

## ANSWERING CALVARY CHAPEL

This is a Scriptural response to the book Calvary Chapel Distinctives by Chuck Smith, the founder of the movement. It is available in PDF form online. When a neighbor who is a member of Calvary Chapel Rio Grande shared this book, he requested a response to it, and that is what prompted the following material. The apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, taught, *“Test all things; hold fast what is good”* (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:21), so it is right to scrutinize all religious material in the light of God’s word.

### PREFACE (P.5-6)

1. “God created a wide variety of churches” (p. 6, ¶1). How many churches did He create?

Jesus did not build churches, but only promised to build His church, singular, not plural (Matthew 16:18). The church is the body (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24) and there is only one body (Ephesians 4:4-6). There are no more legitimate bodies than there are lords, gods, spirits, hopes, or faiths. Salvation is in that one body (Ephesians 5:23). Access to that one body is gained through baptism (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:13).

References to multiple churches refer to the called-out people of God in one or another geographic place (Galatians 1:2; Revelation 1:4), not peoples with differing beliefs. Whatever was commanded to one church was likewise commanded to the next (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4:17; 7:17). They didn’t get to do things their own way. God means for each church to be orderly (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:33). He expects women to maintain silence in every church (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:34). Every church is commanded to take up the collection on

the first day of each week (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:1-3). Letters addressed to one church or specific churches were applicable to all (Colossians 4:16; Acts 15:23; 16:1-5).

### **INTRODUCTION: THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY (P.7-12)**

2. “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God’ – Hebrews 5:4” (p.7, Subtitle). Who is under consideration in this Scripture?

The context refers to the priesthood of Aaron and his sons within the tribe of Levi (Hebrews 5:1-11), and the high priest in particular. The comparison is made, very specifically, to Jesus Christ who is High Priest under the better covenant. No other application is warranted.

The priesthood is changed within the present dispensation (Hebrews 7:11-12) and we have no business trying to revert to the former one.

The New Testament teaches the priesthood of the believer (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6), that every Christian is a priest!

3. “The Bible tells us to make our calling and election sure” (p.7, ¶2). Which call is spoken of in the context (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:10)?

The uncited verse mentioned is one that refers to the calling of salvation, not a call to ministry as a profession. Literally everything about this passage speaks to godliness (3), escaping worldly corruption (4), adding to faith (5-7), fruitfulness in Christ (8), cleansing from sin (9), preventing stumbling (10), and entering the everlasting kingdom (11).

The call of the gospel for salvation (2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:13-14; Galatians 1:6) ought not be confused for a personal call to ministry.

4. “The ministry to the called is not an option—it’s a necessity” (p.7, ¶2). Do ministers need a calling to preach? Which preachers in the New Testament received callings to do so?

Paul was called to be an apostle and disregarding that call would have amounted to disobedience. His call was not to mere preaching, but to apostleship, a different role (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:16; Romans 1:1; Acts 26:12-19).

Jeremiah was a prophet (Jeremiah 20:9; 1:4-5), not just an evangelist (Ephesians 4:11), so his calling is not comparable to positions open now.

Apollos’s desire was sufficient to preach (Acts 18:24-28). He did not need a specific calling.

5. “When I first felt called to the ministry, I went to school to prepare” (p.8, ¶2). Is this the correct course for would-be ministers?

If the Lord didn’t plant the school, He will uproot it (Matthew 15:13) – and the Lord never planted any schools. Formal education was never needed (Acts 4:13). Preachers just need to help others to preach (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:2). This type of mentorship need not be formal. The church is the pillar of truth, so we can function through it without establishing other organizations (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:15).

6. What is your impression of this chapter?

No objections; this is a well-written and Scripturally accurate chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO: CHURCH GOVERNMENT (P.21-30)

7. "The New Testament doesn't give a clear, definitive statement of God's preference for church government" (p.21, ¶1). Is this true?

By inspiration, the apostle Paul said that a church without elders is "*lacking*" (Titus 1:5). Therefore, God gave a clear, definitive statement regarding church governance. The example given is "*Elders in every church*" (Acts 14:23). This is very clear.

