

PERSPECTIVE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH

IS THE BIBLE RELIABLE?





Welcome to Mount Vernon!

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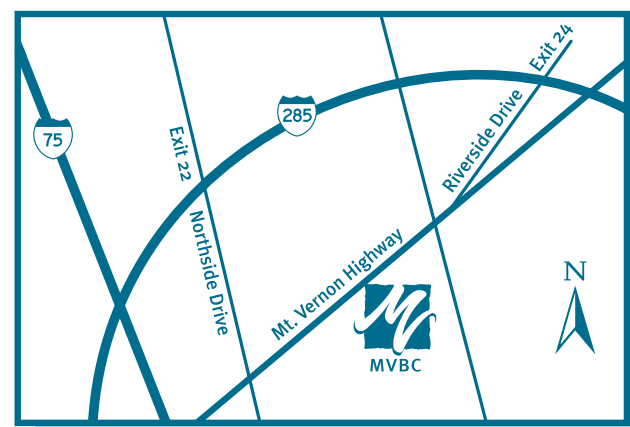
SERMON SCHEDULE

January 4 *Who are God's People? Needy*
Exodus 1:1-7:7

January 11 *Who are God's People? Favored*
Exodus 7:8-12:32

January 18 *Pro-Life in a Culture That Isn't*
Sanctity of Life Sunday
Guest Preacher, Rev. Jim Wood

January 25 ... *Who are God's People? Delivered*
Exodus 12:33-15:21



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A Conversation with...

David Dorsett
Chairman of the Deacons

Interviewed by Brad Thayer



Brad Thayer: Where are you originally from?

David Dorsett: Born and raised in Tifton, GA.

BT: So how did you come to Atlanta?

DD: After graduating from the University of Georgia in August 1986 (BBA in Finance), I moved to Atlanta and started working at the National Bank of Georgia (NBG) on the Management Associate Training Program.

BT: But I've not seen a NBG since I've been here. I'm assuming they aren't in business. So where do you work now?

DD: After 22 years of working at one bank (through many mergers – most recent being Wachovia), I joined Bank of North Georgia in June 2008 as SVP/Team Leader - Corporate Banking.

BT: Besides banking and going to all the UGA games, what is one thing you enjoy doing we may not know about?

DD: Is there anything else better than the Fall and football season in Athens? I enjoy working out (attempting to get to the gym 4-5 days a week) and playing softball and golf mostly. Also, put me on a beach any day and I will be a happy camper!

BT: Tell us your testimony. How did you become a Christian?

DD: I was very fortunate to grow up in a Christian home with very faithful and God-fearing parents. My mom worked as the Senior Pastor's Secretary at FBC Tifton till I was 6 and then she became a full-time stay-at-home mom for my sister and me. I remember being at church whenever the doors were open, as they say, including RA's, choir, camps, etc. In addition, I had wonderful Sunday School teachers, other Christian friends/families and grandparents that had a great impact on my spiritual growth. The Senior Pastor and his teachings had a tremendous influence on me too. But my parents' leading example and explanation of the Gospel had the biggest impact of all. So I accepted Christ and was baptized at 9 years old.

BT: How did you find out about Mount Vernon?

DD: In 1991, several friends and I had been attending Wieuca Road Baptist Church and considered looking at other churches after the Pastor resigned. My friend's brother, Hamby Davis, moved to Sandy Springs and was looking for a Baptist church. His neighbor, Mrs. Bert Smith, was a member of MVBC and told him about the church. Also, while visiting MVBC, I met Bill Mitchell and Johnny Gresham, who I knew in the business world. That coincidence was nice and I felt an immediate draw to the church as I met other members and sat under Jim Wood's preaching.

BT: What do you love most about Mount Vernon?

DD: The members of the church, the staff, etc. have always been so nice, encouraging and supportive to me over the past 17 years. I have been blessed to meet so many wonderful people at MVBC who are great role models and spiritually strong. Our members have a strong desire to serve the Lord through their actions at MVBC, the communities in which they live and around the world. Also, I see their love for each other and desire to reach the lost. It has encouraged me to serve our church in any way possible.

