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the **HeavenlySanctuary.com** network

HeavenlySanctuary.com: Everything about the character of God: discussion forums, featured stories, on-demand streaming video, podcasts and MP3 audio sermons, live video conferencing, online and downloadable Bible study guides, PowerPoint slides, sermon manuscripts and more!

GoodNewsTour.com: Information about the Good News Tour, speaker information, event locations, schedules and dates.

Other Sites We Love!

(these ministries and/or websites are not associated with HeavenlySanctuary.com)

GodsCharacter.com, Live2KnowHim.org, MyFatherInHeavenIsPerfect.com, GregBoyd.org, ComeAndReason.com, RenewedHeartMinistries.com, Pineknoll.org, LBM.org, Theox.org, GreatNewsAboutGod.org

Events & Schedules

Every Saturday, 11-12 PM — Vancouver, BC, Canada (Manuel Silva): Oakridge Adventist Church

Contact: Gaileen Woytko @ 1.604.266.6727 / gaileen@oakridgeadventist.ca

Other Beautiful Messages

(these ministries and events are not associated with HeavenlySanctuary.com)

Every Thursday, 12-1 PM — LLU Medical Student Bible Study (Dr. Brad Cole): See GodsCharacter.com

Every Monday, 12-1 PM — LLU Allied and Public Health Bible Study (Dr. Brad Cole): See GodsCharacter.com

May 11, 2010 — St. Paul, MN (Greg Boyd): Reconciling the Violence of the O.T. with a Loving God

Details: www.whchurch.org/content/page_961.htm

May 27 & 28, 2010 — West Frankfort, IL (Ty Gibson): 3ABN Pillars of Our Faith Campmeeting

Contact: 1.618.627.4651

June 1—5, 2010 — Centralia, MO (Herb Montgomery): Iowa / Missouri Campmeeting

Contact: 1.515.223.1197

The Good News

A NEWSLETTER ENTIRELY ABOUT GOD : ISSUE THIRTY-TWO : MAY, TWO-THOUSAND AND TEN



by Marco Belmonte

What if I told you that our gracious Father in heaven has used a teaching tactic that rarely is ever discussed or used. What is it you ask? It's called *giving in*. Huh? "Did he just say giving in?" you ask. Yes!

Let me share a passage of scripture with you that I believe sheds incredible light on the character of our God, a passage that reveals that He is not a harsh control freak or power hungry tyrant (like Satan suggested in the Garden of Eden) but, rather, a God who is inestimable in power but refuses to exert it as a way of enforcing worship. In fact, I would venture to say that God has given mankind enough evidence down through earth's history that proves without a shadow of a doubt, that forced obedience or worship that originates from coercion is contrary to His very essence. Read the following passage in the light of what I've just suggested:

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to

Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them." (1st Samuel 8:4-9, NKJV)

Can you name one god out of the plethora of deities that has been revered throughout time that would react this way when

a newsletter **entirely** about God

[CONTINUED FROM FRONT] told they were no longer wanted? Of course, even trying to conceptualize an earthly ruler or leader reacting this way leaves the mind blank. What would happen if the American people decided they no longer wanted the current president in power? Do you think President Obama would just step aside? We don't even need to ask the question in regards to Iran's current leader, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, for we've all seen his government crackdowns on TV and the Internet.

And yet, here we have The One who created a universe that just keeps going and going and going – the God who was there before there was a before –and this God turns to His friend Samuel and states “They have rejected Me as their king so give them what they want!” While most of Western Judeo-Christian Society and Eastern Islamic Fundamentalism subconsciously propagate the idea that we must do something to placate or appease the God of heaven, we find the God of 1st Samuel Chapter 8 standing starkly in contrast by giving in, to the very people that have chosen to reject Him.

We often hear the words “Let go and let God” but we find the God of 1st Samuel Chapter 8 revealing to the whole universe that He will let us go and will let us play god.

Why is this so relevant? Let me use wording that expresses the Bible's thoughts on this most effectively. God unquestionably abhors and repudiates the nauseating and repugnant stench that rises from the ideological odor that suggests worshiping Him is not an option. Our God has desperately set out to win His children back with the principles of liberty and love; if He can't win our hearts with freedom then what else is there, and what would that look like? I shudder at the thought.

