

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XIV

March 6, 2005

No. 10

40—Days of Purpose

Jerry Fite

Many churches across the country are currently engaged in a spiritual program called the *40 Days Of Purpose*. The program is based upon the best selling book: **The Purpose Driven Life** by Rick Warren. Mr. Warren is the founder of the Saddleback Church in California and is the leader in the popular “Community Church” movement today.

Rick Warren based his 40 days on what he sees as a time for “transformation” found in the Bible. He says, “Jesus was empowered by 40 days in the wilderness.” “The disciples were transformed by 40 days with Jesus after his resurrection.” Without detailed explanation he asserts that 40 days were also involved in transforming Noah, Moses, the spies, David, Elijah, and the city of Nineveh. So, he encourages his readers to read one of his 40 chapters a day and allow God to change the way one thinks.

What are many of your religious neighbors concentrating on in this 40 days which began for many in February and will end the first of April? They are learning some helpful lessons, such as lov-

ing and serving God in local churches. They are being reminded that in the end, it matters more as to what God thinks of your life, than what men say at your funeral. There is a great emphasis upon fulfilling God’s purpose in your life, not what you might want for your life. These are important truths for anyone striving to transform his or her life in accordance with God and His Word. But one must beware of matters that should concern all believers who have a love for God’s truth.

While there are nearly a thousand quotations from Scripture in Warren’s book, many are from one– person “paraphrases”, in addition to “translations”. Many of the Bible quotes come from *The Message*, a paraphrase by Eugene Peterson and the *Living Bible* a paraphrase by Kenneth Taylor. These paraphrases are offered as the Word of God, but they add to, take away and distort what God has verbally revealed. For example, what confidence can one have in having the word of God before him or her when Jesus’ model prayer addresses God as “*Hallowed by thy name*” in faithful translations, but Mr. Peterson’s

Message says, “*Reveal who you are.*” Mr. Warren states his use of these paraphrases is to help people see God’s truth in “fresh ways”. Is it God’s truth when a man adds to God’s word, and does not even translate what God has revealed?

On day seven, you find Mr. Warren promoting the old faith only error for entrance into the family of God. If you will simply quietly pray this prayer: “*Jesus, I believe in you and I receive you.*” you are congratulated for entering into the family of God (p.58-59). Baptism is stressed to be done immediately, only because it *shows* that you are already part of God’s family (p. 120). One wonders why Mr. Warren, in claiming to offer God’s purpose for our lives, does not once use the Scriptures that reveal God’s purpose for baptism. Your religious friends are never encouraged to read Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16 or I Peter 3:21. After 40 days these students will be accepting one man paraphrases as the word of God, and remain ignorant of God’s revealed purpose for baptism. This is a sad transformation away from God.