

GLAD TIDINGS

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

Vol. XVII

March 23, 2008

No.12

Max Lucado and John 3:16

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I am sure you have seen the person in the stands beaming with rainbow colored hair holding up a sign which reads: “John 3:16”. Max Lucado has decided to write a book entitled “The 3:16 Promise” being simply referred to in the media as “3:16.” What a wonderful opportunity for the popular author to reach all religious groups and as a professing Christian, according to the New Testament, uphold the truth of this text which does not contradict other inspired revealed truth.

Sadly to say, Max Lucado has decided to capitalize upon the interest of this important passage by presenting the error of the Evangelicals based upon Calvinism instead of the oracles of God.

Mr. Lucado speaks of one being born again which Jesus and Nicodemus were discussing in John 3. Lucado exhorts his readers to “Don’t miss the invisible, inward miracle triggered by belief.” He emphasizes “being born again” as a mysterious miracle without informing his readers of Peter’s inspired testimony of “how” we are born again: “Seeing you have purified your souls in your obedience to the

truth...having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God...” (I Peter 1:22-23).

Why does not Mr. Lucado explain this most important element that triggers the new birth with the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27)? It is probably because he no longer believes the truth revealed by God. Yes, “faith” triggers the process, but not faith only, as Evangelicals believe and teach. “Obedience to the truth” of the gospel as seen in one submitting to baptism for the remission of sins is essential before one is born again. Paul speaks of “*the washing of regeneration*” which refers to the “washing away of sins” in baptism which allows one to enjoy the “new birth” or “*regeneration*”, totally cleansed from all sin (Titus 3:5 Eph. 5:26, Acts 22:16).

In his book on John 3:16, Max Lucado explains how one enters into a saving relationship with Christ. He writes, “Say yes to him. Your prayer needs no eloquence, just honesty.” He misses another opportunity to speak as the oracles of God for he could have offered his reading audience what Peter said to the guilty of

heart when the avenue unto salvation was first preached in the name of the Son. “Repent and be baptized... for the remission of your sins..” is what the inspired apostle commanded all to open the way to salvation (Acts 2:38). This is how one says “yes” to God who gave His only begotten son so man should not perish. Paul did not remind Christians that they “prayed” with honesty, or said “yes” in faith, but “*For ye are sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ*” (Galatians 3:26-27).

Mr. Lucado has professed the Evangelical view for a long time. In a radio sermon aired in Lubbock, Texas, in December of 1996, he suggests his audience respond in prayer where they say, “*I accept the gift of your Son on the cross for my sins. And I ask you, Father, to receive me as your Child. Through Jesus Christ I pray.*” After this he encourages the listeners “*to find a church... be baptized... read your Bible. But I don’t want you to do any of that so you will be saved. I want you to do all of that because you are saved.*” Read Mk. 16:15-16 and weep!