

# The Quarterly Journal



THE NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION OF PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

VOL. 36, NO. 2

APRIL-JUNE 2016

EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

## Close Encounters With an Audacious Mind Does Beth Moore Really Have the Key to Loving Jesus?

by M. Kurt Goedelman

A writing career that grew out of a weekly Bible study that begat Bible study materials, full-length books, and video series and live simulcasts has vaulted Beth Moore into a prominent position in the Christian publishing marketplace for nearly two decades.

Her headliner status owes much to the way in which she and her publications are promoted. She is pitched as being the authority on the problems and challenges many women face, as someone who can teach her readers how to arm themselves against Satan's attacks, get them out of the pit into deliverance, break free from spiritual strongholds, and cure the "epidemic" of insecurity. Her writings are often promoted as something to fill the void in the lives of evangelical women.

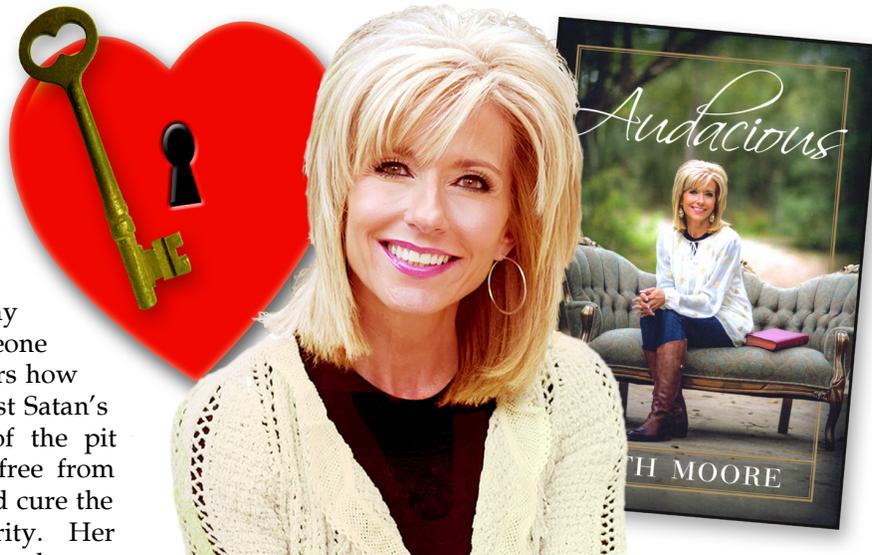
Her latest book, *Audacious*, published late last summer, is yet another in her line of *ne plus ultra* writings. The back of the book's dust jacket says:

"Thirty years in the making, *Audacious* is a deep dive into the message that has compelled Beth Moore to serve women around

the globe. Glancing over the years of ministry behind her and strengthening her resolve to the call before her, she came to the realization that her vision for women was incomplete. It

lacked something they were aching for. Something Jesus was longing for. Beth identifies that missing link by digging through Scripture, unearthing life experiences, and spotlighting a turning point with the capacity to infuse any life with holy passion and purpose. What was missing?

(continues on page 11)



### Inside this Issue:

DO WE HAVE A NEW COVENANT OR DON'T WE? .....	PAGE 2
CHARGES AGAINST GOTHARD MULTIPLY .....	PAGE 3
YESHUA: IS THERE REALLY SOMETHING ABOUT THAT NAME? ..	PAGE 4

---

---

# Editorials

---

---

## DO WE HAVE A NEW COVENANT OR DON'T WE?

Asking the question, "Do we really have a new covenant?" may seem strange to most Christians.

The Apostle Paul was not ambivalent about the new covenant in Christ when he preached to Jewish hearers in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia: "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which *you could not be justified by the law of Moses*" (Acts 13:38-39, emphasis added).

The emerging issue of the new covenant being harmonized with the old covenant really cropped up almost undetected 40 years ago. Apologetics and discernment ministries appeared to have missed the indicators that the germ of this idea was beginning to spread. Those who should have been the first to be alarmed lost sight of the fact that words and titles really do matter.

Up until 1975, many individual Jewish Christians and outreach ministries to Jews were part of what was known as The Hebrew Christian Alliance of America. The title Hebrew Christian Alliance showed recognition of a balance in the body of Christ and a continuing need of fellowship of Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus. However, in 1975, the HCAA changed its name to The

Messianic Jewish Alliance of America. That change had enormous practical significance. Overnight, Hebrew believers in Christ began to be called "Messianic Jews." The word "Christian" was dropped. There began to be a moving away from the Church and a definite shift toward Judaism, along with the need to feel more connected to the synagogue and Talmudic Judaism.

Division and elitism began to surface. The fissure was small at first, but it began to grow. To integrate back into Judaism meant that large parts of the Old Testament Law had to be recognized and practiced. Just which laws to obey now became a guessing game. This created a gap between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, the latter who saw no need of rituals. One of the initial justifications was that Messianic Jews — whose practices looked more Jewish — would appeal to unbelieving Jews. That was not to happen.

So we now face the issue of do we have a new covenant or don't we?

The Prophet Jeremiah was very clear when he prophesied of the coming new covenant: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD" (Jeremiah 31:31-32, emphasis added).

(continues on page 19)

### PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

P.O. Box 26062 • Saint Louis, Missouri 63136-0062 • (314) 921-9800

Visit PFO's Website at: <http://www.pfo.org>

#### BOARD of DIRECTORS:

G. Richard Fisher ..... Dillsburg, PA      Gary E. Gilley ..... Springfield, IL  
M. Kurt Goedelman ..... Saint Louis, MO      Keith A. Morse ..... Denver, CO  
David M. Tyler ..... Granite City, IL

#### BOARD of REFERENCE:

Dr. Jay E. Adams ..... Enoree, SC      Dr. Norman L. Geisler ..... Charlotte, NC  
Dr. Ron Rhodes ..... Frisco, TX

© 2016 – PFO. All rights reserved. ISSN: 1083-6853. These articles may not be stored on web pages or Internet sites without permission. *The Quarterly Journal* is the newsletter publication of PFO. Published by Personal Freedom Outreach, P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, MO 63136. PFO's *Journal* may also be obtained on CD-ROM or flash drive in Portable Document Format (.PDF) for use with Adobe® Reader® software.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version, ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Because of the fluid nature of the Internet, web addresses or links contained in journal articles may have changed and/or may no longer be accessible.

## GOOGLE AD PROGRAM BENEFITS SCIENTOLOGY

The Church of Scientology appears to have received nearly \$6 million in free advertising from Google as a result of the Internet technology company's free advertising program for non-profit organizations and charities.

According to an online report by *Business Insider*, Brandy Harrison, a speaker at a Scientology fundraiser last fall, stated that Google had awarded various monthly grants to the church and claimed, "In fact, in total so far, we have had \$5.7 million in Google grants already approved." The report, however, cautioned, "The \$5.7 million claim ought to be taken with a pinch of salt. Former Scientologists say many claims the church makes about its size and success are hugely exaggerated."

In the past, Scientology supposedly has benefited from other Google policies. In 2002, it was reported that search result links to a website which published news and harsh criticism of Scientology were removed by Google. The deletions were said to have been the result of Scientology's Digital Millennium Copyright Act request. The church claimed the adversarial website had published its internal materials which were said to be copyrighted materials.

—MKG

## WATCHTOWER COULD NET \$1 BILLION FOR ITS BROOKLYN PROPERTIES

For more than a century, Brooklyn, N.Y., has been home for the corporate headquarters of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. That is expected to change in 2017 as the Jehovah's Witness organization is selling its headquarters buildings and moving its offices to a location about an hour north of Brooklyn.

Outsiders are predicting that the sale will bring the society a hefty windfall. Estimates of the sale price are at least \$1 billion. Some call that figure conservative.

According to an *Associated Press* report, "Jehovah's Witnesses spokesman Richard Devine said that the move will allow the organization to operate more efficiently. The church had owned 36 separate Brooklyn properties before it began selling them off in preparation for the move upstate to Warwick."

The Watchtower has been selling these buildings for more than a decade. In 2004, the 1 million-square-foot, 14-story building that housed the group's printing plant sold for \$205 million and was converted into condominiums. In October 2013, the society sold five of its buildings to Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and his partners RFR Realty and LIVWRK Holdings for \$375 million. Kushner is developing the properties into a high-tech hub.

According to the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, the organization's residential facility, known as the Towers Building, is one of the "brightest jewels" of the Watchtower's holdings. The newspaper said, "It was a hotel built in the 1920s where the Brooklyn Dodgers stayed for home games."

The Watch Tower Society moved its headquarters to Brooklyn in 1909, when founder Charles Taze Russell moved the organization's headquarters from Allegheny, Pa.

—MKG

## CHARGES AGAINST GOTHARD MULTIPLY

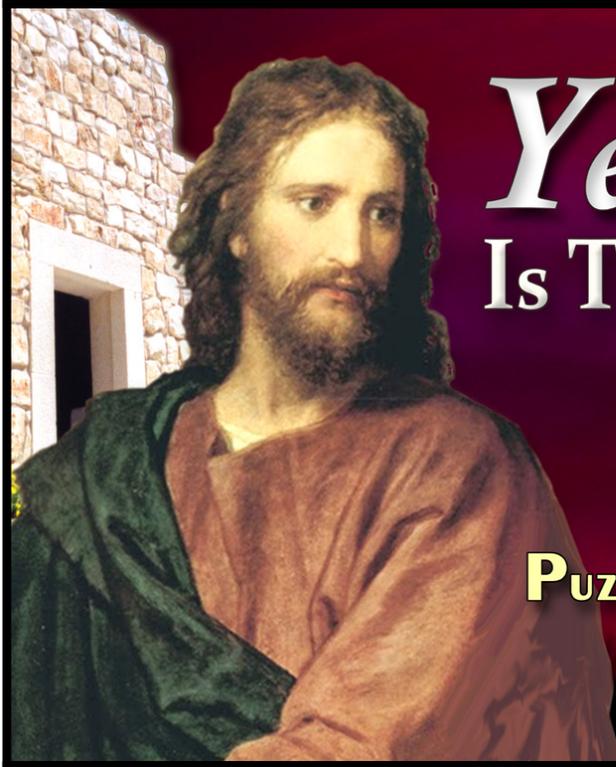
Last October, five plaintiffs sued Bill Gothard's Institute in Basic Life Principles organization, alleging numerous instances of sexual abuse and harassment by Gothard and others in his ministry. In January, the plaintiff list grew to 10 and allegations were added. The suit now names Gothard as a defendant.

One plaintiff has accused both Gothard and an IBLP leader of raping her. According to *The Washington Post*, "The same woman says she was raped by one of the ministry's 'biblical counselors.'" In response, Gothard told the newspaper, "Oh no. Never never. Oh! That's horrible. Never in my life have I touched a girl sexually. I'm shocked to even hear that."

Seven of the plaintiffs in the amended complaint are named. The other three are identified as Jane Does. One of the Jane Does is the woman who says she was raped.

The newspaper also revealed, "Another woman in the lawsuit, Ruth Copley Burger, who was the adopted daughter of the counselor in question, alleges that her father sexually molested her." David Gibbs III, lawyer for the women, said that "he believes both women went to the police with the allegations but he is not sure why law enforcement didn't prosecute the cases."

(continues on page 22)



# Yeshua: Is There Really Something About That Name?

## THE HEBREW ROOTS MOVEMENT'S PUZZLING TAKE ON OUR SAVIOR'S NAME

by G. Richard Fisher

A Christian college near this writer's home recently was the site of a conference for the Hebrew Roots Movement (HRM). The advertisements listed HRM notables Jonathan Cahn, Sid Roth, and others as keynote speakers. Conference organizers scheduled an afternoon when music would be played and vendors would display their wares.

There were stacks of books, CDs, and DVDs. Some were said to be the last word on prophecy and the End Times, along with insights into the identity of Antichrist. Others offered to unveil ancient secrets or suggested America's imminent demise. There were charts and timetables. There were Israeli flags, kippas, prayer shawls, shofars, menorahs, mezuzahs, "holy" anointing oil, bottled water from the Jordan River, Holy Land jewelry, Holy Land dirt, olive wood figurines (made in Israel), and more. One band played Israeli-sounding music. This scene was the Hebrew Roots Movement Cafeteria.

But nowhere was the name of Jesus mentioned. Musicians and vendors, along with the literature, constantly referred to Yeshua.

Yeshua (pronounced *Yeh shoe ah* — emphasis on *shoe*) is the name Jesus in Hebrew. To a young believer or an outsider they may as well have been speaking in tongues. Had Christians missed the correct pronunciation of the "name which is above every name" all these years? Was the name Yeshua an individual preference or an absolute necessity? Was it a personal preference or a demand? And were there negative eternal consequences for this verbal transgression? It depends on who you ask.

### SPLITS AND SPLINTERS

The Hebrew Roots Movement is more a mood than a movement. In the past, *The Quarterly Journal* has published several articles on issues surrounding the HRM, which tries to reproduce elements of Judaism and introduce those elements into Christian practice.

But the problem facing the HRM is choosing which Judaism to adopt.

Judaism has not been unified since the days of Israel's divided kingdom. After King Solomon's death (c. 930 B.C.), the northern and southern tribes split into Israel and Judah.

Jewish scholar and author David Flusser writes that there were "various streams in Judaism during the period of Jesus' life and activities."<sup>1</sup>

Most Christians have some awareness that there were Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes, Sicarii, and Herodians in the days of Jesus. Some followed the teachings, traditions, and interpretations of the School of Hillel while others adhered to those of Shammai.<sup>2</sup> Jesus said in Matthew 23:2 that when the Pharisees quoted Moses (which is the meaning of "sit in Moses' seat") they could be listened to (v. 3). But when the Pharisees quoted traditions, with all their arbitrary and stringent demands, they were to be questioned (vv. 4-5).