What I really love about this provocative passage is how God asks Samuel to tell the people what the results of their actions will look like. Read the rest of 1st Samuel 8:10-18 and you will find Samuel exclaiming to Israel the repercussions of rejecting a God who won't force Himself on you. He warns them that an earthly king will do nothing except bring further hardship on them. It was at that moment in Israel's history – the day they chose a human king who wanted to be served rather than serve – that everything began to crumble. King after king and ruler after ruler finds Israel slavishly descending deeper and deeper into the pits of destruction until the grand finale when the real King of Kings shows up, two thousand years later, only to be murdered by the very people He wanted to save.

God, like a good mother or father, knows how to teach His children the logic of cause and effect. God has been trying to explain how His universe operates, by shedding light on His natural laws. He wants us to understand that the reason He has the sovereign right to be the only deity that is worshipped is because He is the only God who will let His own subjects reject Him! Jesus revealed a God who would love His enemies—a God who would allow His own creatures to murder Him—a God who in the face of so many misconceptions—demonstrates to the world what real power looks like.

Let us worship God, not because we have to worship Him, but rather, because we don't have to worship Him! Realizing that God does not demand my love and respect has caused me to love and respect Him all the more. Understanding that my Father in heaven refuses to accept robotic compliance has instilled within me a passion to freely follow Him, whatever the circumstances. I believe that is how it works for all of us. God becomes everything to us because we know without a doubt that He is willing to become nothing. [END]

NOTE: [Want to discuss this article? Send an email to marco@heavenlysanctuary.com.](mailto:marco@heavenlysanctuary.com)



The Good News Tour

Vancouver DVD Set - Featuring Greg Boyd

Greg Boyd is a former atheist who surrendered his life to Christ in 1974. After his conversion, he discovered that the faith he embraced failed to address many questions and objections to Christianity. Greg's search for a well-grounded and intellectually defensible faith led him to study philosophy at the University of Minnesota (B.A.), followed by studies in philosophical theology at Yale Divinity School (M.Div) and Princeton Theological Seminary (Ph.D). He then became a professor of theology for 16 years at Bethel University and is currently the senior pastor of Woodland Hills Church in St. Paul, Minnesota.

While often known for his dynamic and persuasive speaking style, Greg is also an internationally recognized theologian, an apologist and an author. Some of his beliefs have been highly controversial in traditional evangelical circles, but have had a transforming impact on many lives.

He has authored or co-authored 18 books, as well as written many articles for academic books and journals. His books include the best selling and award winning Letters From a Sceptic and The Myth of a

Christian Nation. Greg has also been featured on the front page of The New York Times, The Charlie Rose Show, CNN, National Public Radio, the BBC and other media venues.

His ministry is a unique blend of passion, boldness, and creative intellectual insight. Greg's apologetic writings and public debates on the historical Jesus and the problem of evil have helped many skeptics embrace faith in Christ. His writings and seminars on spiritual transformation have had a revolutionary, freeing impact on thousands of believers. And his unique theological perspectives on an assortment of topics, while highly controversial in some circles, have been accepted and celebrated in others.

Through his unique blend of passion, boldness, and intellectual insight, Greg's vision is to provoke thinking in both Christians and non-believers that will hopefully inspire a deeper faith in the understanding that God is exactly like Jesus.

Other presentations by: [Marco Belmonte](#), [Brad Cole](#) & [Herb Montgomery](#).

MINISTRY NEWS

Good News Tour DVD – Vancouver



As you can see from the giant spread in the middle of the page, the Good News Tour—Vancouver DVD set has been finalized and has gone to the mastering process. It will be available shortly—probably by the time you read this! You can watch the entire

thing via our website for free—and if you aren't able to afford to purchase the DVD—please just tell us and we'll happily send you one for free (or more)!

We really need financial help.

Many of you will remember our newsletter from September of last year. For the first time since our ministry was formed back in 2002 we petitioned for funding. We promised you all that we took the concept of “no guilt and all content” seriously and that we'd only make our needs known when they actually became a need. Because of your help we were able to run from September of last year to now without any further requests! Thank you so much! With the release of the DVD and all the costs associated with publishing it and distributing it, along with our growing postage and shipping costs (every month we send DVDs, books, newsletters and other requested material for free to those in third world countries that can't afford it otherwise—and also right here in North America—no one has ever nor will they ever contact us and be denied what has been freely given to us!) we are able to run for only one more month. Our network related bills have grown and of course we also have one full time employee. By the time you read this, we will have spent additional money just to publish this newsletter along with the final box art for the DVD. Remember, we are a 501(c)3 organization—anything you give can be used as a tax deductible donation and we are required by law to be an open book (not that we wouldn't be despite the law). If you ever want to know anything about our organization—please feel free to contact us and we'll cheerfully pass on any information you'd like to know.

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