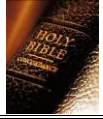


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“ . . . defending the faith once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3)

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FROM THE DIRECTOR’S Desk: Fraud and Deception

Once again, we see parallels between the machinations of those in the world of politics and those in the realm of religion. Although neither field of endeavor was originally intended to be twisted for personal gain there are opportunists everywhere. With the Constitution to guide our statesmen and the Bible given to lead and inspire God’s people, to have each group veer so far off-course was not an accident. Of course this comes as no surprise to Bible believing Christians who understand end-time prophecy, specifically the part that foretells the Anti-christ and the False Prophet leading the One World government and the One World church into the Great Tribulation.

The quest for power and wealth is strong enough to lead the weak into temptation. This influences the ethically flexible public servant into national betrayal while revealing religious hypocrisy for those who practice fraud and deception with God’s Word. Examples of both abound.

In the political world, many gain traction through the use of social media, which is used by over 80% of the population. Digital creators, known as disrupters, use phony actors and venues to bring discredit to the opposition party. TikTok is a popular site which is used this way. This intentional use of disinformation is used to deceive and manipulate the voting public and create social polarization. This is especially taken advantage of by the legacy media to suppress factual information while spreading ideological propaganda. Mix Artificial Intelligence into all of this and you have an unlimited potential for fraud. Dubbing voices to change speech content alters reality. Notable names who dabble in propaganda are politicians like Senators Charles Schumer and Chris Murphy and media shills like the ladies of The View.

False teachers in the church alter reality by twisting the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God. To quote from God’s perfect Word, all liars go to Hell (Revelation 21:8). Now that that’s been established, you can take your pick from a plethora of “prophets” who merchandise God’s Word for personal gain. Kenneth Copeland, Joel Osteen, and Joyce Meyer to name a few of the more well-known self-seekers come to mind. But there are many others. UCC Bishop Yvette Flunder says we need a Third Testament, because the first two are problematic. Andy Stanley says he believes the historical fact of the Resurrection is more proof of its authenticity than the Bible prophecy which foretells it.

Things will only get worse as time goes on. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 describes a lawless one coming with all power and false signs and wonders, accompanied by a strong delusion that they should believe a lie. All of this will ultimately lead to the destruction of nations and souls. Nations lose their sovereignty and become footnotes in history. Fraud and deception exact a far greater toll on the individual. To know the truth of salvation through Jesus Christ leads to life eternal. Anything short of that leads to Hell, which is the ultimate deception foisted upon mankind.

Rev. David Lewis

Reviewing the Winter Edition of:

“Redeeming the Time Quarterly Publication”

Compiled by Robert Luthardt, Sr.

This edition is unique in that it features two well-known religious church leaders both of whom have chosen to raise controversies against long settled doctrines of the Christian Faith. The Bible is clear that Christians are to call “sinners to repentance.”

Looking first at the statement made by Rev. Allistair Begg (a religious radio broadcaster who hosts the popular show, “Truth for Life”) who caused quite a stir with the advice he gave to a grandmother whose grandson was a participant in a same-sex wedding. Begg told the grandmother she should “take a gift to him to show her love.”

The “Religion News Service” (RNS) reported that “Begg said he was thinking with his ‘grandfatherly hat’ when he gave that advice, hoping to help that grandmother show God’s love.” Rev. Brad Gsell noted the similarity in the Pope’s justification for his “Declaration” that priests can now offer “blessings to same-sex couples.” No one should doubt that we are to pray for the lost souls in our midst, but to what extent should we support their sinful endeavors?

Despite Begg’s widespread criticism, he has refused to make any changes. Various ministries have elected to drop “Truth for Life” after having carried it for years. Reportedly, American Family Radio has dropped Truth for Life also having aired it for decades. Likewise, Ligonier Ministries online REFNET has now been “filling in” radio slots with old sermons of Dr. R. C. Sproul.