BT: What are some of the offices you have held in the church?

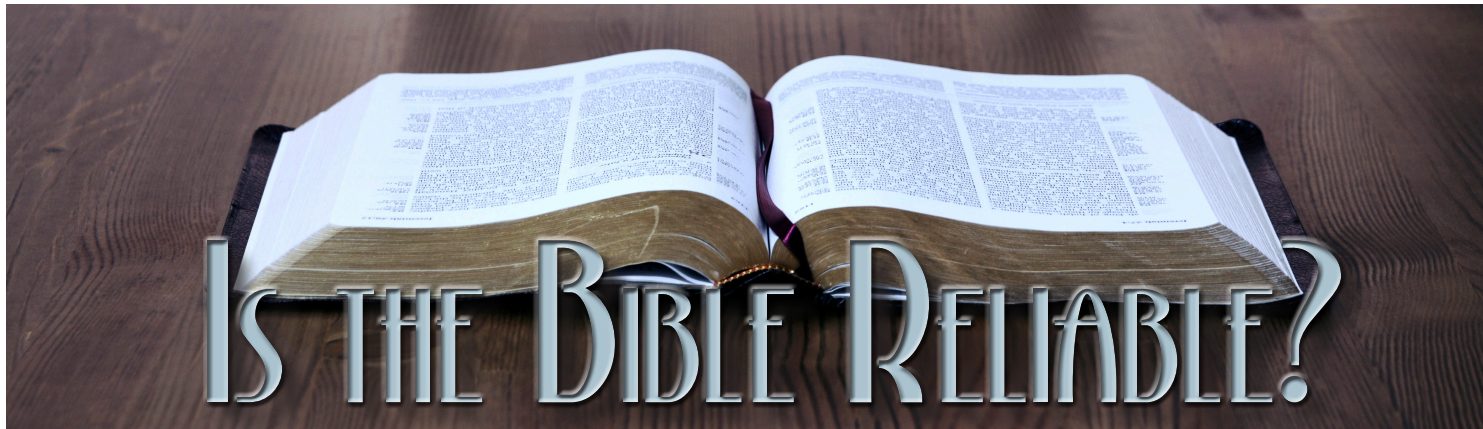
DD: Currently I am the Chairman of the Deacons, Church Treasurer, Ex officio member of the Finance Committee, Chairman of the Compensation Team, Leadership Team Member and a member of the Recreation Committee. In the past, I have served as Deacon Vice Chairman, Deacon Officer-at-Large; Chairman/member of Finance Committee, Chairman/member of Personnel Committee, member of Recreation Committee and Sunday School Director for the 3 and 4 year old's (Pre-School).

BT: Wow! Your selfless service to the church is a blessing and model to other members. So as chairman, what are your responsibilities?

DD: In my opinion, it is to be a good listener! Our Deacon body is comprised of very faithful, wise and spiritually-sound men who love our Church. God has blessed these men with gifts and wisdom about how to serve our Lord and His Church. That being said, our Church is also full of other men and women with much wisdom and great ideas. My goal is to keep a good pulse on the thoughts, needs and concerns of our members by asking questions, listening, being transparent in our communications, and encouraging our active Deacons to do the same. Other responsibilities include overseeing our monthly Deacons meetings and attending Leadership Team meetings (typically, twice a month).

BT: How can the church be praying for you?

DD: Primarily for wisdom in how to lead and encourage our Deacons to service that pleases our Father above. In addition, we will have our annual Deacon Retreat (in-house) on January 16th & 17th. My desire is that members will be praying for us in anticipation of the retreat and during that weekend. Pray that when we come together, our hearts and minds will be open to seek and understand what God's vision is for MVBC in 2009 and the years ahead. 🙏



One of the most interesting stories of last year involved the CERN laboratory outside of Geneva, Switzerland. On Wednesday, September 10, 2008, scientists turned on the Large Hadron Collider, an eight-billion dollar experiment, designed to see what happens when protons crash into one another at ridiculously fast speeds. “We can now look forward,” said the project director, “to a new era of understanding about the origins and evolution of the universe.” Christians can and should be excited about this kind of research. Our knowledge of reality, however, is not limited to what science can prove.

