEEN: *No. Here's my thing, Larry, is I can't judge somebody's heart. You know? Only God can look at somebody's heart, and so - I don't know. To me, it's not my business to say, you know, this one is or this one isn't. I just say, here's what the Bible teaches and I'm going to put my faith in Christ. And I just I think it's wrong when you go around saying, you're saying you're not going, you're not going, you're not going, because it's not exactly my way. I'm just...*

KING: *But you believe your way.*

OSTEEN: *I believe my way. I believe my way with all my heart.*

KING: *But for someone who doesn't...it is wrong, isn't he?*

OSTEEN: *Well, yes. Well, I don't know if I look at it like that. I would present my way, but I'm just going to let God be the judge of that. I don't know. I don't know.*

[Editor: What does this pastor 'know' exactly? What exactly is 'my way' for Osteen? It is difficult to ascertain what exactly is Osteen's 'gospel' because he does not clearly put forth *any* gospel except 'I don't know'?]

KING: *So you make no judgment on anyone?*

OSTEEN: *No. But I...*

KING: *What about atheists?*

OSTEEN: *You know what, I'm going to let someone - I'm going to let God be the judge of who goes to heaven and hell. I just - again, I present the truth, and I say it every week. You know, I believe it's a relationship with Jesus. But you know what? I'm not going to go around telling everybody else if they don't want to believe that that's going to be their choice. God's got to look at your own heart. God's got to look at your heart, and only God knows that...*

[Editor's final comment: This is typical 'doublespeak'. The preacher is to put forth the judgements of God in the Gospel.

At a recent *Hillsong* conference (July/2013) Osteen exhorted listeners to realise that God is 'not keeping a record of their wrongs' or is mad at them, instead 'God is madly in love with you'. Yet are we not warned of the consequences of unbelief? 'Their choice' will not save them! God does 'look at the heart' as Osteen says, but what He sees in the unsaved is Hell deserving sin and depravity! God has entrusted the telling of the Gospel to the believers, especially to pastors who are undershepherds to His people.

Is it any wonder the church in the west is falling away rapidly and seen as weak - when pastors like this who have the ears of millions and yet will not be decisive *when the scriptures are decisive*?]

Wrath Satisfied!

In scripture we have the term '*propitiation*' used three times in the New Testament (Rom.3:25; 1Jn.2:2; 1Jn.4:10). The verb of the same Greek word is also elsewhere translated '*be merciful*' (Lk.18:13) and '*to make reconciliation for*' (Heb.2:17). The same Greek word is also translated '*mercy seat*' (Heb.9:5).

In the word '*propitiation*' is found some of the most exclusive teaching of any religion. *Propitiation* is the turning away of the wrath of God. Some versions such as the RSV, NAB use the word *expiation* instead of *propitiation*. The NIV uses '*atoning sacrifice*'. Modern teaching is increasingly using such terms instead of *propitiation*. But arguably in '*propitiation*' is found a depth and wealth of meaning not found in other words.

Expiation or Propitiation?

Expiation has a meaning that hinges on the removal of sin or guilt through a payment of a penalty. It is the act or the means of making satisfaction or atonement for sin. *Propitiation* emphasizes the turning away or appeasement of God's wrath and His perfect and sure judgement, by an offering. His holiness is then satisfied. Christ propitiated the wrath of God by becoming the expiation for our sins. Propitiation is more the *result* of the act of expiation. But the sense in propitiation is that of something instigated by *God Himself*. Arguably expiation loses that force. *Propitiation* is God doing the appeasing Himself through Jesus. *Expiation* focuses less on God and more on Jesus doing this, or the thing - sin. In the Old Testament expiatory offerings focused on sin or guilt (Lev. 4:1-6:7; 6:24-7:1). The notion of appeasement is arguably lacking in most cases to do with expiation. (In some cases, a propitiatory notion is likely - Gen. 32:20; Num. 16:47-48; 25:11; 1 Sam. 26:19; 2 Sam. 21:3-4; 24:25; Prov. 16:14).

Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. He became the '*mercy seat*' from the Old Testament (Heb.9:5). But it is God who is the *object* and who *foreordains* this. '*Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God*' (Rom.3:25).