Very recently it was announced that Begg would not be speaking at the 2024 Shepherd’s Conference at Rev. John MacArthur’s Grace Community Church. RNS reporter Bob Smietana quoted “Grace to You” V.P. Phil Johnson that Pastor MacArthur’s counsel to Begg was not the same as given to the grandmother which has resulted in the current division.

To point to the Father in Jesus’ parable who took back the Prodigal Son, in no way means that anyone was participating in or condoning sin. In Luke (15:18-19) we see the son “coming in repentance” of his sins; “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.”

In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, who showed great compassion to someone left in grave peril by the roadside, this showed the love of God for those we are to pity; but nowhere in the message is anyone rejoicing in or participating in sin (Luke 10:25-37). Jesus told the story to the lawyer and those around that Christians are to help the helpless (widows, orphans, etc.).

A third account in Luke (15:3-7) points to the Shepherd leaving the 99 sheep to rescue that one lost sheep; but NOT to join in a celebration of that lost sheep’s further descent into sin and lostness. Rev. Gsell said that Jesus, through His discussion with the lawyer, made

the point that joy shall be seen in heaven over even one sinner who repents and is saved. The compassion of Jesus Christ is not parallel to the advice given to the grandmother.”

Walter Wildmon is a vice president of the American Family Association said in their attempts to reconcile with Begg, “that he refused to back down” and much prayer for reconciliation may yet be needed to bring all back to a proper biblical position. We are to stand opposed to any sinful lifestyle but always praying for any still lost in their sins, as we were (Rom. 3:23).

The article, “To go or not to go” speaks to the “fallacy” that you cannot stand against sin and still have Christ—like compassion and God—like love in your actions. We remember the crucified Savior’s statement to the condemned thief who confessed his sins to all the world saying, “Dost not thou fear God seeing thou are in the same condemnation? And we justly ... and he said unto Jesus; LORD, remember me ... and Jesus said ... this day shalt thou be with me in paradise (Luke 23:29-43).

The article tells us that nowhere does the Lord’s Word allow any countenance, blessing or participation in any actions or ceremonies of men in order to appear loving so as to not lose them. We are told to stand for the truth for “all have sinned and forsaken the plain truth of the WORD OF GOD” (Rom. 3:23). Now we may daily petition God to cleanse their hearts to turn them to righteousness and to faith in Christ.

At the outset of this article we noted that this “Redeeming the Time” winter 2024 edition was unique in that it showed a well-known Protestant religious leader ‘AND’ a well-known Catholic Religious leader, both of whom raised up controversies against long-settled Christian doctrines. Pope Francis’ newly appointed Cardinal Fernandez was seemingly elevated to “define the Roman Catholic teaching on the blessings of God.” However, it seems that it is now possible for priests to issue blessings to same-sex couples (never mind that homosexuality has been under God’s Holy ban for centuries). Any declaration that suggests that any religious leader may now not only refuse to discipline rebels not living in any kind of “OPEN SINFULNESS,” but may now issue “blessings on such behavior,” are wrongfully placing themselves above (and possibly beyond) the firmly settled Word of God.

The Bible clearly condemns homosexuality and the only relationship condoned in Scriptures is the marriage of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6; Heb. 13:4). Any other arrangement is in rebellion to the plainest words in God’s Holy Word (see Lev. 18:22-23; 1 Cor. 6:9, etc.). Blessings of God offered in His name are always in response to God’s Word that proceeds from God. God simply NEVER BLESSES that which is sinful (Deut. 28:1-2. In Deut. God told Israel: “If thou shalt hearken ... to observe to do all His commandments ... God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these BLESSINGS SHALL COME ON THEE ...).”

During the week before Christmas 2023, Pope Francis issued a “Declaration” entitled “Fiducia Supplicans: On the Pastoral meaning of Blessings.” As Protestants, we see a radical shift in Roman Catholicism that already rejects Sola Scriptura. Sola Scripture is one of Protestantism’s defining principles that believers rely on;; “Scripture alone for our first authority in

all matters and none may take precedence over the teachings of the Holy Word of God whether Protestant, Catholic or even any other religion. Anything that violates Scripture can never be fatherly or Pastoral. Those who follow the Bible faithfully under the “WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD” assume that Scripture is never to be twisted to condone anything evil (as when Satan tempted Christ to jump from the temple in Jerusalem—Matt. 4:6). It is sinful to wrest Biblical truth out of its context: Christ’s reply, “Thou shalt not tempt the LORD YOUR GOD,” applies here!