8. "The New Testament teaches the establishing of bishops, episkopos, and the appointing of elder, presbyteros. These two forms of government, by their very nature, seem to clash" (p.22, ¶4). Is it accurate that bishoprics and elderships are contrasting systems of church leadership?

"*Elders*" [presbuteros] (Acts 20:17; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:1) have been made "*overseers*" (NKJV, KJV, NASB, ESV) or "*bishops*" (ASV) [episkopos] by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:2) and their duty is to "*shepherd*" [poimano] the church. Thus, elders are the same as overseers/bishops who are the same as shepherds/pastors.

The qualifications of a bishop are the same as the qualifications of an elder because the office is the same (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

9. "The pastor... recognized by the congregation as God's anointed instrument to lead the church. ...Complementing this is the role of the assisting pastors" (p.27, ¶3). Should one pastor lead? What are assisting pastors?

Only Jesus is the "*Chief Shepherd*" (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:4) or "*Great Shepherd*" (Hebrews 13:20). No one else gets subordinate shepherds besides Him.

Each church should have a plurality of qualified men serving as elders/overseers/pastors (Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) with no hierarchy among them.

10. "Everyone should be a deacon" (p.27, ¶6). Does this make sense?

Only those who meet the qualifications should be deacons (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:8-13). True, the word deacon simply means servant and that word can apply to many people in many roles, but since the chapter is about leadership in the church, the reference is clearly being made to the specific office, and that office comes with a number of requirements.

There are differing functions for the various members of the body (Romans 12:4-5).

11. "Those churches that follow the rule of the eldership" are "looking for a hireling" (p.29, ¶3). Should elders rule? Is a preacher under elders a mere "hireling?"

Elders should be ruling (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5:17). This is not optional. Those who rule deserve submission from the flock (Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:12-13), including the preacher.

### CHAPTER THREE: EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT (P.31-36)

12. "Paul asked the Ephesians if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed" (p.31, ¶1). Why did Paul ask that (Acts 19:1-5)?

Paul had only been to Ephesus once and very briefly at that, so when he returned, he was surprised to encounter disciples he had not converted himself (Acts 19:1-5), so he inquired as to how they came to be disciples.

He was the "apostle to the Gentiles" (Romans 11:13; Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:17-18), as the Lord had very specifically commissioned him, so it is reasonable he would be perplexed to meet disciples in Gentile territory that he was not already acquainted with.

He was inquiring if they had an experience similar to what Cornelius's household underwent when they became the first Gentiles to receive the gospel (Acts 10:44-45).

When, after their baptism into Jesus (Acts 19:5), the Holy Spirit eventually came upon them (Acts 19:6), it was through the laying on of the apostle's hands, and it resulted in tongue-speaking. Since there are no living apostles today, there are none who can lay on hands to impart the Holy Spirit.

13. "Here we see an experience of the Holy Spirit that was separate and distinct from conversion" (p.31, ¶2). How did they receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-16)?

The Samaritans received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-16) after they had believed and been baptized (12). How they received the Spirit was through the laying on of the apostles' hands (17-18).

Since the primary qualification of an apostle was that the person had been an eyewitness of the resurrection (Acts 1:22) and Paul was the final such witness (1st Corinthians 15:8), we must conclude there have been no apostles since him. Therefore, there has been no person since the first century who could impart the Holy Spirit as the Samaritans received Him.

Remember that the Samaritans were converted when they beheld the miracles and signs performed by the evangelist Philip (Acts 8:4-13) who was, himself, "full of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:3,5). Nevertheless, it took a visit from Peter and John for the Samaritans to receive the Spirit.

14. "Paul was converted on the road to Damascus" (p.32, ¶1). Is this accurate?

No, Paul was most definitely **not** saved on the road. It was on the road that he was told to enter the city where he would receive further instructions (Acts 22:10). The only thing he was told to do there was to be baptized and call on the name of Christ (16).

When he was on the road, he did ask what to do very pointedly, but was still told to get to Damascus to await the command (Acts 9:6). In Damascus, he was baptized "*immediately*" (18).

15. "I will pray to the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter... even the Spirit of truth... (John 14:16-17)" (p.32, ¶3). Whom was Jesus speaking to when He said this?