Jerusalem Jews differed from Galilean Jews. Diaspora Jews differed from those in Jerusalem and Galilee. After the time of Jesus and beyond, Jews had the Tannaim — Sages of the Mishnah in the first and second centuries A.D. and the Amoraim — scholars of Talmudic instruction from 200-500 A.D. They were followed by the Stammaim, then the Karaites, and then the Kabbalists and medieval mystics. Modern Judaism ranges from

Ultra-Orthodox to liberal. There is no exact surviving form of any of the New Testament Judaisms. There is no Temple, no Holy of Holies, no priesthood, and no blood sacrifices.

Later Jewish traditions and practices have been amassed in the two Talmuds — the larger Babylonian Talmud and the shorter Palestinian Talmud. The Talmud is the Jewish rule book today along with the extrabiblical Midrash and commentaries from centuries of Jewish rabbis.

### A VERY LARGE RELIGIOUS CAFETERIA

Even within Orthodox Judaism today there is a variety of divisions, cultural practices, modes and colors of dress, and rituals depending on from where each group came. There are Ashkenazi Jews (who came from France and Germany) and Sephardic Jews (from Spain and Portugal). There are Ultra-Orthodox separatist Jews living in Mea Shearim in Jerusalem. An online Jewish source tells us:

“The [Hasidic] movement originated in Eastern Europe in the 18th century, at a time when Jews were experiencing great persecution. While the Jewish elite focused on and found comfort in Talmud study, the impoverished and uneducated Jewish masses hungered for a new approach. ... Over time, Hasidism broke up into different groups headed by the different tzadikim [or Hasidic leaders]. Some of the larger and more well-known Hasidic sects include Breslov, Lubavitch (Chabad), Satmar, Ger, Belz, Bobov, Skver, Vizhnitz, Sanz (Klausenberg), Puppa, Munkacz, Boston, and Spinka Hasidim.”<sup>3</sup>

Anyone visiting Jerusalem can see the Belz Great Synagogue, the largest synagogue in the world. It seats 10,000. This seven-story structure, built by the Belz Hasidic community, took 15 years to construct and is patterned after the ancient Temple.

An example of extreme practice among the Ultra-Orthodox is the sacrificing of young male chickens as an atonement on the afternoon of Yom

Kippur. The ritual is called *Kapparot* (atonement) and consists of swinging the chicken above one’s head before killing it. One’s sins are supposed to be transferred to the chicken. For those who concede to the protests over animal cruelty, a bag of money is substituted for the chicken. After swinging it around one’s head, the money is then given to charity.<sup>4</sup>

Then there is the Movement for the Establishment of the Temple, amid reports that people are actively training priests for ministry in the Third Temple. There are also temple builders at the Temple Institute in Jerusalem. They are actively raising red (auburn or reddish-brown) heifers in accordance with Numbers 19 and Talmud Tractate Parah to cleanse the priesthood. Those at the Temple Institute would like to jump-start Temple construction on the Temple Mount while other Jews say they must await the Messiah, who will restore the Third Temple to the mount.

Any attempt to build a Temple on the mount today would trigger a war. It would be a horrific outrage to the Muslims and a catastrophe for Israel. Muslim riots already break out simply because Jews visit the Temple Mount.

Some Jews search for their tribal identity through genetics. Others say Messiah will give that information when He comes. Members of the Ultra-Orthodox Neturei Karta hate the modern State of Israel and its government. They feel more comfortable with Muslim extremists than they do with other Jews. Each one of these sects lives in a world of its own.

Given the variety of Judaisms to choose from, HRM’s approach to deciding which to adopt is: “Do what you want, as much or as little as you want. It’s the idea that counts.” It could be called pretend, do-it-yourself Judaism.

### NOT-SO-FLATTERING CONNECTIONS

Books written by John Klein, Adam Spears, Michael Christopher, and others do not mention of the name Jesus except in a negative context. There is heavy use of the name Yeshua. Some

of these writers expect and even require the use of Yeshua. This seems for some to be the word of passage, an elitist badge of honor.

There may not be a direct link between the current HRM and the Sacred Name cult of the 1960s, but there is certainly a commonality of ideas and arguments. The Sacred Name sect was an offshoot of the Millerite and Adventist groups in the mid-1800s. The Sacred Name group was made up of Torah-observant Gentiles who held an almost magical view of the name Yeshua.

### WHOSE LANGUAGE?

In the seventh chapter of Revelation, we find people from all tribes, nations, and tongues or languages (v. 9). They are praising God in their own languages and dialects. It is certain from the text that they were not all speaking Hebrew. Four times in that chapter the multitude calls Jesus “the Lamb.” Would that pass muster with the HRM? Or would they have to say *kebes*, which is “lamb” in Hebrew? It is certain they were not saying *kebes*, unless, of course, their native language was Hebrew.

E.B. Pusey said, “If they wish for one tongue, let them come to the Church; for in diversity of the tongues of the flesh, there is one tongue in the Faith of the heart.”<sup>5</sup>

Faith is not a matter of one’s language, but a matter of the inner man dedicated to God in humility and faith (Psalm 51:7-10, 17). Regardless of the tongue, language, or dialect, what matters is “the Faith of the heart” as Pusey said.

Some argue that using a word in a certain way gains spiritual advantage. This is magical thinking. A talisman is an object or a word that is supposed to have inherent power or can create other-worldly effects, perhaps even giving spiritual access and advantage if one keeps using it over and over. The words *mantra* and *incantation* describe something along the same line.

Having a talisman or reciting a mantra or incantation repeatedly is based on the false notion that words in themselves have automatic potency

and intrinsic power. It is based on the false notion that words are causative and that they give one a spiritual upper hand. Jesus spoke against such things (Matthew 6:7) and called them “vain repetitions.” Words are containers that we must fill with meaning through definitions and descriptions.

### WORD OF FAITH

Word-Faith followers are taught that words can be used to refashion reality or create a new reality. As God created the universe and the world with His words (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, — “Then God said...”), so we who are made in His image can create, according to Word-Faith teachers. This is done by speaking the words with the “force of faith” and unleashing the words’ power. We’re told to believe that faith is a force that we can harness and manipulate.

It goes like this: If we speak the word “money,” we create money; if we speak the word “sickness,” we create sickness. If we speak the word “health,” we should not speak “illness” or “medicine.” We can confess ourselves into health and wealth. That is why this practice is often called “positive confession” or “name-it-and-claim-it.” In this view we become like God with the ability to create or re-engineer reality.

A word’s meaning is the meaning we assign to it or that God assigns to it in the Bible. Words should describe reality: the way things really are. They have no inherent power to create or change reality. Words can influence, but not create. Words can direct, but not dictate outcomes. They can persuade, but not determine. And the meaning of some words changes over time.

While those within the HRM are not teaching Word-Faith, they may be tilting that way by insisting on the use of certain words and phrases. What we see from some teachers in the HRM is the suggestion that if we do not use words the way in which they dictate, we may be pagans or at least have a pagan mindset.

One illustration is Eva Everson. Everson claims to have had a revela-

tory experience while walking in the ruins of Bethsaida in Galilee. She writes that as she walked the ruins of that ancient biblical fishing village she heard a loud voice and believed that there was someone behind her. The voice cried, “Yeshua.” Everson turned to look and then reports:

“I turn again. But I am alone. It is just me. *And him.* I run to my friend and say, ‘His name. His name ... his name is *Yeshua!*’ And I smile. Because I know what the stones in the road and the rocks of the ruins tried to say to me. *To know him, to understand his ways, is first to know his name.*”<sup>6</sup>

It’s hard not to understand Everson as saying that to know Christ, to understand Him, and recognize His ways we must first identify Him as “Yeshua.” That sounds elitist.

### SYNAGOGUES AND SWASTIKAS

Recently, the Israel National News Service posted an article with the headline, “Swastikas Scrawled on Michigan Student Lockers Stir Outrage.”<sup>7</sup> This was investigated as a hate crime because of the use of the well-known symbol most identified with the Nazi Party. However, the swastika was a common design within Jewish synagogues in antiquity.<sup>8</sup> The Jews from the second century A.D. onward saw and understood swastikas as geometric designs.

No Jew today, however, would want a swastika in a synagogue. Some words and symbols can and have drastically changed meaning.

Unbelieving Jews in Jesus’ day would have addressed Jesus by His Hebrew name Yeshua. They used the right word. They were superficially correct. However, if they were from Galilee and using their Galilean dialect they would have referred to Him as Yeshu. They also used the right word.

The name of Jesus in Arabic is Isa. In Aramaic it is Eashoa and pronounced *Ee-show*. It does not matter as long as those saying the name in their own language have a proper

biblical understanding of who He was and is. When it comes to biblical words in our own language we must recognize that the definitions must be the descriptions and definitions that God assigns in Scripture. The translators of the King James Version of the Bible (A.D. 1611) strongly affirmed in the original Preface that, “As the Kings Speech which he uttered in Parliament, being translated into *French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin,* is still the Kings Speech.”<sup>9</sup>

If the unbelieving Jewish leaders in the first century were convinced that Yeshu or Yeshua was only a magician, a false prophet, or a deluded charlatan, it would not have mattered what they called Him. They could have addressed Him with the correct name and still missed heaven. Believing the right things about Jesus was and is what matters. The Jews of Jesus’ time would have to fill the name Yeshua or Yeshu with biblical meaning for it to matter. They had to know that *Ee-show*, Yeshua, or Yeshu was the sinless divine Savior: God in the flesh who came to die for their sins, rise from the grave, ascend to heaven, and one day return in power and glory.

### SO MANY LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS

On the day of Pentecost we know, according to Acts 2:8-11, that the hearers of the Gospel message spoke many languages and dialects. We may not know exactly how each group actually named Jesus, but we do know multitudes were saved when they recognized Him as the Messiah and called on Him for salvation. Any form or translation or pronunciation of His name would have been fine as long as they repented and trusted Christ as Savior and Lord.

There are some in the HRM who go as far to say that the name Jesus means Zeus, the Roman god of weather.<sup>10</sup> But Zeus means “sky” and has no connection to our Savior or linguistically to His name. It happens that Zeus has the letters *e*, *u*, and *s* as does Jesus, but so do the words bequest, abuse, and repulse. Based upon sounds alone, one could just as

easily claim that the name Jesus means “Gee it’s us,” making us little Christs. Any idea of a Zeus-Jesus connection began with the Sacred Name cult.

Paul’s denunciation of the Athenian gods in Acts 17 shows his abhorrence of paganism and all the gods of paganism. Zeus would have been one of them. Paul called pagan worship “ignorance” and called the Athenians to repentance as he pointed them away from the pagan gods to Jesus (Acts 17:30-31).

Because the writers of the New Testament wrote it in Greek they would also be condemned and found guilty by some in the HRM. Hebrew Roots Movement adherents who believe this fallacy therefore cannot then accept or believe that the writers of the New Testament were under the direct influence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in penning a Greek text. Some within the HRM even revert to a 14th-century Hebrew translation of Matthew (from Latin) by Shem Tov. There also have been Hebrew translations of the New Testament from the Greek or English. The translators erroneously believe they are correcting the Greek text by making it more Semitic. One fact missed by those in the HRM is that the very word “synagogue” is a transliteration (almost letter for letter) of a Greek word.

Scriptures tells us that Jesus has been given “the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

Greeks would refer to Yeshua or Yeshu by the Greek translation of the Hebrew name Joshua. That name is *Iesous* in Greek and *Jesus* in English. English speakers have been referring to Iesous as Jesus for centuries.

One writer observes:

“Those who argue and insist we call Jesus by his correct name, Yeshua, are concerning themselves with trivial, non-essential

matters. English speakers call him Jesus, with a ‘J’ that sounds like ‘gee.’ Portuguese speakers call him Jesus, but with a ‘J’ that sounds like ‘sjeh,’ and Spanish speakers call him Jesus, with a ‘J’ that sounds like ‘hey.’ Which one of these pronunciations is the correct one? *All of them, of course, in their own language.* The Bible doesn’t give preeminence to one language (or translation) over another. We are not commanded to call upon the name of the Lord in Hebrew only. Acts 2:21 says, ‘But everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ God knows who calls upon his name, whether they do so in English, Portuguese, Spanish, or Hebrew. He is still the same Lord and Savior.”<sup>11</sup>

Before the time of English translations, people referred to Jesus in their native tongue. Before the Bible was translated into English, the majority of people would have used the Greek *Iesous* or its Latin transliteration.

And then this thinking would necessitate us to also cast aside many hymns and other musical compositions, from Bill and Gloria Gaither’s *There’s Something About That Name*, to Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Jesu: Joy of Man’s Desiring*. Gone, too, would even be *Jesus Loves Me* and *Jesus Loves the Little Children*. Our hymnbooks would be thinner and our worship diminished.

## BELIEVING RIGHT

Mystics overly spiritualize Jesus and minimize His humanity. Others in the HRM emphasize His Jewish manhood to the point that they lose sight of the resurrected glorified God-Man and Mediator. The Apostle Paul wrote, “Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer” (2 Corinthians 5:16).

Jehovah’s Witnesses insist on precise terminology. They are adamant that God *must* be called “Jehovah” and only “Jehovah.”<sup>12</sup> Black Hebrews in Israel say God can only be called “Yah.”<sup>13</sup> Yet the people of the Old Testament referred to God in many

different ways and addressed Him by many different names and titles. There are entire books written on these titles and names. Some Orthodox Jews will not pronounce any name or title of God, but will only refer to Him as *Hashem*, which simply means “the Name.”