Both words *propitiation* and *expiation* are closely related to *reconciliation*, since through the sacrifice of Christ we are atoned or reconciled to God. The doctrine of the atonement is the *bringing together of two parties who were once at war*. We were at '*enmity*' with God because of our sin (Eph.2:15,16; Rom.8:7). There was nothing we could do to avert the holy and rightful justice of God against this sin, which began in Adam, and is the transgression of His perfect and holy law.

I prefer the term *propitiation* rather than *expiation* because it points to God as not only being satisfied and appeased, but Him also being the one who *orchestrated the necessary work* of Christ which ultimately *propitiates himself*. He, in the person of His Son, performs the sacrifice of expiation which ends in

propitiation. I don't believe that expiation is as full in meaning as propitiation. Expiation tends to minimise the fact that *it is God who must be satisfied* and who planned the whole event from the beginning. It is God who in the person of His Son allowed sin to be imputed to Christ through substitutionary identification with the sin of His people. God is the *instigator*; He predestines the sacrifice of Christ; and uses Christ to *satisfy* (propitiate) *Himself and His own wrath*. God is the object of the action; Jesus is the subject for us. Jesus propitiates the Father. Only then can the Father save us. Much modern teaching misses this in an effort to avoid what is essentially a religious term that is seldom used in modern language. But it is still an English word rich in meaning! Thus most literal versions use 'propitiation' to describe this integral part of the Gospel.

Satisfaction guaranteed!

It may be seen that I am 'splitting hairs'. I do not believe it is necessarily heresy to have a different word than propitiation, but I suggest it is approaching heresy if with other words the importance of the *satisfying of wrath* is minimised; or that it is not God who initiated the redemption process. Only God Himself could do this! And today, if there is one part of the Gospel that is being deleted, it is the fact of *wrath* and the need for God to be *satisfied* in this! *Expiation* and other terms arguably tend to place more emphasis on *us* ('*ex*' - out), not God ('*pro*' - for), as well as subtly taking out the 'wrath' that caused the need for the propitiation in the first place. The Gospel today is being watered down because it is the new modern thought that people do not want to hear about the necessary *appeasement of an angry God*. Hence liberals will balk at the word 'propitiation' and even consider it now to be archaic. But the Bible leaves no room for any hesitation: '**God judges the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day**' (Ps.7:11). His wrath upon sin and the sinner is mentioned in verses too numerous to mention (Jn.3:36; Rom.1:18; 2:8; 5:9; 9:22; 13:4; Matt.3:7; Lk.3:7). Unsaved people are '**children of wrath**' (Eph.2:3; 5:6). There is also future days of wrath to come when the '**wrath of the lamb**' will be revealed '**for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**' (Rev.6:16, 17). The idea of the wrath of God, judgement and the sinner being unable to please God in his unsaved state is repeated over and over. The concept is increasingly difficult for a society that does not want judgement but rather a 'new tolerance'. But the plight of man and the impending and necessary judgement will not go away. Propitiation is the only answer!

Bible teachers and pastors need to bring this 'propitiation' back into the Gospel! It is teaching which puts the emphasis back on God and Christ where the Gospel should be! This is one doctrine that consistently stuns me into a marvellous awe when meditating on the Gospel - that God the Father should propitiate Himself by sending us a propitiator (Jesus) who by His blood sacrifice would reconcile believers to God, '**not imputing their trespasses unto them**' (2Cor.5:19). What a God! What a Saviour!

Terry Arnold

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Encounter with a Roman Catholic

(Editor's comments in bold and brackets in response to a series of questions put to a Catholic man. Excerpts only)

...I suppose my personal philosophy is that my purpose on earth is to love God and love those in my life. If I do these two things I hope and pray God will one day welcome me home.

[There is NO salvation in these activities. This '*philosophy*' is *not* the Gospel. The Catholic church teaches (and you agreed previous) that you will have Purgatory (to purge sins)...And yet elsewhere you state '*My faith is in Jesus who died for my sins and rose for my justification*'. How can you say this and yet not be certain of the outcome (see your '*philosophy*' above)? If you say He *died for your sins* then why are you believing in a 'purgatory' to purge these sins?