Jesus uttered these words when He spoke at length between the Passover (AKA "the Last Supper") and His arrest in the garden (John 13:1-18:1). Given this context, we can know who was present and thus whom He was speaking to. He ate the Passover with the apostles, specifically (Luke 22:14-15; Mark 14:16-17; Matthew 26:20). Therefore, the saying under consideration – "He shall give you... the Spirit" – was directed to no one but the apostles. To infer beyond that is presumptuous.

16. "Calvary Chapel also believes that the moment a person receives the witness of the Holy Spirit, Jesus takes away his sin. When anyone invites Jesus to come into his heart, to take over the rule and control of his life, we believe that the Holy Spirit then comes into that person's life" (p.32, ¶5). According to Scripture, when does Jesus take away sin?

A person must believe for sin to be taken away (Acts 10:43). A person must repent for sin to be taken away (Acts 3:19; 5:31). A person must be repent and be baptized for sin to be taken away (Acts 2:38). A person must confess Jesus and be baptized for sin to be taken away (Acts 22:16).

17. "In Acts 1:8 we see this promise, 'But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you'" (p.33, ¶3). Whom was Jesus speaking to in this context?

Jesus was speaking to the apostles (Acts 1:2). No one else was under consideration regarding this promise of the Holy Spirit. Those whom He so empowered with the Spirit were under obligation to be His "witnesses" (Acts 1:8b). Not everyone is qualified to be Christ's witnesses, but only those who



were specifically “chosen” and who interacted with Him personally following His resurrection (Acts 10:39-41).

18. “Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ (John 20:22). I believe that when Jesus breathed on them and said this, they received the Holy Spirit” (p.34, ¶2). Is this conclusion accurate? When did they receive the Spirit?

By itself, the verse is inconclusive as to whether the Spirit was received on the spot or at another time. Further reading is necessary to reach a valid conclusion. Jesus imparting the Holy Spirit to them was how the apostles received their promised “power” (Acts 1:8). They were required to “tarry in the city of Jerusalem” to receive this power (Luke 24:49). They did, in fact, receive the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-5).

19. Regarding the incident in which Jesus breathed on them, Smith claims, “At that moment the disciples were born again by the Spirit of God” (p.34, ¶2). Is this conclusion valid? How does rebirth occur?

Nothing at all in the context or elsewhere in Scripture substantiates the conclusion that rebirth occurred on this occasion. One is born again through water and the Spirit, not just Spirit (John 3:5). One is born again of the incorruptible seed that is the word of God, the gospel preached (1st Peter 1:23-25).

20. “This experience is usually separate from salvation, but it can be concurrent with salvation, as was the case in the house of Cornelius” (p.36, ¶2). Was the baptism of the Holy Spirit experienced by Cornelius’s household simultaneous with their salvation?

On what basis does Smith assert that Cornelius's household received salvation simultaneously with receiving the Holy Spirit? He does not even mention the passage he alludes to, much less explain his statement from the context. After the Holy Spirit fell upon Peter's audience, he "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" with "water" (Acts 10:44-48). Salvation occurs in water baptism, so it is false to say that Cornelius's household was saved when the Holy Spirit came upon them (1st Peter 3:18-21).

#### **CHAPTER FOUR: BUILDING THE CHURCH GOD'S WAY (P.37-44)**

21. "A distinctive characteristic of Calvary Chapel is a relaxed casual style" (p.37, ¶1). Should church be relaxed and casual?

What are the Scriptures teaching us to behave casually or in a relaxed manner toward God in His church? Holiness cannot be complete without the fear of God (2nd Corinthians 7:1). The kind of fear under consideration is very clear - it causes us to tremble (Philippians 2:12)! Without fear, we will not attain the promised rest (Hebrews 4:1). Such fear as God deserves is coupled with reverence, meaning awe or even shame (Hebrews 12:28).

22. "The pastor doesn't try to motivate people carnally" (p.37, ¶1). Is this a worthy objective? Is this claim accurate concerning Calvary Chapel?