One of the Hebrew names of God is YHWH (Hebrew has no vowels), referred to as the Tetragrammaton. The insertion of the vowels from *Adonai* (meaning “My Lord”) into the letters YHWH was arbitrarily done by the Jewish Masoretes. Ralph Wilson says:

“As mentioned, early Hebrew had no vowels, only consonants. But in 906 AD, a group of Hebrew scholars at Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee known as Masoretes were concerned that because fewer and fewer people were actually speaking Hebrew at that time, the memory of the language and how it was pronounced would die out. To retain the correct pronunciation, they introduced vowel points — a series of dots and dashes under the Hebrew consonants — to indicate the vowels for each word. The Hebrew Bible with their vowel points is known as the Masoretic text.”<sup>14</sup>

Wilson further informs:

“When the Masoretes added vowel points to the Hebrew text in the tenth century, instead of pointing the vowels of YHWH that would help the reader pronounce the name, instead they added the vowel points that would go with the regularly substituted word ‘*adonay*’ or ‘*elohim*’. These vowel points were intended to prevent a reader from accidentally pronouncing the divine name, but they created a strange spelling of the word for those who didn’t understand what was happening.”<sup>15</sup>

Thus, more than a millennium after the Old Testament was completed, the name Yahweh (or Jehovah) was cobbled together. The exact placement of vowels and the exact pronunciation is anyone’s guess.

Practitioners in the HRM have no inside track regarding the name Yeshua. Those in the HRM can use the word Yeshua if they wish, but they cannot stand in judgment over those English speakers who address the Savior as Jesus or any other language's form of the name.

### MISTAKEN MALIGNING

Another misunderstanding within the HRM is the teaching that those not subscribing to HRM views have had their minds corrupted by pagan Greek religion, speech, mythology, and philosophy.

In fact, however, prominent Jewish rabbis emphasized using the Septuagint, along with Hebrew from early years after the destruction of the Jewish Temple.<sup>16</sup>

Some inside the HRM also insist that everyone outside of the HRM is using a defective Greek hermeneutic. This is asserted strongly in John Klein, Adam Spears, and Michael Christopher's book, *Lost in Translation — Rediscovering the Hebrew Roots of Our Faith*.<sup>17</sup> The best scholarship would beg to differ. The late professor of philosophy, Ronald Nash, wrote a book-length treatment of this very issue. In this volume, Nash contends:

"This book offers an answer to one basic and extremely important question: Did early Christianity (the Christianity of the first century A.D.) borrow any of its essential beliefs and practices from the pagan religious and philosophical systems of the time? In other words, was first century Christianity, the Christianity reflected in the New Testament a syncretistic religion? During a period of time running roughly from about 1890 to 1940, scholars often alleged that primitive Christianity had been heavily influenced by Platonism, Stoicism, the pagan mystery religions, or other movements in the Hellenistic world. Largely as a result of a series of scholarly books and articles written in rebuttal, allegations of early Christianity's dependence on its

Hellenistic environment began to appear much less frequently in the publications of Bible scholars and classical scholars. Today most Bible scholars regard the question *as a dead issue*. ... Was early Christianity a syncretistic faith? Did it borrow any of its essential beliefs and practices either from Hellenistic philosophy or religion or from Gnosticism? *The evidence requires that this question be answered in the negative.*"<sup>18</sup>

So it seems that some in the HRM are more than 75 years behind the times and trying to assign a perceived Greek paganism to the entire Christian Church based on long-discredited ideas.

Klein, Spears, and Christopher also assert that Greek thinking in the early Church led to the corruption of the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Old Testament. These three confuse textual transmission with hermeneutics — Bible interpretation — when they suggest:

"[T]he culture that was responsible for protecting and transmitting the oldest foundational texts for a majority of the present-day translations of the Bible (especially of B'rit Hadashah) was primarily a Greek culture. These are the same people who idolized hundreds of false gods, whether created in the imagination of their own writers or imported from somewhere else. ... Beyond that, based on the mythological texts on which they developed their methods, they were also used to assuming that a given text would automatically reflect 75% creative imagination and contain only 25% of truth. As we said earlier, by even the most charitable standards, that built-in presumption would leave a lot of room for them to interject their own biases!"<sup>19</sup>

For the most part it was not pagan Greeks who preserved the Greek New Testament, but Byzantine Christians. Eastern Christians preserved the sacred text by accurate recopying. Greek culture had nothing to do with

the process of Bible transmission. The earliest copies show that the Byzantine believers did not alter or corrupt the text.

While there was a Greek allegorical school of interpretation in Alexandria, Egypt, it is false that both the Old and New Testaments and the entire early Church were corrupted by it. Alexandrian scholars dealt with interpretation, not textual transmission. However, it may be argued that because of having to prevail against its false interpretations, the allegorical school did in some small way cause the Church to keep accurate copies of the Greek Scriptures.

We know also at that time that there was a school of Jewish Literalism in early Israel. The Syrian School of Antioch in the early centuries of the Church flourished in Syria and held to the plain literal sense of the Scriptures. As well, during the Middle Ages, the Victorine School of Paris promoted the literal interpretation of the Bible.<sup>20</sup>

The Church at large was never overwhelmed by allegorical hermeneutics. Certainly the Reformers were not overwhelmed by Greek thought or by what is known as Protestant Scholasticism. The literal, grammatical, historical approach to the Bible has prevailed for centuries.

### A DEPENDABLE BIBLE

Old Testament manuscript scribes were meticulous in their practice. Hebrew scholars had rigid methods of hand-copying and knowing how many letters and words were on a page. The text and canon of the Old Testament became fixed by the first century A.D., according to Josephus. This has been verified by the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint. The standard Hebrew version became known as the Masoretic text and is the basis for our Old Testament translations today.

The Masoretic Text of Ben Asher is three-fifths complete. There are no fewer than eight other manuscripts from the Ben Asher family of manuscripts, so there are no gaps. This text reflects centuries of accurate copying.

The Ben Asher text dates from A.D. 930 and is also called the Aleppo Codex.<sup>21</sup>

Then we must also consider the facts with regard to the Greek New Testament. The earliest copies of the New Testament were used, quoted, and preserved by the early Church Fathers. We have those verses and sections of the Bible in many of their extant writings. We could re-create almost all of the New Testament from these writings alone. However, there is more. We know that some of the earliest copies of the Greek New Testament were preserved in the great library of Alexandria. Large numbers of fragments, verses, and sections of these have been discovered in the Egyptian desert and are called "P" fragments. These go back almost to the time of the apostles. So we can link the "P" fragments, the quotes by the Church Fathers, and the reproductions of the Byzantine Church to the continuing preservation of the Greek New Testament.

So, from the fourth century A.D. forward, the Greek text of the New Testament was preserved by the Byzantine Church because it was the Greek-speaking Church of the east. In all, the Byzantine Church copied and accumulated roughly 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament between 300 and 1500 A.D. The Western Church also preserved ancient copies of the Bible.

Philip Wesley Comfort is a professor of New Testament literature and interpretation. He writes:

"Around 330, Constantine commissioned Eusebius to make fifty copies of the Scriptures to be used by the churches in Constantinople."<sup>22</sup>

Thus, there is no question about the reliability of both Testaments and the precision of their transmission. Any of the minor differences in manuscripts over spelling or word order have nothing to do with the major doctrines of the faith.<sup>23</sup>

What extremists in the HRM would have us believe is that they are the only ones — and only since the late

20th century — to know what the true Bible is and what it says. They boast of an original Hebrew translation of the New Testament that no one has ever seen or been able to produce. It is an argument without evidence.<sup>24</sup> They pretend that Hebrew speakers today are the ones with the real inside track and call the rest ignorant. With many in the HRM the message seems to be: "Either get aligned or get maligned."

### THE REAL CULPRITS

The readers can decide who actually spiritualizes, overly allegorizes, and imposes mystical metaphorical meanings on the text of Scripture. As Klein, Spears, and Christopher elaborate on the Tabernacle in the wilderness, they write:

*"The main camp itself, which equaled servanthood ... The Outer Court, which equaled friendship ... The inner court of the tabernacle, which equaled sonship ... The Holy of Holies, which equaled marriage."*<sup>25</sup>

These meanings are contrived and have no basis in Scripture. The book of Hebrews speaks of the typology of the Tabernacle and shows that it is primarily *Christological* (pointing to Christ) and *soteriological* (having to do with salvation). The book of Exodus as well as the book of Hebrews does not speak about courts of servanthood, friendship, sonship, and marriage. The Tabernacle is not all about us, but all about Jesus.

Further, these three authors promote a myth about the priest entering the Holy of Holies with a rope attached to him. This tale actually originated in the occult medieval Kabbalah. Klein, Spears, and Christopher announce:

"Only the High Priest, carefully chosen for both the 'terror and the honor,' was ever allowed to enter, and then only once a year on the great Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). He wore a bell and attached himself to a strong rope. If the bell ever stopped ringing, for any length of time, the priests on the other side could assume

that he'd not been found sufficiently holy for the honor of approaching God directly, and therefore had died. They could then use the rope to pull him back out."<sup>26</sup>

First, it is not strictly true that the priest wore a *bell*. Priests wore a series of small *bells* on the fringes of their robes (Exodus 28:34; 39:25-26). To say that the priest could die in the Holy of Holies is to miss the impact and import of Exodus 28:40-43. The teaching there seems clear. If the priests were dressed as God commanded they would be shielded from harm or death while in the holy place (v. 43). His obedience in dress was his protection. That is why there is no instruction in the Old Testament to other priests on the removal of a dead priest from the interior of the Tabernacle or Temple.

The myth of the priest with a rope tied to him while in the Tabernacle is a myth that has been repeated as insider information. It is a legend that cannot be found anywhere in the Bible, the Apocrypha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, or the Talmud (either the Babylonian Talmud or the Palestinian Talmud). It has been passed down in commentaries from generation to generation only since the Middle Ages. It is not taught in mainstream Judaism and does not appear until centuries long after Christ.

As noted, the idea originated in the occultic Kabbalah.<sup>27</sup> The Kabbalah teaches reincarnation, the mystical meaning of words and numbers, and has very strong Gnostic leanings.<sup>28</sup>

The origin of the rope idea is found in the Zohar ("The Book of Splendor" or "The Book of Radiance") which is the fundamental text for the teachings that make up the Kabbalah. Randall Price reports:

"Moreover, the Zohar (a text of Hasidic Judaism) records the tradition that people outside the Holy Place took precautions for removing the high priest's body (by means of a rope attached to his ankle) if he should have an improper thought while perform-

ing his duties before the Ark and be killed.”<sup>29</sup>

In another translation of the Zohar it is described as a cord or thong on the ankle of the High Priest. Todd Bolen notes that:

“The Zohar says a lot of other things that are not trustworthy. In fact, wearing such a rope would probably be a violation of Leviticus 16:3-4, which gives clear directions on what the high priest is to wear on Yom Kippur.”<sup>30</sup>

Probably the first Christian commentary to promote the rope legend was the exposition of John Gill in the mid-1700s. It has been showing up in Christian commentaries ever since.

### DEJÁ VU ALL OVER AGAIN

In the centuries since Jesus walked the earth we find that there was a revolt against Talmudic Judaism and rabbinical traditions. This revolt or reformation sought to throw off traditional and non-biblical practices that they labeled Pharisaism. This group called themselves Karaites (“readers of Scripture”). They accepted the Torah, but not Oral Law. They opposed Talmudic Judaism. In regard to the Karaites and the Oral Law, one Jewish source says:

“The [Karaites] emerged in the 8th cent. and spread rapidly among Middle Eastern communities, and after the 12th cent., into Crimea and E. Europe. ... the sect claimed its message to be a rejection of the authority of the Oral Law as developed by the rabbis, and a return to the pure doctrine of the written text of the Bible. ... The most striking difference between rabbinic Judaism and Karaism is the absence of ‘rabbinic’ customs (e.g. Tephillin, Mezuzah) and festivals (e.g. Hanukkah).”<sup>31</sup>

There is a revival of Karaite Judaism in Israel today, with 14 synagogues in the Holy Land.<sup>32</sup>

Nehemiah Gordon — not a Messianic Jew — is an author and one of the most visible spokesmen for the

modern Karaites. He buttresses part of his argument against rabbinical tradition on some of the statements of Jesus and even wonders if Jesus may have been an early proto-Karaite even though the Karaites only trace back to the 8th century A.D. The ideas espoused by Gordon are being entertained in certain HRM circles.

### SO WHAT DO WE CALL HIM?

The words “Yeshua,” “Messiah,” “Jesus,” “Lamb,” “Savior,” “Lord,” “King,” “Immanuel,” and their precise and exact pronunciations in Hebrew are not a spiritual life or death matter as long as we know about whom we are talking, that we understand the importance of those titles and names, and that we know He is Mighty God, Prince of Peace, and our only hope for heaven. Robert J. Morgan speaks to this issue and reminds us that:

“Jesus, Joshua, Yeshua, and Iesous are all one and the same name, pronounced slightly differently depending on the language.”<sup>33</sup>

We need to think about what really matters. It really matters what we know and believe about Jesus. One could say the word “Yeshua” and fill it with all the wrong content and create “another Jesus.” We can call Him “Yeshua” or “Jesus” or “Resurrected Savior” or “Lord” or “Lamb of God” or “Immanuel” or any other of the many biblical names attached to Him. There is no name-magic and how we address our Savior should simply be a matter of personal preference within biblical parameters. At times we need Him as Shepherd and at other times as Lord. Some days we need to see Him as Friend and other days as Forgiver. Some need to see Him as Messiah and others as King and Lord. All the names and titles of Jesus can apply at different times and different ways in our life’s experiences.