Christians believe God has spoken (which presumes, of course, a God who can speak!). As the apostle Paul wrote Timothy, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16). If this text is not true—if Scripture is not inspired by God—the gospel, the church, and Christianity itself are all just smoke-and-mirrors—a mirage that disappears upon closer inspection. Confidence in the Bible as God’s Word is essential to Christianity.

The Christian worldview assumes and requires an inspired word—the Bible. The Bible is God’s revelation, “the self-disclosure of God by which He makes known truth about Himself, His purposes, His plans and His will which could not be known otherwise.” Consider how your relationship to someone else changes dramatically when the other person is willing to open up—a casual acquaintance becomes a close friend. Likewise, our relationship to God is founded upon the principle that God chose to reveal Himself to us.

All that sounds good, but why should anyone believe that what the Bible has to say is true? Isn’t the belief in the historicity of biblical texts similar to faith that Zeus reigned from Mount Olympus? This is an important question that deserves a clear response from those who bear the name “Christian.” Why do we believe the Bible? There are many reasons. Here are two.

First, we should believe the Bible because Christ believed the Bible. Such reasoning may sound circuitous or circular. It is not. As the British theologian, John Wenham argued, Christianity is rooted first and foremost in faith in a person: “Hitherto Christians who have been unaware about the status of the Bible have been caught in

a vicious circle: any satisfactory doctrine of the Bible must be based on the teaching of the Bible, but the teaching of the Bible is itself suspect. The way out of the dilemma is to recognize that belief in the Bible comes from faith in Christ, and not vice versa.” In other words, confidence in the Bible rests upon confidence in Christ. Is Christ who He said He was? Is He just a great man or is He the Lord? The Bible may not prove to you He is the Lord, but the lordship of Christ will prove to you that the Bible is the very word of God. This is because Christ regularly spoke about the authority of the Old Testament (see Mark 9). He claimed authority for His own teaching by saying, “I tell you” (see Matthew 5). Jesus even taught that the teaching of His disciples would have divine authority (see John 14:26). If Jesus Christ is trustworthy, then His words about

the authority of the Bible should be trusted as well. Christ is trustworthy and He trusted God’s Word. So should we. Without faith in Christ, you will not believe the Bible is the self-disclosure of God. With faith in Christ, you cannot help but believe the Bible is God’s Word.

Second, we should believe the Bible because it accurately explains and powerfully changes our lives. How does it explain our lives? The Bible makes sense of the universal feeling of guilt, the universal longing for hope, the reality of shame, the presence of faith, and the exercise of self-sacrifice.

Such categories loom large in the Bible and are obvious—to differing degrees—in our own lives. What about good and evil? Some may try to deny their existence, but the Bible best explains what we all experience—the presence of good (the reflection of a perfect, holy God) and the presence of evil (the expected results of a fallen, corrupt creation). Consider also how the Bible powerfully changes our lives. Philosopher Paul Helm wrote, “God [and His Word] are proved by hearing and obeying Him and finding that He is as good as His Word.” Our very lives become evidence of the Bible’s reliability. The Christian’s life is supposed to be evidence of the Bible’s truthfulness. The psalmist urged us to “taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him” (Psalm 34:8). As we experience God, as we take refuge in Him, His words are proved to be a reliable standard. Like the captain of a ship, in days of old, who trusted in his map to bring him to his final destination, the Christian trusts in God’s Word as an infallible guide because the Christian has seen where it has taken him. Don Carson made a similar point when he described what first attracted a friend

of his to the Bible: “His first attraction to the Bible and to Christ was prompted in part by intellectual curiosity, but more particularly by the quality of life of some Christian students he has known. The salt had not lost its savor; the light was still shining.” A changed life is evidence of a true Word.