I originally asked you '*Do you believe you are saved by Grace through faith and nothing else; or do you believe the sacraments and /or works are necessary for salvation?*' You have not answered that question? Simply put you cannot be saved by '*another gospel*'. Either the Protestant gospel is correct and the Catholic one false; or the Catholic one correct and the Protestant false. They are diametrically opposed. The Biblical Gospel is 'faith alone', not of works, which you say Paul anathematizes (curses). '*For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast' (Eph.2:8,9) ; '*For what says the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*' (Rom.4:3-5)]*

... Sacraments are not 'works...'

[But the Catholic sacraments are '*necessary for salvation*' as taught by your church. Rome teaches the sacraments, baptism etc. are *salvific*. Pope Ratzinger recently taught this publicly: '*The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation...'*. This was taught in the Council of Trent (Canon 4, Sess.7) and ratified in the recent Vatican II. (The '*anathemas*' also state the same and still ratified).]

...We do regard the sacraments as the 'primary means of salvation' in so far as they are the most 'direct line' to God...it is not personal observance of the sacraments themselves that brings about salvation, not the personal effort or regular attendance, but it is the action of God through them that is of importance.

[This is contradictory. It still says the sacraments are '*necessary for salvation*'! The Biblical Gospel says nothing but grace through faith alone is necessary! The difference is HUGE. Which gospel is it?]

Continued next page >

Catholics believe that faith is ongoing. As we come to relationship with Christ, in daily prayer, we grow deeper and deeper in faith. As we do so, in this ongoing way, he transforms the heart through the power of the Holy Spirit...

[...This is infused human wrought righteousness by which no one will be saved. You have confused biblical justification at the new birth with sanctification ongoing by the Holy Spirit. It is belief in Christ and His *finished* sacrifice that initially saves, *not the ongoing work of the holy spirit*]

...The fruit of this transformation is the works...

[...By which, according to scripture, NO MAN is saved].

As James says, 'Show me your faith without deeds and I will show you my faith by what I do' (James 2:14-26)...I believe this passage captures the heart of the Catholic understanding on faith and works...

[You have not put the whole context here: 'What does it profit, my brethren, though a man SAY he has faith, and have not works? can [that] faith save him? ...faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone. Yes, a man may SAY, you have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works'

The passage compares two kinds of faith - one true and one false; one that a man 'says' he has; and one that is *proved by works*; one has works and one that has no works. The one that has no works is FALSE. But that 'works' has NO part in salvation as is shown in numerous other scriptures. Does this passage contradict Ephesians 2:8,9 and Romans 4:3-5? Does James contradict Paul? Is salvation by faith alone or faith and works together?]

The works by themselves have no power but a genuine faith in Jesus always creates a natural flow of works.

[Then why the 'necessary' sacraments for salvation?]

In this sense it is not the works that save us but the ongoing transformation of the heart that is only by Jesus' grace by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[Contradictory again. How can it not be of works and grace through 'faith alone' when the sacraments are 'necessary for salvation' and sins are not purged here but in Purgatory? Salvation (Justification) is NOT an 'ongoing transformation' that saves us - it is a one-off IMPUTATION of Christ's righteousness through Faith (Rom.4:3-9)]

We believe that the actions or objects used in the sacraments have no power in and of themselves...but are very powerful only because they are a channel through which the love of God is ministered.

[This is NOT what Catholicism teaches about the sacraments in salvation. Read your Catholic Catechism - the sacraments infuse righteousness into the soul on an ongoing basis. This flatly contradicts Romans 4 and imputation. Romans 4 teaches that a man is made righteous upon belief 'without works' and that righteousness is 'credited' (imputed) to him and his sins are not imputed to him. 'For what says the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted [imputed] unto him for righteousness...But

*to him that **WORKS NOT**, but **believes** on him that justifies the ungodly, his **faith** is counted [credited, imputed] for righteousness...Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will **not impute sin**' (Rom.4:3-8)]*

I do trust the...[Catholic apologists]...