All of His names and titles give us a deeper understanding of His person and work. As with all preferences, we need to be careful about our attitude or about being judgmental toward those who do not share our prefer-

ences. After all, preferences are just that — preferences.

Morgan’s book, *He Shall Be Called*, is subtitled “150 Names of Jesus and What They Mean to You.” He surveys all of the names of Christ to help the reader grasp His infinite character so that we can appreciate our Savior more fully. Instead of limiting ourselves to one name, we need to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). That knowledge includes all that He is and all that He is called. In that, we all need to grow.

### Endnotes:

1. David Flusser, *Jewish Sources in Early Christianity*. New York: Adama Books, 1987, pg. 7.
2. It was these two schools of thought with which the Pharisees challenged Jesus in Matthew 19:3-8. The *NIV Study Bible* states in its annotation of Matthew 19:3 that, “This last part of the question [for any and every reason] is not in the parallel passage in Mark (10:2). Matthew possibly included it because he was writing to Jews, who were aware of the dispute between the schools of Shammai and Hillel over the interpretation of Dt 24:1-4. Shammai held that ‘something indecent’ (Dt 24:1) meant ‘marital unfaithfulness’ (Mt 19:9) — to him the only allowable cause for divorce in that passage. Hillel emphasized the preceding clause, ‘who becomes displeasing to him’ (Dt 24:1). He would allow a man to divorce his wife if she did anything he disliked — even if she burned his food while cooking it” (pg. 1495).
3. Lisa Katz, “Ultra-Orthodox Judaism - Hasidic Jews” from (Judaism) About Religion website. Document accessed at: [http://judaism.about.com/od/denominations\\_ofjudaism/a/hasid.htm](http://judaism.about.com/od/denominations_ofjudaism/a/hasid.htm).
4. See further, “Kapparot” from Wikipedia. Document accessed at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kapparot>.
5. E.B. Pusey, *The Minor Prophets - A Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1953, Vol. II, pg. 284.
6. Eva Marie Everson and Miriam Feinberg Vamosh, *Reflections of God’s Holy Land*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008, pg. 139, italics and ellipsis in original.
7. Arutz Sheva staff, “Swastikas Scrawled on Michigan Student Lockers Stir Outrage,” Arutz Sheva 7, Israel National News website, May 20, 2013. Document accessed at: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/168123#.VnHB-bbyvMw>.
8. See further, Hershel Shanks, *Judaism in Stone - The Archaeology of Ancient Synagogues*. New York: Harper & Row Publish-

ers, 1979, pp. 103, 136, and Avraham Negev and Simon Gibson, *Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land*. New York: Continuum, 2003, pg. 164.

9. "The Translators To the Reader," *Holy Bible 1611 King James Version* (A word-for-word reprint of the First Edition of the Authorized Version). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982, no page number, however the citation is on page 7 of the 11-page Preface. The original 1611 English spelling in the quotation has been changed to present-day spelling.

10. xpat dave, "How The Name Jesus means Zeus," Nov. 21, 2013. This 69-minute video is said to show "How the Messiah's name was corrupted and how Jesus refers to Zeus." Video accessed at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjmJ\\_LLjY50](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjmJ_LLjY50).

11. Mary Fairchild, "Why Do We Call Him Jesus if His Name Is Yeshua? - Are We Worshiping the Wrong Savior?" from (Christianity) About Religion website, emphasis added. Document accessed at: <http://christianity.about.com/od/faqhelpdesk/f/jesuaryeshua.htm>.

12. See further, M. Kurt Goedelman, "Why the Name *Jehovah's Witnesses*?" in *Jehovah's Witnesses: Exposed*. Saint Louis: Personal Freedom Outreach, 2002, pp. 47-50. This chapter is also available in tract form from PFO.

13. See further, G. Richard Fisher, "The Real Identity of Black Hebrews," *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 2015, pp. 2, 21-22.

14. Ralph F. Wilson, "Correct Spelling and Pronunciation of Yahweh vs. Jehovah," The JesusWalk Bible Study Series. Document accessed at: [www.jesuswalk.com/names-god/yahweh\\_jehovah.htm](http://www.jesuswalk.com/names-god/yahweh_jehovah.htm).

15. *Ibid.*, italics in original.

16. See further, Jack Finegan, *The Archaeology of the New Testament*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 207-208.

17. John Klein, Adam Spears, with Michael Christopher, *Lost in Translation — Rediscovering the Hebrew Roots of Our Faith*. Bend, Ore.: Covenant Research Institute, 2007, Vol. 1, pp. 129-130.

18. Ronald H. Nash, *The Gospel and the Greeks - Did the New Testament Borrow from Pagan Thought?* Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2003, pp. 1, 254, emphasis added.

19. *Lost in Translation*, op. cit., pp. 128-129.

20. See further, Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. Boston: W.A. Wilde Printing, 1956, pp. 45-51 and Gerhard Maier, *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1994, pp. 68-73.

21. See further, Randall Price, *Searching for the Original Bible*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 2007, pp. 59-60; Adam Ackerman, *The Mysteries of Jerusalem: 101 Unique Sites in the Holy City*. Jerusalem, Israel: Multipress Ltd., 1996, pp. 48-50; and Matti Friedman, *The Aleppo Codex*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books, 2012.

22. Philip Wesley Comfort, *The Quest for the Original Text of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1992, pg. 24.

23. See further, F.F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*. Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963.

24. See further, G. Richard Fisher, "The Hebrew Roots Movement: Deeper Insights or Elitist Distraction?" *The Quarterly Journal*, July-September 2011, pp. 1, 14-21.

25. *Lost in Translation*, op. cit., pp. 111, 112, 113, 115, italics in original.

26. *Ibid.*, pg. 115, italics in original.

27. "Kabbalah" means "received tradi-

tion." It was produced in Babylon in the 6th century A.D. and later developed in France and Spain. It is a blend of Jewish mysticism, magic, speculation, and superstitions. It unites numerology and astrology to offer a theology for God, the origin of the universe, and the destiny of man. It has been recently popularized by Madonna and other celebrities. Kabbalah can have various spellings.

28. For additional information on the Kabbalah, see Marcia Montenegro, "Kabbalah: Getting Back to the Garden," Christian Answers for the New Age website. Document accessed at: [www.christiananswersforthenewage.org/Articles\\_Kabbalah1.html](http://www.christiananswersforthenewage.org/Articles_Kabbalah1.html). There are three pages to the entire article. Pages 2 and 3 can be subsequently linked from page 1.

29. Randall Price, *Searching For The Ark of the Covenant*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 2005, pg. 120.

30. Todd Bolen, "That Rope around the High Priest's Ankle," from the Bible-Places.com blog, Jan. 13, 2009. Document accessed at: [blog.bibleplaces.com/2009/01/that-rope-around-high-priests-ankle.html](http://blog.bibleplaces.com/2009/01/that-rope-around-high-priests-ankle.html).

31. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder, Editors, *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965, pg. 223.

32. See further two videos on YouTube. Karaite Jews of America, "The Karaite Jewish Renaissance in Israel." Video accessed at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IOMj4A93-0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IOMj4A93-0) and The Health Watchman, "Jewish Karaite vs. Pharisee. What's the difference?" Video accessed at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFJZ3VREW\\_s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFJZ3VREW_s).

33. Robert J. Morgan, *He Shall Be Called*. New York: Warner Faith, 2005, pg. 4, italics in original.



---

## AUDACIOUS MIND

(continued from page 1)

Well, let's just say, it's *audacious* and it's for *all* of us. And it's the path to the life you were born to live."<sup>1</sup>

Yes, it sounds almost too good to be true: Moore's new book, 30 years in the making, is so critical because it is what women have been "missing" and what they have been "aching for." It is a lesson for "all of us" to finally place us on "the path to the life [we] were born to live." And just in case we still aren't quite ready to buy the book, it is "Something Jesus was longing for."

Apologist Sharon Lareau of Chapter 3 Ministries speaks to this last declaration:

**"Jesus is longing for something.** I have several thoughts about this. I don't have a lot to go on, but this seems to suggest that Jesus has a strong need or desire that is beyond his control to satisfy. On the surface, it appears to diminish Jesus, the sovereign Lord of the universe. For the sake of argument, let's say he is longing for something. How did she learn about it? If it was through the Bible, how did she miss something that important in 30 years of Bible teaching? I

could guess that she learned about his longing through personal revelation. Mrs. Moore is in the practice of claiming that she receives them, but I won't make any conclusions based on red flags."<sup>2</sup>

Lareau questions other accolades showered on Moore's book:

"Additionally, since the description says Jesus is longing and women are aching for this incredibly important missing thing that is the path to the life we were born to live, I have to wonder if it is being implied that the missing thing is not only

missing from her vision but also from the whole church. If Jesus is longing for it, does that mean he has not seen it anywhere else? And what of the women? They are aching for it. So are they not receiving it anywhere else in the church? Is this missing thing missing everywhere? I know the description doesn't say that, but it's hard not to read that as an implication."<sup>3</sup>

### WHAT'S IN A TITLE?

Moore's use of "audacity" at the heart of her latest book certainly lacks originality. Just a few months before its release, megachurch pastor Rick Warren was blogging to his followers, "If you want to make it in a career, you have to show audacity. Audacity is the courage to think big, to show initiative, and to take risks for a dream while facing the possibility of failure." Warren tells us that it was "a little bit of audacity" that caused him to disregard Zondervan Publishers' contention that his book *The Purpose Driven Life* would not sell.<sup>4</sup>

And then there is the second book by then-Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope*. Obama's volume, published in the fall of 2006, made its way into the number one position on both the *New York Times* and Amazon best-seller lists. And that title was not even original with Obama. Wikipedia informs us:

"The title of *The Audacity of Hope* was derived from a sermon delivered by Obama's former pastor, Jeremiah Wright. ... Having attended Wright's sermon, Barack Obama later adapted Wright's phrase 'audacity to hope' to 'audacity of hope' which became the title for his 2004 Democratic National Convention keynote address, and the title of his second book."<sup>5</sup>

Moore says she seized upon the word because the mission statement — "To see women come to know and love Jesus Christ" — which she had written 30 years earlier was "begging for an adverb":

"I'd seen too much in the last several decades to leave well enough alone. I'd traveled too far, talked to too many people and heard too many stories. I'd been through too much. I was no longer new to this thing, no longer remotely as naïve, and no longer satisfied to leave the vision there. I wanted more for women than that. I wanted them to come completely alive. I wanted them to find out what they were doing here and do it. I wanted them to tumble headlong into something vastly more influential over their futures than their pasts. Something so enthralling that they couldn't quit. Something they wouldn't miss for the world. Something too big for them to hide. I wanted the same thing for them that I wanted for myself. Something that would require audacity. After twisting my intestines into a pretzel to sort it all out, I decided with considerable relief that what I wanted as a vision for the rest of my labors wouldn't take scrapping my original statement. It would just take tweaking."<sup>6</sup>

So, she says, her mission statement needed just two words, "one tiny little adjective and one lively adverb,"<sup>7</sup> and has now become: "To see all women come to know and audaciously love Jesus Christ."<sup>8</sup>

Moore is passionate about the word *audacious* and she wants her readers to be excited as well:

"*Audacious* is a fabulous word, don't you think? It's a word with an aerobic heart rate if you'll ever find one. A word with a closet full of running shoes and pointe shoes, of rock-climbing gear and hiking boots. It's the kind of word that can get a person up and moving in the morning without hitting the snooze alarm fourteen times. It's the extra shot of espresso in your cappuccino and it doesn't come in decaf. It's the kind of word that can go with anyone to work

anywhere because it's about perspective, not performance."<sup>9</sup>

Yet despite Moore's fondness for the word, it may not be the perfect choice she makes it out to be. To give her readers "a working definition of the word [her] book is all about,"<sup>10</sup> she cites a current edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*:

"**1 a:** intrepidly daring: ADVENTUROUS (an *audacious* mountain climber) **b:** recklessly bold: RASH (an *audacious* maneuver) **2:** contemptuous of law, religion, or decorum: INSOLENT **3:** marked by originality and verve (*audacious* experiments)."<sup>11</sup>

But, we are told, "To keep our working definition of our term consistent with the character and teachings of the one we aim to love audaciously, we'll scratch through the second definition and two additional words and still have everything we need to embrace."<sup>12</sup>

So Moore picks and chooses and quickly eliminates half of the definitions of her "fabulous word." Gone are "recklessly" (from "recklessly bold"), "rash," "contemptuous of law, religion, or decorum," and "insolent."<sup>13</sup> She then tries to escape the fact that several of the definitions for *audacious* — her "fabulous word" — could quite easily be at odds biblically by contending:

"We could have pushed and prodded some of those scratched-out words into appropriate enough applications but constantly qualifying them would reduce the clarity we need in order to move forward with traction."<sup>14</sup>

### SUPERFICIAL STUDY

The Bible never speaks of a bold or audacious love. There are few places in Scripture where there is an "adverb begging to carve a place" before the word *love*. And in those few places where the word "love" is modified, it is done so with words such as "brotherly" (Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; Hebrews 13:1), "sincere" (2 Corinthians 6:6; 1 Peter 1:22), "everlasting" (Jeremiah 31:3), "greater" or "great"

(John 15:13; Ephesians 2:4), “fervent” (1 Peter 4:8), or “incorruptible” (Ephesians 6:24, NASB).