The Bible throughout speaks of God’s blessings but also of His displeasure with unforgiven sinners. God made a covenant with Abraham saying, “I will bless them that bless thee ... in thee shall all families of earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). The Bible makes it perfectly clear ... whom God will bless (Ps. 128:1). Those living in ANY SINFILLED LIFESTYLE cannot receive the blessings of God until and unless they repent and turn away from their sins unto the righteousness of Christ who confers blessings.

James tells us that our blessings come from “the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness—neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). Men however always failed to remember that “love for God and for our neighbor is Christ’s greatest commandment” (Matt. 22:37-39), for he alone is our, “just God” and our “Savior” (Is. 45:21).

Many believe we are living in the last days with men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things coming on the earth ... then shall they see the Son of Man coming on the earth ... with power and great glory. “And when these things begin to come to pass, THEN LOOK UP, AND LIFT UP YOUR HEADS; FOR YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH” (Luke 21:25-28).

Jesus said, “... Iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold, but they that shall endure until the end, THE SAME SHALL BE SAVED.”

Chief Source:	“Redeeming the Time”
Prime Author:	Rev. Brad K. Gsell
Publisher:	Bible Presbyterian Church
	P.O. Box 26281
	Charlotte, NC 28221-6281



John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." KJV

God's Gift To Save His People

By Joseph Burghauser

John 3:16 is a wonderful statement of the Gospel (good news) of what God has done to give eternal life to sinners. He provided the "Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). John 3:16 also echoes John 1:12: the necessity to believe in Him to have our sins removed and to have this eternal life.

A popular view of John 3:16 is that God loved mankind so much that He gave His Son to die so that everyone would be given the opportunity to believe (trust) in Him for eternal life. Emphasis is placed upon "whosoever" to stress that everyone has the capacity to believe.

However, I, and others, differ with some of the above interpretation. We agree that sinners must believe in the Son of God to be "born again". But, this new birth is not of "the will of man" (John 1:13). God alone provides our "everlasting life." Some of us also view God's "love" and "the world" differently. "For" ties the rest of John 3:16 to what we have just read, and we cannot ignore the rest of the Gospel of John or the rest of the Scriptures to understand it.

God does have a benevolent love for all (Matthew 5:45). But God in another sense hates some: Psalm 5:5, 11:5; Proverbs 6:16,19; Hosea 9:15; Malachi 1:3; Romans 9:13. The beginning of John 3:16 may be translated as: "For this is the way God loved the world" (NET). This love is not just benevolent affection and provision for everyone; it is God's supreme provision for the object of His love ("the world"). The Greek construction of John 3:16 emphasizes the intensity of His love and that its purpose will be realized. So, God's love in John 3:16 is most likely His 'saving love'.

"World" in the Bible does not usually mean everyone without exception. In John 1:9-10 and 3:19, "world" does seem to refer to the entire earth or to all people, not just to Israel. But, John 17:9 refers to a "world" of those for whom Christ does not pray. In John 1:29, a different "world" has its sin "taken away", which means "the world" in John 1:29 must ultimately refer to believers. These are God's elect (those He chose for eternal life). It cannot mean 'everyone', because not all have their sins removed.

"Should not perish" means they will not perish. John 3:17: "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." Although "should" and "might" can be used in the sense of an uncertain outcome, they can also be used to express a purpose. In John 3:16, the use of "should" and in John 3:17, the use of "might" refers to the purpose of God sending His Son (to save "the world"). God always accomplishes His purposes. The "world" will be saved. "Might" does not mean He came to make salvation merely possible, depending on our 'choice'. Matthew 1:21 says of Christ: "For He shall save His people from their sins."