[You should not 'trust' these men. Luther did not, nor many others...Why can't you trust the Bible enough to check out the difference between Paul's 'Gospel' and that of Rome? Therein could well lie the difference between salvation and damnation?...Why were millions in the Reformation burnt?]

I will do some more reading and look into it though.

[This you MUST do...for the good of your eternal soul to be sure? I did it. I beg you to read my book 'To Catholics Whom I Love' in full...]

...Purgatory completes the purification that is begun on earth so that there is no residue or stain of sin left when a person enters into heaven.

[So, Christ's death and resurrection are not sufficient for salvation in and of themselves? Where is Purgatory in the Roman Catholic Bible? Was not Christ's sacrifice enough? (Heb.ch.9,10 'once...once for all...once forever'). Does Christ's shed blood cleanse us from all sin..or just SOME?...]

We do believe that the Mass is a representation of the events on Calvary...

[No, Rome teaches that Christ is ACTUALLY PRESENT in the wafer. And it is the 'same sacrifice as at calvary' and a 'continuing' sacrifice]

As we eat his body and drink his blood we come into communion with him in a physical...and spiritual way. But...to say that we 'crucify Jesus in every Mass' is a distortion of RC teaching. The Mass makes present the once and for all sacrifice that took place on Calvary.

[How can you make something that was done 'once' to be something you continue and repeat? Do you not see this is anti scripture? (see Hebrews)...]

Re: Mary devotion: ...There are parts of the RC world that, in my opinion, hold Mary too highly. Often in some Asian cultures (and sometimes amongst older Australian Catholics) Mary is prayed to for healing or direction or whatever...I do find this very strange and wrong. It is not RC teaching.

[Oh, yes it is! Check out the writings of the last three Popes. Check your Catholic Catechism...They have dubbed her the 'Queen of Heaven' and proclaim her to be a 'co-redemptrix' with Christ!]

We pray together to God for healing. Catholics believe that this gathering can go beyond the grave. We can therefore ask for the intercession of the saints or Mary. We ask them to pray for us for whatever the need is.

[Christ instructed us to pray to the Father alone. We are *not* to pray to the dead (Is.8:19-20; Dt.18:10,11; Lev.20:6). Saul attempted to contact the dead (1Sam.28:11) against the Word of God (Lk.16:26). It is only through Jesus we have *access...to the Father* (Eph.2:18). He is our *advocate with the Father* (1Jn.2:1) and '*My soul waits only upon God*' (Ps.62:5). The only one in the Bible who mediates and intercedes for us is Jesus]

Because of her special relationship to Jesus she is honoured... an important

distinction that some Catholics and many non-Catholics miss.

[She is MORE than ‘honoured’...she is bowed down to, prayed to, crowned, and given the position of ‘co-mediator’ and ‘co-redemptrix with Christ’]

As for what ‘saved me’...I’m not sure I can put this in an e-mail! I believe this process is not complete...but as I journey with Christ he continues to change me into the person He created me to be.

[This is NOT Biblical salvation. He abhors the person you are!...your righteous deeds are as ‘filthy rags’ to Him. You can only be made acceptable to Him by His IMPUTED righteousness...this is the difference between Roman Catholicism and Biblical Christianity]

Often the Catholic Church is misrepresented and beliefs are misunderstood...

[Let me be very clear here - I taught Catholic doctrine in schools for years in primary and high school...For decades I have read and studied Catholic doctrine and refuted it...which doctrines are *misunderstood*?]

...Anything proclaimed by Church doctrine should be understood in the historical context in which it was written. The ‘anathemas’ were written at the time of the Reformation...secondly, the word ‘anathema’, apparently refers to St. Paul’s proclamation in Galatians 1:9 - ‘If anyone preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received, let him be anathema’. The anathema is therefore a statement to say that anyone preaching another gospel (in this case, the argument for faith alone bringing salvation) is outside of the ‘truth’.

[The anathemas were ratified again in Vatican II councils. I believe in salvation by ‘faith alone’ and not of works. Does this mean I am ‘anathemetised’? Does this mean I am preaching ‘another gospel’ and ‘outside of truth’ as you say?