If anything, Scripture calls us to an obedient, selfless, sacrificial love, never to an “intrepidly daring,” “recklessly bold,” “rash,” or “contemptuous” love. Consider how Paul, in his great discourse, described love:

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

No daring, bold, or verve love from the apostle. But perhaps that’s the “missing link” that “Jesus was longing for.” Moore takes a word, which she uses more than 100 times, and stretches it into a 178-page book.

From the back cover of the publication’s dust jacket, Moore “identifies that missing link by digging through Scripture, unearthing life experiences, and spotlighting a turning point with the capacity to infuse any life with holy passion and purpose.” Moore’s “turning point” was birthed from an extrabiblical source, and she is clearly long on “unearthing life experiences” and short on “digging through Scripture.”

Her “digging” is shallow and her accounts bog down in anecdotes that make it all too easy to miss her point — or at least take a long time getting there. For example, in her opening chapter she answers two questions: “What is your dream?” and “What is your vision for the future?” She takes readers through a litany of “reminiscing,” including flying her family to Nashville to celebrate a ministry anniversary, eating pizza on the Mount of Olives, riding motorcycles on the Island of Patmos, celebrating Purim in Old Jerusalem, hauling a replica of the Ark of the Covenant over the Utah desert, and more.<sup>15</sup>

In her second-to-last chapter, “A Love for All Loves,” she spends seven

pages developing her point. She describes moving into a new home, the neighbors she was leaving behind, a review of messages from her early years, the discovery of school keepsakes, and the first greeting card her husband, Keith, gave to her.<sup>16</sup> And, in between, there is even more personal banter.

Despite her assurance that, “I am convinced to the last particle in me that, there in that audacious love, you will find the life you were born to live,”<sup>17</sup> readers are set adrift in the shallow waters of Moore’s biblical exposition and left to run aground on anecdotal sandbars.

### MISSING THE BASICS

If we are going to understand love according to the Bible, it is important to know the two words translated as “love” as well as the distinction between them. Moore doesn’t offer even a basic description.

The two primary Greek words for “love” used in the New Testament writings are *agape* and *phileo*.<sup>18</sup> Enabling us to recognize the difference between those two principal words for love, one biblical encyclopedia says:

“The [Greek] language employs several words for love, rich with finer shades of meaning and precision of expression. Two of these are found in the NT: Φιλέω [*phileo*] and ἀγαπάω [*agapao*] (verb forms). *Phileo* denotes an inclination prompted by sense and emotion. It means to love in the sense of being friendly, to delight in or long for, to love to do, or to do with pleasure. On the other hand, *agapao* properly denotes a love founded on admiration, veneration, and esteem. It means to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of (Matt 5:43f.). It is to be full of good will both in thought and deed (Luke 7:42ff.). The noun form ἀγάπη (*agape*), is defined as ‘affection, good will, love, benevolence,’ as seen in numerous references (John 15:13; Rom 13:10; 1 John 4:18). It is distinc-

tively a Biblical and ecclesiastical word, and the one commonly used in the spiritual sense. It is employed in expressing God’s love to man (John 3:16); man’s love to God (2 Thess 3:5; 1 John 2:5; 3:17); and man’s spiritual love of his fellow men (John 15:12f.; Rom 13:8; Gal 5:14).<sup>19</sup>

One key passage in the Gospel of John that uses both Greek words for love (*agapao* and *phileo*) and which are verses Moore cites in her book is the account of the Apostle Peter being restored and commissioned by our risen Savior (John 21:15-19). Instead of giving a biblical explanation of the passage, she writes, “With every ounce of conviction in my soul, I believe Jesus brought you and me to each side of these pages to ask us the exact same question. ... ‘Do you love Me?’”<sup>20</sup> She further states that “Following Jesus [John 21:19] is meant to be driven and drawn by love. Audacious love.”<sup>21</sup>

In reflecting upon the apostle’s encounter with the risen Christ, pastor and theologian Paul Enns gives us what Moore failed to, namely an understanding of those verses:

“Then Jesus focused on Peter, ‘Do you love Me?’ Three times Jesus asked the question and three times Peter answered in the affirmative. But the third time, Peter was grieved. The first two times Jesus questioned Peter He used the word *agapao* for love. *Agapao* reflects a rational, reasoned love that loves the object as a decision of the will. Each time Peter responded with *phileo*, a word for love that reflects fondness for a friend. But the third time Jesus questioned Peter He used *phileo*, questioning whether Peter even loved Him with the affection of a friend. This was why Peter was grieved. But this was important for Peter’s restoration. How many times had Peter denied the Lord? Three times. Now the Lord challenged Peter: ‘Tend My lambs ... Shepherd My sheep ... Tend My sheep’ (vv. 15-17). Not only was

Peter restored by the Lord, but he was also commissioned to minister on behalf of the Savior."<sup>22</sup>

Another Bible truth left undeveloped in her discourse is that apart from an act of God, we are helpless to love. Glenn E. Schaefer writes:

"We are totally incapable of loving either God or others — a condition that must be corrected by God before we can love. The Bible's ways of describing this process of correction are numerous: 'circumcision of the heart' (Deut. 30:6); God's 'writing his laws' on our hearts (Jer. 31:33); God's substituting a 'heart of flesh' for a 'heart of stone' (Ezek. 11:19); being 'born again' by the Spirit (John 3:3; 1 John 5:1-2); removing old clothing and replacing it with new (Col. 3:12-14); dying to a sinful life and resurrecting to a new one (Col. 3:1-4); moving out of darkness into light (1 John 2:9). Until that happens, we cannot love. God alone is the source of love (1 John 4:7-8); he 'poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us' (Rom. 5:5). God's love then awakens a response in those who accept it."<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, Arthur W. Pink tells us:

"We love him, because he first loved us' (1 John 4:19). God did not love us because we loved him, but he loved us before we had a particle of love for him. Had God loved us in return for ours, then it would not be spontaneous on his part; but because he loved us when we were loveless, it is clear that his love was uninfluenced. It is highly important, if God is to be honored and the heart of his child established, that we should be quite clear upon this precious truth. God's love for me and for each of 'his own' was entirely unmoved by anything in us. What was there in me to attract the heart of God? Absolutely nothing. But, to the contrary, there was everything to

repel him, everything calculated to make him loathe me — sinful, depraved, a mass of corruption, with 'no good thing' in me."<sup>24</sup>

What Pink describes is foreign to Moore's feel-good message. Moore does cite 1 John 4:19 ("We love Him because He first loved us"), but she does so from Eugene Peterson's *The Message* version,<sup>25</sup> a translation that shrouds the pure and simple truth of the text. Rather, Moore's is a sensual message that you be "convinced that a fiery passion rages within Him [Jesus] toward you"<sup>26</sup> and that you be "driven back again to the romance of God,"<sup>27</sup> where "somewhere just beyond the veil, Jesus smiles."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, it tells us that God "still calls you Beautiful at your ugliest."<sup>29</sup> And further instructs:

"Let your memory rewind to how Christ has pursued you and met you and stopped you and cornered you and pushed you and carried you — *all because He found you fascinating enough to make sure you wouldn't miss Him.*"<sup>30</sup>

As further example, in the few places where Moore cites John 14:15 ("If you love [*agapate*] Me, keep My commandments"),<sup>31</sup> she never really develops the concept of an obedient, sacrificial love. As Matthew Henry tells us, "obedience to his commands ... is better than sacrifice, better than tears."<sup>32</sup> Rather, Moore's *audacious love* appears to discount such an idea:

"It's easy to subconsciously conclude that, since Jesus is unseeable, love for Jesus is probably unfeeling. With this view, love for Jesus is most about doing and least about feeling. Not only is this view misleading, it's woefully dissatisfying."<sup>33</sup>

### MORE HAPHAZARD INTERPRETATION

In her chapter, "Getting to Something Definitive," she cites several Bible verses (Acts 4:13; 4:31; 28:30-31; 2 Corinthians 3:12; Philippians 1:20; and Hebrews 4:14) because the word *boldness* appears in each. However,

that word in any of the cited verses is never synonymous with the word *love*.

Moore tends to misuse, misapply, or take liberties with the text. One example is her application of verses from the Song of Solomon. Moore suggests to her readers that they apply words from this biblical book "personally, passionately, and prophetically." She writes:

"The Bridegroom, by whom and for whom our hearts were shaped, delights over those with the audacity to take these words from Song of Songs personally, passionately, and prophetically: *I belong to my love and his desire is for me.* (7:10) Try starting your day with that every morning. Look at that woman in the bathroom mirror who wonders if she possesses anything worth wanting and say those words out loud to her. Say them like you mean them. And if, for whatever reason, you need the verse in the worst way — whether over loneliness, loss, abandonment, or rejection — write it on an index card and tape it to the edge of your mirror where you can see it every time you see yourself. Now, let's flip that index card to the other side. Each page of this book is devoted to the unabashed pursuit of an audacious affection for Jesus that answers His for us."<sup>34</sup>

Throughout Church history, Bible interpreters, commentators, and teachers have held differing views about this book. Some, such as Matthew Henry and Charles Spurgeon, have called the book an allegorical description of love between Christ and His Church (the Bride). Others, such as Mark Driscoll, have gone beyond sanity in their interpretation. John MacArthur writes that Driscoll, the disgraced and former pastor of the now-defunct Mars Hill Church in Seattle, is guilty of "paraphrasing Solomon in a way that was totally crass and not even remotely close to what the Holy Spirit intended."<sup>35</sup>

Moore, while not as extreme as Driscoll, would find herself beyond those who interpret the book allegorically by claiming those with audacity should take Solomon's words "personally, passionately, and prophetically." However, it is unsafe for believers to assign spiritual meaning to a text that goes beyond the literal sense of the biblical text. Moreover, as one theological dictionary instructs:

"The allegorical method, however, lacks any external justification. The Song gives no indication that it should be read in any but a straightforward way. The discovery and publication of formally similar love poetry from modern Arabic literature as well as ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia signaled the end of the allegorical approach to the text, but left the church with a number of questions about the theological meaning of the Song. The Song serves an important canonical function with its explicit language of love. Allegorization in early times arose from the belief that such a subject was unsuitable for the Holy Scriptures."<sup>36</sup>

PFO director Gary Gilley emphasizes:

"The students of Scripture have long struggled over how to interpret the Song of Solomon. Taken at face value it is a love story which specifically praises physical and romantic love between a man and his wife. ... It wasn't until the mid-19th century that a normal/literal approach to the Song became acceptable. With this interpretive grid the Song rightly demonstrates the joys and wonders of romantic love within the parameters of a godly marriage. It is for this reason that the Lord places the Song in the canon of Holy Scriptures. Allegorical interpretations are exercises in subjective imagination, not biblical exegesis. ... It is for these reasons that one is wise to not base either theology, or practical biblical principles, on the allegorical understanding of the

Song of Songs. The natural meaning is clear: romantic and physical love within marriage is sanctioned by God, and we do well to learn what the Song has to say in this regard, rather than import meaning to the text that the Holy Spirit never intended."<sup>37</sup>

Elsewhere in her book, Moore writes that by the time a believer's funeral takes place, he or she will have a new body:

"God help us, the picture on the program at our funerals doesn't have to look like a glamor shot. This place causes a person some wear and tear, some banging up and bruising. A few of them might as well show. That said, the picture on the front of the program is of you at full age — your life completely lived. *You'll have a new body by then so you won't care.*"<sup>38</sup>

Here Moore is in line with the troublesome and unorthodox theology of Murray Harris, who started a controversy with his book, *From Grave to Glory*.<sup>39</sup> Norman Geisler, one of the leading voices of orthodoxy in the "battle for the resurrection," included in his book response to Harris an appendix which answered the question, "When Do Believers Receive Their Resurrection Bodies?"<sup>40</sup> In this section, Geisler wrote that, "Paul's writings and the rest of Scripture teach plainly that believers are not resurrected until Christ returns again."<sup>41</sup>

John MacArthur also disputes Moore's view. On the website of his Grace to You ministry, the question is posed, "Do Christians receive glorified bodies immediately after they die?" In response, it says:

"Second Corinthians 5:6-8 makes it clear that the believer is ushered directly into the presence of God upon death. Paul argues that 'to be absent from the body' is tantamount to being 'present with the Lord.' ... However, Scripture also teaches that the believer, while in the presence of

the Lord, will not receive his glorified body until a later time. Upon death, our bodies go into the grave and await the second coming of Christ (1 Thess. 4:16), when He will raise and transform them (1 John 3:2). The apostle Paul speaks of the time when our spirits will be again united with our bodies so that we will no longer be naked (2 Cor. 5:3) but able to live throughout eternity in the form God created us to enjoy. The new body of the Christian is yet future, though each deceased saint is now in the presence of the Lord."<sup>42</sup>

Likewise, apologist Ron Rhodes tells us:

"Both believers and unbelievers remain as spirits (in a disembodied state) until the future day of resurrection. And what a glorious day that will be! God will unite believers' spirits with their resurrected physical bodies. These bodies will be specially suited to dwelling in heaven in the direct presence of God — the perishable will be made imperishable and the mortal will be made immortal (1 Corinthians 15:53)."<sup>43</sup>

Even Greek New Testament scholar Spiros Zodhiates, whom Moore cites in her book,<sup>44</sup> states:

"Each Christian upon the face of this earth bids the dead body good-bye, while Heaven welcomes the soul."<sup>45</sup>

Elsewhere, Moore's imagination runs wild. For example:

"Rewind the New Testament clock several weeks and you'll find a brief account that opens the twelfth chapter of John. The flashlight moves around the dining room from one individual to another then suddenly lands on a table built for two: Jesus and a woman named Mary from a town called Bethany."<sup>46</sup>

Scripture does not even hint at such a romantic description, but reports:

“Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, *but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him*” (John 12:1-2, emphasis added).