This is a good and holy objective Jesus was perturbed by those who sought Him simply because they got food one time and He rebuked them (John 6:22-27). Christ used physical force to expel from the temple those who bought and sold there, and wouldn't even let people carry stuff through the place

(Mark 11:15-17). The earliest disciples distinguished between where they worshiped and where they shared meals (Acts 2:46). The church is absolutely not the place for people to come together for meals (1st Corinthians 11:22, 34).

Sadly, Calvary Chapel's own website proves that church is engaged in many, many activities that are motivated by the flesh, not the Spirit:

- 1) Valentine's Dinner
- 2) Canon Christian Academy
- 3) C.C.A. Book Fair
- 4) The Citadel
- 5) Blood Drive
- 6) Bookstore
- 7) Grounded Coffee Shop

23. Concerning how the "pastor" preaches, Smith says, "Nor is [he] apt to shout at the congregation" (p.37, ¶1). Should preachers incorporate shouting into their presentation?

From time to time, it is necessary to "*Cry aloud*" the word of the Lord. It's okay if this isn't the ordinary, but there is room for it (Isaiah 58:1). Some preaching needs to involve foot-stomping and fist-pounding (Ezekiel 6:11). The attention of God's people needs to be aroused on occasion.

24. "If I have complete confidence that it's His church—He's going to build it—then all I have to do is be faithful" (p.37, ¶1). Do Christians have any responsibility in the building of the church?

Yes, Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). Still, members of the church are responsible to keep building (1st Corinthians 3:9-15). The body, that is the church, is called to edify itself (Ephesians 4:11-16), and edification literally means building up.

25. “The Lord would speak to my heart” (p.40, ¶1). How can it be verified whether God spoke to Chuck Smith?

If God was speaking directly to him, then Chuck Smith was claiming the gift of prophecy (2nd Peter 1:21). Because of the abundance of false prophets, we are obligated to test the spirits (1st John 4:1). One test is to compare what the so-called prophet says against what God has already said (Deuteronomy 13:1-4).

The end of prophecy was foretold (1st Corinthians 13:8-13). Spiritual gifts had a specific purpose that has been fulfilled (Hebrews 2:1-4). The transference of spiritual gifts required direct physical contact with an apostle (Acts 8:18). The primary qualification of an apostle was to be a witness of the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:22). Paul was the last witness of the resurrected Lord (1st Corinthians 15:8).

If a man presently claims to have two-way conversations with God, he is indistinguishable from a schizophrenic.

#### **CHAPTER FIVE: GRACE UPON GRACE (P.45-54)**

26. “But Jesus was interested in ministering to the woman, helping her, putting her life back together, not condemning her” (p.51, ¶2). Was Jesus’ treatment of the adulteress an extraordinary act of grace?

Jesus was not overriding the Law with grace by not condemning her. Her punishment would have been altogether illegal in the absence of the man (Deuteronomy 22:22). His invitation for those without sin to cast the first stone was just what the Law required (Deuteronomy 17:7). Had these men truly wanted her dead, they would have brought her to Pilate who had the authority in such matters (John 18:31). That they did not implies ulterior motives.

27. "There is a place for the Law" (p.51, ¶4). What is the correct use of the Law under the present covenant?

No one now living is subject to the Law of Moses in any way (Romans 10:4; Hebrews 10:9; 8:13). The relevance of the former covenant is that we can learn about God from it, but not that we are beholden to it for obedience whatsoever (Romans 15:4; 1st Corinthians 10:11).

28. "It's easy to fall into legalism. Beware of this temptation and taking the hard stand" (p.53, ¶1). The word "legalism" does not appear in Scripture; what is meant by this term?

If legalism refers to binding manmade rules on others, then, yes, legalism is very wrong (Matthew 15:1-9; Colossians 2:18-23; Titus 1:13-14). If legalism means teaching strict obedience to the word of God, then legalism must be very good (Romans 2:5-8; Titus 2:11-15; 2nd Timothy 3:1-9; 2nd Thessalonians 3:14). What is the preferred alternative? To be an illegalist?

29. "I have found that it's important not to be divisive so that people don't become polarized on issues, because the moment they are polarized, division results" (p.53, ¶2). Should Christians be this averse to conflict?