I pray you will seek truth in all this. I also again beg you to read my book in full with an open mind and an open Bible]

Editor’s final note to reader: This person replied: *‘I feel very offended by a number of your statements and your general tone of aggression and judgment. In particular...you say ‘He abhors the person you are. Even your righteousness deeds are as filthy rags to him’. Who are you to make such judgements?...I will not be discussing any of these matters with you any further...’*

[...All I have done is address your *beliefs*...And the above re: ‘filthy rags’ - this is not my opinion of you, this is God’s ‘judgement’ of all fallen humanity. I was quoting scripture (Is.64:6)...]

Dear Terry,...Please keep up the good work in these difficult and evil times, when so many either don’t want to know what is going on, or just don’t care. Rejoice in the Lord’s promises to us all, Yours in the Lord’s service.

(C.& V. M., Qld)

Terry's Itinerary

Sept.15th (Sun) 9.30am & 6.30pm Hervey Bay Bible Church, Qld.
Ph.0411489472

Sept.21st (Sat) 2-5pm Corinda Brethren Assembly, Brisbane Ph.(07)37256458
SEMINAR: Sovereignty of God: Arminianism, Calvinism, hyper-Calvinism:
the history; what they teach; what is biblical?...

Sept.22nd (Sun) 9.30am Corinda Brethren Assembly, Brisbane
Ph.(07)37256458

Oct.13th (Sun) 9.30am & 6.30pm Hervey Bay Bible Church, Qld.

Nov.3rd (Sun) 9.30am & 6.30pm Hervey Bay Bible Church, Qld Ph.0411489472

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)

Terry, I want to support students who wish to attend the Masters course in the future. It is encouraging to know that there are such who want to study...

Praise the Lord your interstate itinerary was fruitful and trust the Lord for growth to follow. We have so much to praise the Lord for though all around us is falling apart...Thankyou for 'Diakrisis' and the very helpful articles and the 'Comments and Questions'. God bless this ministry. Be assured of my prayers.

(J.B., Qld)

Editor's Comment: Any donation towards helping a student attend the college is greatly appreciated. Any such funds will be allocated prayerfully.

[From missionaries in Kenya] *In Mumias...every one you meet is a 'Christian' or some Muslim, yet both seem to have the same gospel... 'say sorry to God and try to be a good person'...Our task is to help them to see there is no one good and ask the 'Christian' why did Jesus have to come? They have all 'made decisions for Jesus' yet have not understood the Bible Jesus and what He has accomplished. Many were invited to the 3 days of teaching...many admitted they were not saved...*

...On the final morning one of the brothers led the devotional. His text was 1Cor.2:2, 'For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified'. He was from a Charismatic background and only recently persuaded of the Doctrines of Grace. He explained his ministry had been about himself...his experiences, his gifts, his preaching, his access to the Spirit, his energy, his leadership...He told us he would get up Sunday morning in church, read a text, put his Bible down, and with no preparation tell the people whatever came into his head! It was all about him. He said he was determined, by the grace of God, to change completely. It would no longer be about him but about the Lord Jesus. Through our studies he realised the power is in the Word of God, not in himself...and to let God speak to the people...

Your Comments and Questions

(Views expressed here are not necessarily those of the editor)



Pacific Bible Institute Update

14 pastors and students attended the 2 weeks August Masters programme in Hervey Bay. The training was intensive but fruitful. A time of blessing was had by all.

There may be room for new students in this course next year (entry requirements exist for any new students).

Application forms and information sheets can be obtained from the college. Some funds have also been kindly donated to be given to students needing financial help to enter this Masters programme. Any prospective students who are interested and in need of financial help can apply for this.

Prayer/Praise Points

- Praise the Lord for opportunities in the last few months to reach out to unsaved and send literature. Much literature has also been sent to readers requiring help in various areas.
- Praise the Lord for the successful Masters course in August and the Lord providing all the funds to run the course. Pray for the students growth and success with their assignments. Pray that they will go back to their churches and use the information, the teaching and the equipping, to edify the saints and preach the true gospel.
- Pray for Terry's seminar in Brisbane and meetings elsewhere (see itinerary).

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