A few pages later, Moore further develops her *audacious love* concept, saying:

“If we were looking at a red-letter edition of the Bible that colors every statement out of the mouth of Christ, this question would be the first splash of red in the Gospel of John: ‘*What do you want?*’ ... The question is particularly poignant in a Gospel that narrows to a close with another question painted in crimson on the sacred page: ‘*Do you love me?*’ The bright red bookends of the book of John: *Want. Love.* Jesus made no bones about it: His followers were being invited into a journey of the heart.”<sup>47</sup>

The problem here is that, “Do you love me?” (John 21:17) is not the closing *bookend* of Jesus’ words in the Gospel of John. It is not even the last question Jesus asked in this Gospel account. The last words of Jesus recorded by John are “what is that to you?” (v. 23). However, those words do not work for Moore’s recipe and so are ignored. While this *faux pas* is not of a critical theological concern, it does demonstrate either carelessness on Moore’s part to accurately present what is found in the Word of God or that she will audaciously — that is, recklessly — refashion Scripture to accommodate her message.

However, of greater concern and significance here is that Moore is trying to piece together two unrelated statements of Jesus separated by 19 chapters and three years and in totally different contexts. This is fraught with danger. In John chapter two, Jesus’ first words may have been “What do you want,” but Mary’s reply was “wine,” not “love.” This type of

exegesis is destructive to proper biblical interpretation.

In her chapter, “You Would Ask Me,” Moore instructs readers how to acquire this audacious love by drawing from the exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. Spotlighting the words, “You would ask Me” (v. 10, NLT) she tells her readers:

“Weigh those four words until they sink down somewhere deep. To some of us, the spiritual concept will be brand new.”<sup>48</sup>

A short time later she broadens her focus to a dozen words within the verse and writes:

“Those three groups of four words in that single statement of Jesus form an equation with a mass-energy relationship that puts Einstein’s  $E = mc^2$  to shame. *If you only knew + you would ask Me = I would give you.* The equation is so simple that, somewhere down in our belief system, we don’t even see how it could work. ... But here’s the thing: the equation *does* work. It is guaranteed to work. No matter what anybody has ever told us or what we’ve told ourselves based on our own calculations.”<sup>49</sup>

Moore here again does a bit of Bible hopscotching, coupling John 4:10 with 1 John 5:14-15. While Moore is connecting this to her audacious love, it is important to note that the context of Jesus’ words to the Samaritan woman is eternal life, not audacious love. One evangelical dictionary explains:

“The word ‘water’ is used in a variety of metaphorical ways in Scripture. ... In John 4:10-15, part of Jesus’ discourse with the Samaritan woman at the well, he speaks metaphorically of his salvation as ‘living water’ and as ‘a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’”<sup>50</sup>

Objectionable as well is the tilt toward the positive confession heresy of the hyper-Charismatics that could be gleaned from Moore’s “equation,” which she says is “guaranteed to

work.” After all, if it works for audacious love, why not for other things, like a better job, financial prosperity, a perfect marriage, obedient children, and physical health?

Moore appears to hold a novel view of the Holy Spirit as well. She tells us, “He [Jesus] sent His promised Holy Spirit to seal, sanctify, thrill, and fill you.”<sup>51</sup> While it is scriptural to argue that the Spirit of God seals us (Ephesians 1:13), and sanctifies us (Romans 15:16), and fills us (Ephesians 5:18), it is wholly unscriptural to assert that the Holy Spirit was sent to “thrill” us.

When we consider much of the above, we can agree with Moore’s assessment of herself when she confesses, “I’m a long shot from having this whole thing pinned down.”<sup>52</sup>

### SAME OL’ BETH

Some things never change. And Beth Moore is a pretty example. In book after book she repeats aspects of her personal history, characteristics, and teachings.

Moore is a master at self-abasement. Her comments about herself are inconsistent and make it difficult to know if she sees herself as a spiritual mess or a secure role-model. In *Audacious*, Moore preaches about a Jesus who audaciously loves us, has a fiery passion for us, and who sent His Spirit to thrill us. Yet she claims she is “still inarguably odd and unfixed,”<sup>53</sup> her heart was “one malformed, malnourished, malfunctioning mess,”<sup>54</sup> and she is “a flawed woman with limited understanding”<sup>55</sup> and “a bit of a train wreck.”<sup>56</sup> Perhaps Moore would try to file such musings under “humility,” but the critical concern here is that Moore and her publications are big business and she is advertised — both by her own words and those of her publishers — as a role model and biblical teacher with the answers for the Christian life.

Some may think that Moore’s personal putdowns are a result of her own insecurity. But that is supposedly a “stronghold” she has exposed, battled, and conquered over a half-decade ago in her 2010 book, *So Long*,

*Insecurity: You've Been a Bad Friend to Us.*<sup>57</sup> Moreover she has said that in regard to her low self-esteem, "God has dealt with that handicapped part of me."<sup>58</sup> In light of her ongoing admissions, one can only wonder what happened with that.

And in this same vein, Beth's husband, Keith, does not fare well in her writings as he is the recipient of subtle admissions that should make most readers a bit uneasy. Moore writes that:

"[Keith never cared] one iota to be a pastor, deacon, elder, usher or anything else at church. He doesn't often read his Bible but he does on occasion love to flip through a good hymnal. Despite innumerable debates early on, Keith wants to make his spiritual contribution primarily by being a good husband to a woman in full-time ministry. It is a role he fills with tremendous strength and testosterone."<sup>59</sup>

And church attendance doesn't appear a top priority for Keith either. "When he sits next to me in church, I'm glad. When he doesn't, I'm no longer mad,"<sup>60</sup> she further admits.

The comments above by Moore are unfortunate. Sharing your mate's weaknesses and flaws with the world is a questionable practice. It undermines the spiritual life of the one described by publishing his lack of desire to use gifts and talents for the benefit of the saints (1 Peter 4:10) and an even greater malevolence exhibited by revealing his lack of devotion to Scripture. The discipline of Bible reading — which Keith lacks — is the believer's lifeline to "hearing" God (Matthew 22:31b) and his or her path to sanctification (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:3-4; Psalm 119). It appears that in regard to Keith, it's all about Beth and not so much about Jesus. For Beth's part, apparently, "audacious love" doesn't cover over a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8).

Of considerable importance, however, is her continued devotion to mysticism and ongoing revelation. In

the past Moore has asserted that not only the content of her book was directly from God, but its very title. In her 2002 book, *When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*, she wrote:

"Oddly, the concept for this book came complete, God delivering the title to me *in full*. My Bible was open to these verses for the first time in a long while, and the instruction from the Lord came so unmistakably that I dated it in the margin: *April 19, 2000*. My pen still didn't touch the paper until almost exactly a year later when I knew His Spirit was saying to me, 'Now.' I headed to the mountains, and within a few weeks it was done."<sup>61</sup>

Of an earlier volume, *Praying God's Word*, she claims "God directed me" and "He revealed to me."<sup>62</sup>

Moore is supposedly so in tune with God that He even changes her words when she misspeaks. "You know what Lord? That's the wrong words and You just changed it in my spirit," she said as she reworded a statement she made on her video series *Believing God*.<sup>63</sup>

*Audacious* comes with the same mystical leanings. Moore writes that, "We can engage with Jesus ... Fully. Actively. Verbally. We can talk to Him like people who know He really is there." Then, in response to our cry, "Jesus, I need you," Moore has Jesus saying, "You have Me. Tell Me what you need. Tell Me what you want. Tell Me how you feel. Tell Me how you don't."<sup>64</sup> From this mystical encounter, we are told, "We can draw faith."<sup>65</sup> This is in opposition to what Paul instructs, that "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

In the final chapter of *Audacious* comes the most muddled and conflicted description of God speaking to us. Moore offers a sound reverence for the Bible by saying: "Those pages are the most sacred treasures fingertips of flesh can brush"<sup>66</sup> and "Scripture is complete. It cannot be added to or subtracted from."<sup>67</sup> Yet sandwiched exactly between those honor-

able statements, comes this mystical patchwork:

"To subtract the miraculous from God is to deny that He is who He says He is. To say that He no longer performs wonders is to claim that He is no longer wonderful. To say that He can no longer speak to us through His Spirit in our inner man is to say that He — immortal, invisible, and immutable — has dramatically changed. God didn't call us to control the Spirit. He called us to be controlled *by* the Spirit. We don't get nervous and throw out the Spirit. We go to the trouble to test the Spirit."<sup>68</sup>

In the final pages of the book, Moore relates a mystical experience where she "heard no words" or "saw no visions," but "believed it was very possibly the leadership of the Holy Spirit."<sup>69</sup> Having told God that she was "ready for some good jaw-dropping divine encounters,"<sup>70</sup> she describes an event that occurred just a few days later. Circling through her memory was the image of a public bus stop some distance from her home. She "somehow knew" to "take some money" and head thirty minutes from her home to that bus stop.<sup>71</sup> A short time after arriving, a woman walked up to catch a bus. Moore says she approached the woman and told her that she believed that Jesus sent her to give her the money. In Moore's telling, the woman needed to move out of a bad situation, but was in need of funds as a deposit to be able to move. Moore wraps up the episode with:

"Somebody will insist that I was delusional, that God doesn't lead these days like that, and that, of course, the woman took the money whether those were her circumstances or not. *After all*, someone will say, *what fool wouldn't?* And that's okay with me. I'll take that chance on the mere possibility of a holy nod from God."<sup>72</sup>

Mysticism, prophecy, and holy nods from God appear to be an ongoing staple in Moore's writings and videos.

Her inclination toward personal revelation has been a consistent theme even in her earlier years as a member of a Southern Baptist Church, but probably now even more so as a member of Bayou City Fellowship, the church pastored by her son-in-law, Curtis Jones. This continuationist theology is expressly stated in the church's Doctrinal Statement:

"We believe ministry and evangelism is the work of all Christians. Spiritual gifts are assigned by God to each member of the church and should be used with faith for the common good. (Romans 12:3, 1 Corinthians 12:7) We are to be informed about and eagerly desire the spiritual gifts, especially prophecy. (1 Corinthians 14:1) We believe all the gifts listed in the New Testament are still active and good for this generation of the church. However, any spiritual gift used without love is useless and unprofitable. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)"<sup>73</sup>

### COTTON CANDY TEACHING

This is not to say that Moore is always off-base. Some of the material in her book may be helpful. For example, she offers a good Old Testament synopsis,<sup>74</sup> a sound understanding of testing and trials,<sup>75</sup> and helpful exposition of Jeremiah 17:9 (a deceitful heart).<sup>76</sup> However, in the end we must ask if it is really worth the effort to wade through 178 pages of Moore's other shallow and questionable Bible exposition, along with the torrent of personal stories, for just a few pages of sound teaching that is in such short supply.

With Moore, the bad and insignificant far outweigh the sparse good. If one wants to invest time to read the further adventures of Beth seasoned here and there with a biblical flavor, then this book will suffice. But be warned, it's like cotton candy. It may be attractive and look like a lot and when you bite into it, it may be sweet and good tasting, but there is not much substance or spiritual nourishment. As with the other of Moore's writings, it lacks fruitful instruction toward biblical sanctification in the

life of the believer — and that is a tragic omission from one who is hailed as presenting "solid biblical insight."<sup>77</sup>

### Endnotes:

1. Beth Moore, *Audacious*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2015, back of dust jacket, italics in original.
2. Sharon Lareau, "Evaluating Beth Moore's Upcoming Live Simulcast," from Chapter 3 Ministries website, bold in original. Document accessed at: <http://chapter3min.org/2015/08/20/evaluating-beth-moores-upcoming-live-simulcast/>.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Rick Warren, "How To Trust God for Your Big Dream," from the Daily Hope with Rick Warren website. Document accessed at: <http://rickwarren.org/devotional/english/how-to-trust-god-for-your-big-dream>.
5. "The Audacity of Hope" from Wikipedia," italics in original. Document accessed at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Audacity\\_of\\_Hope](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Audacity_of_Hope).
6. *Audacious*, op. cit., pg. 7.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, pg. 9.
9. *Ibid.*, pg. 32, italic in original.
10. *Ibid.*, pg. 31.
11. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* cited in *ibid.*, pg. 32, bold, italics, and capitalization in original.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, pg. 33.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 135-141.
17. *Ibid.*, pg. 8.
18. A third Greek word, *eros*, is defined as love of passionate desire for an object, and often specifically sexual passion. A fourth Greek word, *storge*, denotes a natural love which occurs between parents and children (or husbands and wives, or siblings). *Storge* is used only once in the New Testament (Romans 12:10) in compound form with *philos* (rendered as *philostorgos*). However, it is used two additional times (Romans 1:31 and 2 Timothy 3:3) with the negative "alpha" as a prefix thereby translating it as "unloving."
19. G.B. Funderburk in Merrill C. Tenney, General Editor, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1975, Vol. 3, pg. 989, Greek and italics in original.
20. *Audacious*, op. cit., pg. 24, italics in original.
21. *Ibid.*, pg. 25.
22. Paul Enns, *Living the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 2010, May 5 entry, italics and ellipsis in original.
23. Glenn E. Schaefer in Walter A. Elwell, Editor, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical*

- Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996, "Love," pg. 494.
24. Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2006, pp. 99-100, italic in original.
  25. *Audacious*, op. cit., pg. 42.
  26. *Ibid.*, pg. 41.
  27. *Ibid.*, pg. 115.
  28. *Ibid.*
  29. *Ibid.*, pg. 125.
  30. *Ibid.*, pg. 150, emphasis added.
  31. *Ibid.*, pp. 64, 153, 155.
  32. Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible by Matthew Henry*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961, pg. 1591.
  33. *Audacious*, op. cit., pg. 27.
  34. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99, italics in original.
  35. John MacArthur, "The Rape of Solomon's Song, Part 2," Grace to You website, April 15, 2009, A397. Document accessed at: [www.gty.org/resources/articles/A397/the-rape-of-solomons-song-part-2](http://www.gty.org/resources/articles/A397/the-rape-of-solomons-song-part-2).
  36. Tremper Longman III in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, op. cit., "Song of Solomon, Theology of," pg. 742.
  37. Interoffice correspondence between author and Gary Gilley, dated Jan. 7, 2016, copy on file.
  38. *Audacious*, op. cit., pg. 58, emphasis added.
  39. See further, G. Richard Fisher, "Murray Harris' Resurrection: Mainstream or Tilt Toward Heresy?," *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 1991, pp. 5-8.
  40. Norman L. Geisler, *The Battle for the Resurrection*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989, pp. 182-185.
  41. *Ibid.*, pg. 182.
  42. "Do Christians receive glorified bodies immediately after they die?," from Grace to You website, QA098. Document accessed at: [www.gty.org/resources/questions/QA098](http://www.gty.org/resources/questions/QA098).
  43. Ron Rhodes, *What Does the Bible Say About...?* Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House Publishers, 1997, pp. 263-264.
  44. *Audacious*, op. cit., pp. 63, 96.
  45. Spiros Zodhiates, *Resurrection: True or False?* Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG Publishers, 1984, pg. 104.
  46. *Audacious*, op. cit., pg. 83.
  47. *Ibid.*, pg. 93, italics in original.
  48. *Ibid.*, pg. 126.
  49. *Ibid.*, pg. 128, italics in original.
  50. Wesley L. Gerig in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, op. cit., "Water," pp. 812-813.
  51. *Audacious*, op. cit., pg. 52.
  52. *Ibid.*, pg. 115.
  53. *Ibid.*, pg. 70.
  54. *Ibid.*, pg. 108.
  55. *Ibid.*, pg. 161.
  56. *Ibid.*, pg. 177.
  57. Beth Moore, *So Long, Insecurity: You've Been a Bad Friend to Us*. Carol Stream, Ill.:

Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2010. In February 2016, Tyndale re-released this volume in a softcover edition. For a critique of this book see, G. Richard Fisher with M. Kurt Goedelman, "So Long, Beth: Your Precepts Have Been a Bad Friend to Us," *The Quarterly Journal*, July-September 2010, pp. 4-11.

58. Beth Moore, *Get Out of That Pit*. Nashville: Integrity Publishers, 2007, pg. ix.

59. *Audacious*, op. cit., pg. 148.

60. Ibid.

61. Beth Moore, *When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002, pg. 220, italics

in original.

62. Ibid., pg. 23.

63. Beth Moore, *Believing God*. Nashville: LifeWay Church Resources, 2002, Session 4, "Believing You Are Who God Says You Are," timemark: 1:02:35.

64. *Audacious*, op. cit., pg. 80, italics in original.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., pg. 163.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., italics in original. In reference to her statement "We go to the trouble to test the Spirit," Moore cites in a footnote "1 Thess. 5:19-21; 1 John 4:1."

69. Ibid., pg. 171.

70. Ibid., pg. 170.

71. Ibid., pg. 171.

72. Ibid., pp. 172-173, italics in original.

73. "Bayou City Fellowship > Doctrinal Statement" from the Bayou City Fellowship website. Document accessed and downloaded at: <https://bayoucityfellowship.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/bcf-doctrinal-statement.pdf>.

74. *Audacious*, op. cit., pp. 45-51.

75. Ibid., pp. 63-64.

76. Ibid., pp. 108-109.

77. Cited from *Audacious* advertisement in the January/February 2016 Christian Book Distributors catalog, pg. 5.



---

## EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

This new covenant is contrasted by Jeremiah with the old covenant, which was attached to Israel's deliverance from Egypt: the Mosaic covenant given at Sinai (Exodus 19-24). The new covenant would be an internal rule prompted by the Holy Spirit and empowered by God's grace as opposed to an external rule (Jeremiah 31:33) and would provide not annual forgiveness on the Day of Atonement, but once and for all purging of sins; those sins to be remembered no more, and not just covered (v. 34).

It all seems pretty clear, doesn't it? A new covenant is promised and is on the way, according to Jeremiah. The book of Hebrews sharpens the focus even more as it talks about what Jesus did in bringing in the new covenant: "But now He [Jesus] has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a *better* covenant, which was established on *better* promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second" (Hebrews 8:6-7, emphasis added).

In context the "first covenant" is obviously the old covenant under Moses and the "second" is the new covenant inaugurated by Jesus through His death and resurrection.

Note also that this new covenant is "better" than the old or the first covenant because the first is faulty, while the new covenant is far superior. The first could demand righteousness, but not dispense it. It could insist on certain behaviors, but not necessarily provide enablement to carry it out. The second or new covenant brought justification through Christ by grace and an inner motivational dynamic besides (Titus 2:11-13).

The writer of Hebrews continues: "Because finding fault with them, He says: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — not

according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away (Hebrews 8:8-13, emphasis added).

The book of Hebrews points out that the new covenant is superior to the old because we have a better offering — once for all (Hebrews 7:22-28; 9:28). And we now have a superior priest, Jesus: "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises" (Hebrews 8:6). The new covenant, in fact, replaces the old obsolete covenant. We truly do not have less now, but much, much more.

**Back to the future:** It was Jesus who, at the Last Supper, said: "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Mark repeats the words of Jesus: "Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, 'This is My blood of the new covenant which is shed for many'" (Mark 14:23-24). Christ's death brought the new covenant into being. Also to the point is the impact of the two words "is shed" in verse 24. Kenneth Wuest instructs: "The words 'is shed' are present tense, durative action, 'which is being shed,' our Lord looking upon His sacrifice on the Cross as imminent and regarded as already present" (*Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, Vol. 1, pg. 261). Jeremiah's prophecy was being fulfilled.

We should be aware also that the word “new” in both Matthew and Mark is *not* the Greek word *neos*, which means “new in time.” This is not bits and pieces of the old just reintroduced at a new time. Neither is it new things just patched onto the old. The Greek word used by Mark is *kainos*, which means “new in quality.” The new covenant is something totally different and intrinsically new. Linguist W.E. Vine wrote that *kainos* is “of that which is unaccustomed or unused, not new in time, recent, but new as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old” (*The Expanded Vine’s: Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, pg. 781). Vine also notes that *kainos*, being in respect to quality, is “distinct” from *neos* (new or fresh) which is in respect to time (ibid., pg. 462). *Kainos* helps us see that the two covenants cannot be harmonized, merged, or confused. The new covenant is unique and totally different in quality.

**Blind spots:** We stress all this because it does not seem that obvious to some in the Hebrew Roots Movement. They are unclear as to whether we have a new covenant either because of their own sincere ignorance or they are trying to obfuscate so as to hang on to elements of the old covenant. None of them really holds onto the old covenant in its entirety or they would have to mete out its many punishments commanded by the old. It is interesting that the Reconstructionists or Theonomists (also called Dominionists), while not wanting Judaism *per se*, have sanctioned the punishment side of the old covenant and want that retribution meted out by our government in an Old Testament rule of the United States. (See further, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse* by H. Wayne House and Thomas Ice.) They are just another example of the subjective nature of trying to go back under the Law.

**Covenants and testaments:** Some in the Hebrew Roots Movement say that the new covenant simply merges with and is incorporated into the old. Others who are more extreme push the impossible case that a covenant and a testament are not the same, but rather entirely different things. The old is a covenant, but not the new — or so they allege. So is a covenant really totally unrelated to a testament? This is an important matter that must be settled.

HRM advocates John Klein, Adam Spears, and Michael Christopher approach it this way:

“... many of us confuse *covenant* and *testament*. ... in ancient Hebrew society (the context in which the Bible was written), those two words never meant the same thing. A *testament* is a Greek legal document ... By contrast, the word *covenant* defines an ongoing relationship with no appointed end” (*Lost in Translation*, Vol. 1, pg. 35, italics in original).

These authors go on to say that “each ‘renewed’ covenant includes everything that came before” (ibid., pg. 40).

Jeremiah would disagree with these men and we can be sure of that because he prophesied an appointed end for the old covenant as we have seen, and as does the book of Hebrews. According to Klein, Spears, and Christopher we could call the new covenant in Christ’s blood not a superior covenant as the writer of Hebrews states, but an add-on covenant or an amendment to the old one. It would be new wine in old wineskins or a new patch on an old garment. In actual practice within the HRM, the new covenant is merged with elements of rabbinical Judaism creating a strange hybrid.

The above authors correctly liken a testament to a will, as in Last Will and Testament, but their limited definition of a testament as simply and *only* a will is clearly wrong and they seem unaware that it can be shown without doubt that the *two words “testament” and “covenant” are interchangeable*. Hebrews 9:15-18, without question, uses the words “covenant” and “testament” as synonyms. That being said we want to emphasize that we really do have an old covenant and a new covenant in our Bibles.

Klein, Spears, and Christopher go on to say (without any scriptural proof) that an existing covenant cannot be replaced in spite of the clear teaching of both Jeremiah and Hebrews as well as 1 Corinthians 3:6-9 and Galatians 3:24-29. The trio are so bold to assert that Jeremiah only meant a *renewed* covenant, so it can only mean, they say, that “a more accurate title for the New Testament would be ‘Renewed Covenant,’ or ‘Renewed Relationship,’ not ‘New Covenant’” (ibid., pg. 37).

We have already stated that the Greek word *kainos* makes their position impossible. The new covenant is something totally new, totally different in quality, not something just added in time to something else. It is too much of a stretch to say that the New Testament should be called the “Renewed Relationship” or that the word “testament” can be translated as “relationship.” Jesus did not say, “a *renewed* covenant in My blood,” but rather “a *new* covenant.” Klein, Spears, and Christopher are contradicting themselves even in calling the new covenant, a renewed covenant. They have already stated that a testament is not a covenant. They cannot have it both ways.

**Biblical facts, not speculation:** The Hebrew word translated “covenant” in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word *b’rit* (sometimes written *berit*). It is used 280 times in the Jewish sacred text. The exact etymology is uncertain, but it basically means an agreement between two people. It can also be an agreement between God (as the initiator) and man (as the recipient) as in Genesis 15:18 and Exodus 34:28, or man with God as in Deuteronomy 29:12 and 2 Kings 23:3.

When the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek at the command of Egyptian Ptolemy Philadelphus (288-247 B.C.) it is reported that Eleazer the High Priest sent 72 scholars from Jerusalem to Alexandria for this work. Hellenistic Jews needed a viable Greek Old

Testament in their language and it paved the way for the propagation of monotheism among the pagan Greeks. (See further, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion*, "Septuagint," pg. 349.) Many of the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament are from this Greek Septuagint. The New Testament writers, who were moved by the Holy Spirit, drew from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. They had no aversion to the Greek language.

What is important to notice is the Greek word selected to translate as "covenant." Consistently the Jewish translators selected the Greek word *diathēkē* to interpret the word "covenant." *Diathēkē* is the word "testament" (as in *New Testament*) and like the word *b'rit* means basically an agreement. These Jewish scholars were not wrong in seeing that *b'rit* and *diathēkē* were interchangeable. Jesus, in the Gospels, uses the word *diathēkē* in referring to the new covenant in His blood. *Diathēkē* is used 33 times in the New Testament and translated as "covenant" 20 times showing that the translators clearly saw the two words as synonyms.

We can easily say that the two words show us two different aspects of the same thing, or we could say two sides of the same coin. Covenant stresses God and man together in agreement while testament stresses the aspect of God as the initiator of the blessings of salvation and His gracious nature through the death of Jesus. *B'rit* shows a gracious relationship, while *diathēkē* shows a legal relationship. *B'rit* shows us mutuality, while *testament* shows us the divine Testator. As has been shown, the book of Hebrews links Jeremiah's predictions of a new covenant with Jesus and the New Testament. Jesus' death put into play the provisions of His will or testament.

H.L. Drumwright explains:

"*Diathēkē* ... stressed that the initiative in God's relations with men lay with Him and not with them. Men could not argue or bargain with God; they could only accept or reject. Also the significance of the death of Christ as the inauguration of the new covenant may reach back to the concept of *diathēkē* as 'will.' The will became effective only upon the death of its maker. Christ's death, after the manner of sacrificial animals that inaugurated the old covenant, established the new (Gal 3:15-18)" (*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 5, pg. 679).

**The bottom line:** The Jews could never live up to the law. That is why God provided a priesthood, sacrifices, and the mercy seat. The mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant was where the blood was brought on the Day of Atonement. There is no more priesthood, no more sacrifices, and no more Ark. Our only Mercy Seat is our eternal Priest, Jesus Christ. We do not need legalism. We are now under Christ's law (literally en-lawed to Christ) as 1 Corinthians 9:21 tells us. The indwelling Christ motivates and enables us, not the thunders of Sinai.

Hebrews is crystal clear that we do not go back to Sinai, but to Jesus and the Church (Hebrews 12:18-25).

We are neither legalists, nor lawless antinomians. As Harry Ironside writes:

"Neither under law nor without law, but legitimately subject to Christ. And where has Christ expressed His mind for me? In the four Gospels and in the Epistles. ... Through the Holy Spirit He has shown us the heavenly calling and the lives that should correspond" (*Addresses on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp. 259-260).