Division is inevitable when we serve Jesus (Matthew 10:34)! Division is unpleasant, but it allows the faithful and unfaithful to be distinguished from one another (1st Corinthians 11:19). Genuine unity is all speaking and thinking alike (1st Corinthians 1:10). There is no real unity achieved by ignoring differing beliefs.

30. “Do you really want to lose fifty percent of your congregation?” (p.54, ¶2). How high a priority should numerical retention be to the church?

Jeroboam didn't want to lose people either, so he created a new religion in which the people sacrificed to golden calves (1st Kings 12:26-32). Not wanting to lose people is an evil justification for compromise. When people stopped following Jesus, He didn't regret what He said and He didn't alter His methods (John 6:66-67). He actually invited others to leave if they were so inclined. The truth is not found with the majority (Luke 13:22-27).

31. “You know the beautiful thing about being called Calvary Chapel? People don't really know where you stand” (p.54, ¶3). Is ambiguity a desirable trait for the church?

It is confusing that one of the “distinctives” of Calvary Chapel is ambiguity! Paul commended the churches for their reputations of faith (1st Thessalonians 1:8; Colossians 1:4). There was no doubt who they were or what they believed. It is axiomatic that if we are to stand, then others should see and know where we stand and what we stand for (1st Corinthians 16:13). By the way, cowering is not a stand.

## **CHAPTER SIX: THE PRIORITY OF THE WORD (P.55-59)**

32. “How is it possible for a person to claim to have declared ‘the whole counsel of God’? The only way a person could make that claim would be if he taught through the whole Word of God with them, from Genesis to Revelation” (p.55, ¶2). What was Paul referring to when he spoke of “*the whole counsel of God?*”

In context, the apostle was claiming himself innocent of the blood of all men on the basis of having declared God’s whole counsel (Acts 20:26-27). His innocence is relevant inasmuch as he had been a violent persecutor, but in embracing and proclaiming the gospel, He had repented and obeyed the Lord. He was not referring to every book in Scripture as “the whole counsel,” but to what was relevant for saving sinners.

A few verses earlier, he said basically the same thing in different words: “I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you” = “I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel.” He presented the information they needed to hear. That helpful proclamation amounted to testifying about repentance and faith (Acts 20:20-21).

All the counsel of God most likely indicates the pleasant parts, as well as the difficult parts – whatever the hearers are needing in relevance to their situations (Jeremiah 1:10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:2).

33. “The teaching ministry of Calvary Chapel is expositional in style. It doesn’t mean that on occasion a pastor won’t address a particular topic or give topical messages” (p.56, ¶3). Is textual preaching better than topical preaching?

Expository preaching and teaching is very good, but to make a point of expository lessons outweighing topical ones seems backward from the example of the New Testament.

To establish the point that Jesus is better than angels (Hebrews 1:5-14), the inspired writer cited seven different passages in the course of just ten verses. These references were not expounded upon further, nor was the rest of the chapter read through; they were just presented briefly in support of the topic being taught.

- Verse 5 quotes both Psalm 2:7 and 2nd Samuel 7:14.
- Verse 6 quotes Psalm 97:7.
- Verse 7 quotes Psalm 104:4.
- Verses 8-9 quote Psalm 45:6-7.
- Verses 10-12 quote Psalm 102:25-27.
- Verse 13 quotes Psalm 110:1.

When Paul preached Jesus in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:16-41), he quoted six different passages in a twenty-five verse span.

- Verse 22 quotes both Psalm 89:20 and 1st Samuel 13:14.
- Verse 33 quotes Psalm 2:7.
- Verse 34 quotes Isaiah 55:3.
- Verse 35 quotes Psalm 16:10.
- Verse 41 quotes Habakkuk 1:5.

Paul wrote to the Roman brethren about the universality of sin in a nine-verse reference (Romans 3:9-18), prefaced with "It is written," containing six different quotations from the Old Testament.

- Verses 10-12 quotes Psalm 14:1-3/53:1-3.
- Verse 13 quotes Psalm 5:9 and Psalm 140:3.



- Verse 14 quotes Psalm 10:7.
- Verse 15-17 quotes Isaiah 59:7-8.
- Verse 18 quotes Psalm 36:1.

