

The New Covenant: A Review

Neil Girrard

Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are from Bob Emery, *The New Covenant*, BenchPress Publishing, 2012

It has been rightly said that every generation is obligated to rewrite history according to its own context. Such an approach is however dangerous because the true historical context is too often replaced with historical revision as the modern context invariably, even subliminally, “flavors,” distorts and changes the historical reality. Converting historical events into a modernly-palatable, dramatic retelling further incorporates the danger of historical supposition: the plausible is placed alongside (and therefore on the same level as) the true. Only someone possessing an equal scholarly or spiritual understanding of the Scriptures will be able to know which is which and it is the novice or recent convert most likely to be ensnared. Emery’s book functions most as only a vehicle, a literary device, to place his own peculiar, private interpretations before a wider audience apparently in the hopes of gaining followers after his own organization and “ministry.”

The New Covenant is divided into three books: the first about Christ and His crucifixion, the second a survey of the New Testament, and the third a commentary of the book of The Revelation. Each is purportedly told by the apostle John (in the first person “I”). Disappointingly, even sadly, the words and ideas are *not* those of John or any of the original apostles – they are the words and ideas of Bob Emery whose experience and background in churchianity and “the Jesus movement” is transposed upon the original apostles. Where those words and ideas converge in truth, there is no problem with the book. In fact, the first book represents a fairly respectable work of scholarship, writing and understanding (even if Emery’s literary device does make some bald appearances at times). The second book becomes more contaminated with Emery’s own private interpretations and the third book is virtually nothing but Emery’s peculiar understandings.

Perhaps Emery’s departures from the truth stem from a very basic failure – the failure to recognize that Satan is a deceiver who deceives best by taking *the truth* and spins it into lies and deceptions that ultimately separate the disciple from the Lord of truth. Though, for example, Emery recognizes that “it takes Jesus to reveal Jesus” (p. 87), he believes that to “properly” understand The Revelation “any valid interpretation [must] take into account how Christians living in the first century, *to whom it was written*, would have understood it” (p. 276 – emphasis in original) and “It helps to be Jewish.” (p. 291) Unfortunately, John, Peter, Paul, Titus and the first century believers are *all* dead and they are in no way able to speak for themselves. Emery has, nonetheless, shamelessly enlisted them *all* – who “coincidentally” speak and think like 21st century “theologians” (though Emery does have John hide behind “the simple fisherman” disguise when it suits his purposes – p. 293) – and they all, equally “coincidentally,” speak in defense of Emery’s peculiar private interpretations! If Emery had written this book in the second or third centuries, it would be rightly dismissed by scholars today as fraudulently pseudonymous (written by someone assigning his views to a well-known author or apostle more likely to be believed or received).

It is well beyond the reach of this short review to refute the many places where Emery puts forth his own private interpretation as if it were the rightly divided, whole counsel of truth but perhaps the clearest example is where he has John say, “The idea that my revelation speaks of a far future date is a strange one and without support.” (p. 293) Are we really to believe that

Jesus came as the sole mediator between God and all men of all times and all places (1 Tim. 2:5) and He is to be the eternal King over a realm that will never end (Dan. 7:27, etc.) and that in Him “in the dispensation (or suitable administration) of the fullness of the times He [will] gather together in one all things, both heavenly and earthly” (Eph. 1:10) – are we to really believe that this once-for-all Savior prophesied *only* of the demise of Jerusalem, Judaism and the Old Covenant? A truly eternal perspective envisions a much larger picture than does Emery’s “John” or “Jesus.”

Perhaps above all, Emery should heed the warnings in The Revelation of the danger of adding to or taking away from the words of that prophecy – something which the third book does both of quite liberally. (see Rev. 22:18-19) Though “it takes Jesus to reveal Jesus,” it would seem that the Spirit of truth, whose work it is to lead us into *all* truth (Jn. 16:13), has been left out of Emery’s *New Covenant*, particularly from the third book which relies heavily on Josephus (a worldly and Jewish and not always accurate “historian” who was never once even considered for being part of the canon of the New Testament) to confirm Emery’s views! *The New Covenant*, in spite of its many quotations from the Bible, is such a departure from the truth that even God would call the whole of the work trash.

God, in circumstances that may or may not coincide with Emery’s suppositions, has already written a work entitled “The New Covenant” and His work is in no way so inadequate or incomplete that He has called upon Emery to fill in the supposed missing gaps. The seeker who hungers after God and truth would be well advised to seek after the original version and simply avoid Emery’s flawed remake.

Let he who has ears hear.

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