So, “the world” in John 3:16, as in John 1:29, ultimately refers to ‘the world of the elect’; to all who will become believers, rather than to everyone. This “world” includes elect Gentiles as well as elect Jews (John 11:50-52; Revelation 5:9). God’s love for the Jewish nation is seen in: Deuteronomy 7:6-8; Jeremiah 31:3. He also had a special love for the remnant of Israel who, like Abraham, “believed God.” (See Romans chapters 9-11.) In addition, God promised blessings to the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 49:6.)

Luke 4:14-30 records the attempted murder of Christ as He reminded those in the synagogue of God’s provision for and healing of Gentiles. Later, Christ rebuked some of the Jewish leaders for thinking that they were guaranteed eternal life because they were physical descendants of Abraham (John 8:33-44).

That “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,” is best understood by looking at passages that echo its message. Two are below. (Keep in mind that because God is Triune, God’s giving His Son can also be expressed as Christ giving His life. And Christ’s love is as that of the Father.) Romans 5:8-9:

But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners,
Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we
shall be saved from wrath through Him.

In Romans 1:5-7, Paul wrote to the “called”. Romans 5:1 also uses “we” as those who are justified. God has a special love for “us.” and Christ died for “us.” The “us” and “we” in Romans 5:8-9 are the elect of God, who have become believers, not all people (see Romans 8:29-32; Ephesians 1:3-14). Paul writes in Romans 5 of the “we” that includes both Jew and Gentile believers in the church at Rome. They are part of “the world” of John 3:16.

Ephesians 5:25: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” A husband is to have a special love for his wife, as Christ does for His church. Christ loved and gave His life for the church (believers).

The KJV translation of John 3:16 uses the phrase “whosoever believeth in Him”. Other English translations are similar, but it may be best understood with a more literal translation as “everyone who is believing in Him.” This is a statement of who will be saved from eternal punishment in Hell: those who believe in Him. It is not a statement that sinners have the desire and ability to exercise saving faith apart from God’s choosing and regenerating them (Psalm 14:2; Romans 3:11; John 6:44,65; 10:26-29). We will only trust in Christ if we have been chosen. If you trust in Christ alone, you know that you have been chosen (John 6:37).

John 3:16 is a wonderful statement of God’s saving love of and of His gift to “the world.” His gift was “The Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). The Lamb was given to be “lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:14b-15). “The serpent in the wilderness” restored physical life to those Israelites who looked. In John 3:16, the “lifting up” (Crucifixion) of “The Son of man” gives eternal life to believing Israelites and Gentiles (the world). So, “the world” ultimately refers to God’s chosen people (His elect) from all nations. John 3:16 continues the teaching of the need to be “born again,” and the need for the Son to be “lifted up.” The ‘condition’ for the new birth is repeated from John 1:12: belief in Christ. John 3:16 does not tell us how sinners come to believe in

Him, but that sinners must believe in Him for eternal life. The explanation of how sinners come to faith in Christ began in John 1:13 and John 3:5 and is expanded in passages such as John 6:37-44, 65 and John 10:26-29. God has chosen and regenerates those who become believers. Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it very clear that our belief is a gift from God.

Whatever view we have of John 3:16, we should agree that God provided His Son to die for sinners, and that we must trust in His Son alone for eternal life.

I John 4:9-10

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

*We honor our
Mothers ...*



*And also our
war dead.*

Our mission through the broadcast of In Defense of Truth and the publication of The Defender newsletter is to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Our vision today is just as strong as it was back in 1963 when Dr. John Dekker began this outreach. We pray that you will continue to stand with us as we hold true to God's holy Word.

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DEFENDER CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. David R. Lewis, MDiv., Director, IDOT
Robert Luthardt, Sr., Elder, CHBPC
Joseph Burghauser, Elder, CHBPC

WRITE TO US!

Rev. David Lewis &
In Defense of Truth
2927 Cub Hill Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21234

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If you are in or around the Baltimore area, we'd love to have you join us for these upcoming events!

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Sunday Morning Worship & Children's Church	11:00 am
Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study	12:30 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00 pm