To emphasize the inclusion of Gentiles in the gospel plan (Romans 15:9-12), Paul again prefaced the reference with “It is written,” and then rattled off at least four different passages from the former covenant.

- Verse 9 quotes 2nd Samuel 22:50/Psalm 18:49.
- Verse 10 quotes Deuteronomy 32:43.
- Verse 11 quotes Psalm 117:1.
- Verse 12 quotes Isaiah 11:10.

The lengthiest portion of Scripture quoted in Scripture (Hebrews 8:8-12) is Jeremiah 31:31-34, which is only four verses. The New Testament writer made a single point from a three-word reference: “In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete.” He did not explain every word in the original language or draw out an application from every sentence; he just made the point that one covenant replaced another, as had been foretold. He took four verses to do so, and not one citation of the former testament within the present one ever exceeds that length.

Topical lessons were the norm in Scripture, not the outlier. Every sermon recorded in the book of Acts is topical ((Acts 2:14-39; 7:2-53; 10:34-43; 13:16-41; 14:14-18; 17:22-31; 20:17-38; 22:1-21; 26:2-27)), not expositional.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: THE CENTRALITY OF JESUS CHRIST (P.61-68)**

34. “We dissuade any practice or behavior that would distract people” (p.61, ¶1). Cite Scriptures upholding this position.

Church assemblies ought to be calm and orderly (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:33, 40). Whether seekers will understand or be confused is a very real concern (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:16, 23).

35. “The church had also developed factories to manufacture various types of souvenirs” (p.64, ¶1). Is this a legitimate function of the church?

What pattern is being followed when a church operates factories to manufacture souvenirs (Philippians 3:17; 2nd Timothy 1:13)? How is this an authorized church function?

Jesus know the works of the church (Revelation 3:7-13), which ought to frighten any church that exceeds His authority and takes on tasks beyond what He assigned.

36. “The gift of tongues is valid in the New Testament, and that there is a proper place for tongues” (p.65, ¶6). Is the gift of tongues ongoing or has it ceased?

Tongue speaking, like other spiritual gifts, was only “part” and would disappear when replaced by the “perfect” – meaning complete, whole, finished (1st Corinthians 13:8-10). Scripture is able to complete a man, thus the perfect has displaced the partial and the partial is done away with (2nd Timothy 3:16-17). Tongue speaking, like other spiritual gifts, served the purpose of confirmation by the Lord that the one exercising the gift was speaking His word (Mark 16:17-20). Reading about miracles in the inspired word should be sufficient to produce saving faith (John 20:30-31).

37. "We want to keep Jesus Christ as the central focus" (p.68, ¶2). Defend this from Scripture.

Jesus is worthy of preeminence (Colossians 1:18). There is something very wrong when men seek to be preeminent (3<sup>rd</sup> John 9).

#### **CHAPTER EIGHT: THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH (P.69-93)**

38. "The second coming of Jesus will be to establish God's kingdom upon the earth" (p.73, ¶2). Will Christ actually reign here on earth? What is the nature of His kingdom?

The Lord Jesus plainly said His kingdom is not of this earth (John 18:36)! That statement alone is sufficient to overthrow any doctrine about a kingdom of God established upon the earth, period.

Prophecy asserted that no descendant of Coniah (Jeconiah) would ever sit a throne in Jerusalem (Jeremiah 22:28-30), but Jeconiah is an ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1:11-12). Thus, it would violate inspired prophecy if Christ is ever enthroned in Judah.

Daniel prophesied that the eternal kingdom would come in the days of the Roman kings (Daniel 2:44). Jesus foretold the establishment of His kingdom in the lifetime of His contemporaries (Mark 9:1). Paul wrote that He and fellow Christians were already in the kingdom during the middle of the first century (Colossians 1:13).

Saints alive when Jesus comes will ascend to meet Him in the air (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13-17), without mention of Him actually stepping foot on

earth. From that time, we will always be with Him – thus, He will not take us to heaven, and later leave us there, descending to rule an earthly kingdom.

39. “There are some prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled before Jesus comes again. The antichrist must be revealed, and the earth must go through a time of great tribulation and judgment” (p.74, ¶1). When will the antichrist be revealed? Who is the antichrist? Does Scripture foretell an earthly tribulation before Christ’s coming?