**Spiritual hoarding:** To say we have a new covenant and then proceed to bury it under huge piles of Talmudic regulations, rituals, and rules seems to be the same as what the Pharisees did by burying the literal words of the old covenant under huge loads of oral tradition with traditions to cover those traditions. How can we expect people to see and know the true Jesus of the new covenant in grace if He and it are buried under truck loads of shofars, prayer shawls, kippas, festivals, Hebrew gibberish, rituals, and routines?

If I spew Hebrew words that most do not understand (just to appear to be in the know), is that not what Paul warned against in 1 Corinthians 14:9-11? Paul also said that he would rather teach five words that people understood than thousands of words not understood (v. 19). An unknown Hebrew tongue is worthless without interpretation and meaning. All the Talmudic accouterments that are dragged into the Christian life can be like the television show *Hoarders*. Real life gets buried under a pile of unneeded stuff and unnecessary dress up. Jesus warned the religious elite, "Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men'" (Matthew 15:6-9). These are frightening words indeed.

The Church has not had it wrong and missed it all these years. We really do have a new covenant, not a patchwork of old and new cobbled together. Grace and the Holy Spirit give us the want-to that the former covenant never could. The love of Christ compels and constrains us (2 Corinthians 5:14). We have come out of the shadows into the full light. It is like this: I remember being in a large bus station in New York and seeing signs on the walls that said, "Do not litter." I looked at the floor and there was litter everywhere. When I got home there were no "Do not litter" signs on the walls of my house and yet the floors were clean! A love for one's home accounts for that and the motivation is not an external sign on a wall, but an internal love and caring. Yes, we do have a new and better covenant as Jeremiah the prophet and the book of Hebrews has told us.

—GRF

The Recovering Grace website, an online ministry devoted to helping people whose lives have been adversely affected by Gothard and his teachings, said that its Leadership Team was “disappointed — even angered — at the board of IBLP for their failure to stand up publicly and be counted as men of God at this pivotal time. These men could have shown even the slightest interest in uncovering the truth. ... Those who have followed Bill Gothard and his IBLP ministry over the past 40 years have waited without satisfaction for the board to step forward and publicly decry the behavior of its founder, as well as many of its damaging teachings.”

The website’s report further revealed, “At least four board members resigned in the past year, and while we can only speculate as to their motives, it continues a pattern observed in IBLP board governance over the decades. It appears, from the investigation and the current board resignations, that the focus has been on protecting the organization as well as the personal interests of those still running it.”

The court’s initial hearing of the amended lawsuit was held Jan. 13. Following that hearing, attorney Gibbs told Julie Anne Smith, a spiritual abuse blogger, that, “The Judge granted permission for the Plaintiffs to amend and expand their lawsuit to include at least four new victims (for a minimum total of 14). This current lawsuit will be closed to any new plaintiffs after February 17, 2016. If more abuse victims come forward after that date, they would need to file a new lawsuit. The Defendants plan to file motions opposing the expanded lawsuit and the next status conference with the court will be April 4, 2016.”

Gibbs also stated, “The Victims remain open to talking with the Defendants to avoid the necessity of a public jury trial. IBLP is not willing to meet with them at this time.”

—MKG

## CATHOLICS DISALLOW EVANGELISM OF JEWS

A recently released document from the Vatican says Roman Catholics must not try to convert Jews to Christianity and is drawing criticism from traditionalists within the Catholic faith.

In December, the Vatican’s Commission for Religious Relations with Jews claimed that God has not rescinded His covenant with the Jewish people. In explaining what this signifies for Catholics, the document stated, “In concrete terms this means that the Catholic Church neither conducts nor supports any specific institutional mission work directed towards Jews” and added to that a “principled rejection of an institutional Jewish mission.”

Catholic traditionalists embrace the need for a “Jewish mission” aimed at conversion of the Jews because of their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah.

According to the online Jewish news source, *Ynetnews*, “The document coincided with the 50th anniversary of a revolutionary Vatican statement that repudiated the concept of collective Jewish guilt for Jesus’ death and launched a theological dialogue that traditionalists have rejected.” The report also stated, “Until about 1960, prayers at Catholic Masses on Good Friday, the day commemorating the death of Jesus, labelled Jews ‘perfidious’ and called for their conversion. That prayer was eliminated from general use after the 1962-1965 Second Vatican Council introduced a new missal, or prayer book used at Masses.”

The document also said that in addition to Christians personally not being anti-Semitic, they are “to do all that is possible with our Jewish friends to repel anti-Semitic tendencies.”

—MKG

## CAHN’S ANCIENT MYSTERY MESSAGE APPEARS UNSTOPPABLE

The last Hebrew Shemitah, or “sabbatical year,” which ran Sept. 25, 2014 through Sept. 13, 2015, has long since passed but that hasn’t slowed rabbi and doomsday theoretician Jonathan Cahn from continuing to promote his Shemitah message of the supposed impact of what he labels an “ancient mystery.”

Writing for the conspiracy theory news website, *WorldNetDaily*, Cahn stated, “The word ‘Shemitah’ in Hebrew, can be translated as ‘the shaking.’ So the Shemitah of 2015, as in past Shemitahs, was a year of massive shaking in the financial and economic realms – from the Greek Crisis, to the Collapse of China, to Black Monday. For the first time in years, stock markets closed in the red, having entered negative territory. The headlines proclaimed it the worst year since 2008. Again, it had all happened according to a seven-year cycle as in the mystery of the Shemitah. And it wasn’t just *any* seven-year cycle. It was the *specific, ancient and precise* seven-year cycle of the biblical Shemitah. 2015 was the worst year of financial collapse since 2008. Both *worst* years, both years of collapse, 2015 and 2008, constituted the biblical Shemitah.”

Cahn claims that God controls the world’s economy according to this seven-year Shemitah cycle. He has been able to spread his message through a variety of media outlets, including articles written for WND, books published by Charisma Media, television broadcasts of *The Jim Bakker Show* and *Glenn Beck Program*, and YouTube videos.

Cahn works all major world events into the grid of his prophetic scenarios.

According to an online report by *Charisma* magazine, "Cahn's books and ancillary products have collectively reached 3 million units in sales." The news article was announcing that Cahn has signed another book contract with Charisma Media. It would be his third book for the publishing firm and will publish under the title, *The Book of Mysteries*. It is scheduled for a fall 2016 release.

—MKG

## COPELAND TOPS LIST OF RICHEST PASTORS

In 2014, *Nehanda Radio*, an Internet radio station based in the African country of Zimbabwe, published a list of the "Top 10 richest pastors in the world." Word-Faith preacher Kenneth Copeland was number seven on that list, with an estimated net worth between \$25-\$27 million. That might have been a significant underestimate.

According to a report by the online entertainment blog *ETInside*, Copeland is said to have a net worth of \$760 million. In describing the popular health-and-wealth teacher, the article stated, "He runs Kenneth Copeland Ministries. His ministry's 1,500-acre campus is a half-hour drive from Fort Worth includes a church, a private airstrip, a hangar for the ministry's \$17.5 million jet and other aircraft, and a \$6 million church owned lakefront

mansion. He is very close to being a Billionaire even though he already claims billion dollar status." That designation places Copeland far atop the list of the "Top 15 Richest Pastors in America."

Others making the *ETInside* roster of richest pastors included Pat Robertson in the number two position (\$100 million), Benny Hinn number three (\$42 million), and Joel Osteen number four (\$40 million). Joyce Meyer, John Hagee, and Paula White also made their way onto the lower third of the list each with a net worth in the single-digit millions.

The article said, "It might be argued that the reason why ministers are more likely to make money today is because they utilize more money making opportunities such as writing books, producing movies and speaking engagements."

Copeland has also caught the media's attention in regard to American politics. Daniel Burke, CNN's religion editor, included Copeland in his Jan. 25 report, "7 types of evangelicals — and how they'll affect the presidential race." Burke classified Copeland as an entrepreneurial evangelical. Along side Copeland, Burke placed Paula White and Jerry Falwell Jr., saying, "These evangelicals may not share many theological beliefs, but they all appreciate a good business model. They are evangelists who have built television ministries reaching millions of Americans, and Pentecostal preachers who have turned storefront churches into thriving congregations."

—MKG

### PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

- I. THE BIBLE AS THE DIVINELY INSPIRED, INERRANT WORD OF GOD: IT IS IN ITS ENTIRETY THE SOLE AUTHORITY FOR ALL MATTERS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND PRACTICE.
- II. THE ONE TRUE GOD. IN THE ONE TRUE GOD THERE EXIST THREE PERSONS, BEING: THE FATHER, THE SON JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- III. JESUS CHRIST: HIS DEITY, HUMANITY, VIRGIN BIRTH, SINLESSNESS, DEATH AND BODILY RESURRECTION; WHO WILL PERSONALLY AND VISIBLY RETURN AGAIN TO EARTH.
- IV. THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- V. THE EXISTENCE AND PERSONALITY OF SATAN, HIS TOTAL OPPOSITION TO GOD, AND HIS POWER OVER THE UNREGENERATE.
- VI. THE COMPLETE AND TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF ALL MEN WHICH MAKES THEM HOPELESSLY LOST WITHOUT THE NEW BIRTH OBTAINABLE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.
- VII. THE FINAL ESTATE OF MAN: FOR THE SAVED, EVERLASTING LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND FOR THE UNSAVED, EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF.
- VIII. THE GOSPEL BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED BEING SUMMED IN THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- IX. THE CHURCH BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST, UNITED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, CONSISTING OF THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR. A LOCAL CHURCH IS AN ORGANIZED ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS UNITED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CARRYING OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST.
- X. THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST BEING TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL MEN, BAPTIZING AND DISCIPLING THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED.



# Books in Review

## CONVERSATIONS WITH JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

by Ron Rhodes

Harvest House Publishers, 222 pages, \$12.99

The Watchtower Society's membership explosion in the early 1970s prompted a number of evangelical writers to draw attention to the heresies and cultic qualities of the organization. As the decades passed, new critiques of Watchtower doctrine and practice have declined significantly. Some of the decline can be attributed in large part to the ready availability of information on the Internet, where resources are often reliable and sometimes not. All of this is why Ron Rhodes' *Conversations with Jehovah's Witnesses* is a welcome arrival.

Rhodes has written two other evangelical responses to Watchtower doctrine and practice, including the extensive *Reasoning from the Scriptures with Jehovah's Witnesses*. However, Rhodes writes, "that this [newer] book is not intended to replace the earlier books, but to complement them" (pg. 7). More specifically, Rhodes writes, "This book is intended to teach you how to engage in tactical conversation with Jehovah's Witnesses that will yield maximum evangelical punch" (pg. 8). Rhodes not only tells his readers how to engage in "tactical conversation," but in tactful conversation.

The book has two parts. The first explores "The Basics of Tactical Conversing" and establishes the why and how of witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses. He presents essentials such as listening, asking questions, and sharing one's personal testimony. The second section, which makes up about three quarters of the book, covers "Conversations on the Big Issues." These "Big Issues" spotlight the core doctrines of the Christian faith that the Watchtower denies: essentials such as the Trinity, Jesus' deity, His bodily resurrection and visible Second Coming, the personage of the Holy Spirit, and the biblical means of salvation. Rhodes also examines secondary tenets such as the two classes of believers among Jehovah's Witnesses (i.e., the heaven-bound 144,000 and earth-bound "other sheep"), the use of the name "Jehovah" in the New Testament, soul sleep and hell, the instrument of Jesus' death, *The New World Translation of*

*the Holy Scriptures* (the Watchtower's Bible), and the Watchtower teaching that the organization is God's sole prophet.

Each chapter in the "Conversations" section is presented in identical format. The subject is introduced with an historical and doctrinal overview of the Watchtower perspective, followed by bullet points of "Falsehoods to Watch For" and "Important Points to Introduce" during the conversation. The "heart of the chapter" then ensues with "Eavesdropping on a Conversation." Rhodes here provides a pithy but illustrative mock exchange between a Jehovah's Witness and a Christian. The dialogues offered, while not verbatim from conversations that Rhodes has had with Jehovah's Witnesses, are realistic and represent a faithful portrayal of what could transpire at a Christian's doorstep. Each of these chapters concludes with "Conversation Highlights," which summarize the key points of the dialogue, and "Digging Deeper," which directs the reader to further study in his *Reasoning from the Scriptures with Jehovah's Witnesses*.

The book contains a couple of small mistakes. On page 120, it is incorrectly stated that 1975 was "the year the Watchtower Society prophesied that the Old Testament patriarchs — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — would be resurrected from the dead and live at a mansion called Beth Sarim in San Diego." That was actually predicted to occur in 1925. It should be noted, however, that in two other places in the book, Rhodes provides correct distinctions between 1925 and 1975 (pp. 152, 181).

Elsewhere Rhodes mentions on repeated occasions that the anointed class of 144,000 heaven-bound Jehovah's Witnesses was completed around 1935. While this accurately reflects what the Watchtower once taught, it is another of the teachings which the Watchtower has changed and now comes under a description of "new light." Several years before the publication of Rhodes' book, the Watchtower altered its view saying, "it appears that we cannot set a specific date for when the calling of Christians to the heavenly hope ends" (*The Watchtower*, May 1, 2007, pg. 31).

However, the value and importance of this volume far outweighs these minor errors. It is a book rich in practical instruction which will encourage you to be prepared to biblically and effectively respond to Jehovah's Witnesses with a heart of compassion when they come knocking at your door.

—MKG

**Editor's Note:** The publications featured in PFO's *Books in Review* section are available from **Personal Freedom Outreach** (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$3.00 to the price listed for shipping and handling. Due to occasional price changes by the publishers, the retail amounts listed are subject to change without notice. These publications are also available to those who help to financially support the work of PFO. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.