There were already many antichrists in the world when John penned his epistles (1<sup>st</sup> John 2:18; 4:3; 2<sup>nd</sup> John 7). The appearance of the antichrist cannot be a future event.

Anyone who denies Christ is antichrist (1<sup>st</sup> John 2:22). It’s not one single person.

The coming of the Lord will be without warning (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:1-2).

40. “Look at the book of Revelation” (p.77, ¶5). What is the subject of the Revelation?

From the first chapter to the last, the Revelation is explicit that its fulfillment was near at hand when it was initially revealed during the first century (Revelation 1:1, 3; 22:6-7, 12, 20). Those words are meaningless if it has not yet been accomplished.

The fact John was commanded not to seal the book (Revelation 22:10), but Daniel was told to do exactly that (Daniel 8:26; 12:4), means an early fulfillment.

The Revelation is specifically about Jerusalem (Revelation 11:1-2, 8).

The reason for the doom that was foretold was, specifically, to avenge the martyrs (Revelation 6:9-11; 16:4-7; 18:21-24). That vengeance would be carried out on the generation then living (Matthew 23:29-36).

#### **CHAPTER NINE: HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT (P.95-106)**

41. What is your impression of this chapter?

Although it is very much in dispute whether Calvary Chapel itself actually began in the Spirit, the general theme of this chapter is commendable. Human prestige is not what edifies the body of Christ.

#### **CHAPTER TEN: THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE (P.107-112)**

42. What is your impression of this chapter?

This chapter is mostly correct. Love ought to motivate all action.

#### **CHAPTER ELEVEN: STRIKING THE BALANCE (P.113-120)**

43. "An important characteristic of Calvary Chapel fellowships is the desire not to divide God's people over non-essential issues" (p.113, ¶1). How is an issue determined to be essential or not?

What Scripture treats as a non-essential is a situation in which a brother or sister is more strict with themselves than God's word requires, for instance

abstaining from meat or observing certain holy days (Romans 14:1-15:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:23-33).

Another non-essential would be when advice was dispensed that was clearly identified as such in contrast to an actual command of the Lord (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:26-40). Again, in such a scenario, the conclusion was to be more strict than God demanded by foregoing certain rights.

Commands from God must be kept (1<sup>st</sup> John 2:3-6). To disregard His word as arbitrarily "non-essential" is sinfully disobedient.

44. "...Our approach to the debatable issue concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit... The minute we start taking hard-line positions on any of the non-foundational controversial issues, we alienate part of the people" (p.113, ¶2).  
Is the exercise of spiritual gifts a foundational issue?

It is astonishing that anyone who reads Scripture could call the exercise of spiritual gifts "non-foundational" when the "laying on of hands" is specified as one of seven subjects in "the foundation" (Hebrews 6:1-2)! It is "elementary!"

"Through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given" (Acts 8:18). The Holy Spirit cannot be given now that all the apostles have died.

God bore witness to the spoken word by spiritual gifts and accomplished what He intended (Hebrews 2:1-4). The Word has been confirmed, so spiritual gifts are no longer needed.

45. “Another example of maintaining a balance on debatable issues is our approach to Calvinism... We don’t believe that you can lose your salvation because you lost your temper or told a lie and, as a result, need to go forward next Sunday night to repent and get re-saved” (p.115, ¶2). Does a single sin cause a Christian to lose salvation?

Simon believed and was baptized (Acts 8:13), but then committed one sin and was told his heart was not right and he was bound by iniquity (18-23). He was told to repent!

A brother overtaken in “any trespass” needs to be restored (Galatians 6:1)!

#### **CHAPTER TWELVE: VENTURES OF FAITH (P.121-135)**

46. “The key is to discover what God wants to do. I’ve found the best way is by just stepping out. Try it and see. Maybe God will work. Maybe God wants to work. Let’s give Him a chance” (p.131, ¶6). Is “try it and see” the correct approach to understanding the Lord’s will?

Understanding the will of the Lord is not much more complicated than reading what the apostles and prophets wrote (Ephesians 5:17; 3:4).

Just because results follow does not mean the action was correct (Numbers 20:7-12).