If this is true, what should we do? First things first: praise God—He did not remain silent. God was under no obligation to speak; yet He did. He broke forth from the silence and made Himself known. The fact that some would like God to reveal Himself differently or more does not change the fact that God revealed Himself as He saw fit. Second, because God spoke, we should strive to know Him with the passion of a young man pursuing a young woman. That young man wants to know her more and better. He wants her to speak and when she does he soaks in every word. We should desire to know God with a similar, youthful, even passionate zeal. Read the Bible; get to know God. It’s the New Year so consider going through a Bible reading program like McCheyne’s Calendar for Daily Readings. It will take you through the New Testament and Psalms twice and

MANY CHRISTIANS HAVE SEVERAL QUESTIONS about how to read and understand the Bible. For example, do you have to read it from beginning to end? Why are there different translations? Do you need to learn Greek and Hebrew to know its meaning? What do you do if you do not understand parts of it? *10 Keys For Unlocking The Bible* by Colin S. Smith helps answer those questions by telling the Bible’s “one story” that points us to Jesus Christ (10).

Smith lays out the Bible’s timeline and function in a brief and concise ten chapters. “The Garden” is the focus of chapter one dealing with important elements found in the first two chapters of Genesis. The Fall is the focal point with the possibility for reconciliation of man to God waiting in the future (19). Chapter two is devoted to the law and its effects on our lives. Smith does the church a service by explaining the nature of the law. It is not set up solely as a list of do’s and don’ts. Rather, they are commands that reflect the character of God. For example, why should we not steal? Because God is trustworthy. Why should we not lie? Because God is truth. Why should we not covet? Because God is content with himself (28). In addition, it is important not to miss the fact that the law is a good thing, acting as an x-ray into our souls revealing the sickness of sin and remedy in Jesus Christ (31).

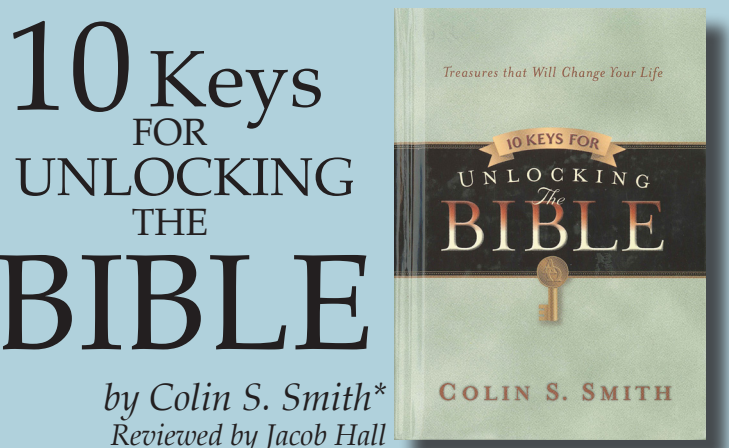
Chapter three discusses the Levitical priests’ purpose for making sacrifices and atonement on behalf of Israel (41). Chapter four is the last chapter dealing with the Old Testament storyline. The focus is God’s invitation to a people to follow Him. The invitation is free and we bring nothing to it (52-54). God wants and made a way for people to follow after him.

Chapters five through seven turn the reader’s attention to the New Testament beginning with the birth of Christ and God taking the initiative to redeem mankind through Jesus, who was born fully God and fully man (70). Following Christ’s birth, Smith discusses his death on the Cross, the climax of the story. On the cross, forgiveness for sin is “released” (80), paradise opened up (82) and death subdued (85). The seventh chapter focuses on the tomb from Luke 24. No explanation is given to the people except that God raised Christ, leaving only an empty tomb (92). “He is risen!” are, without a doubt, some of the sweetest words to a Christian’s ears. Smith discusses what these words mean to the believer’s everyday life and their eternal implications.

The story continues as the news of Christ’s death and resurrection spreads throughout the regions by the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, chapter eight is entitled “The Spirit.” The

the rest of the Old Testament once in 2009. Finally, look for evidence of the Bible’s truthfulness in your own life. Make no mistake; the truth of the Bible does not depend on you. Nonetheless, your life gives evidence of Scripture’s reliability. If your day was recorded, would someone be more or less convinced of the truth of Scripture? The Christians in Corinth were Paul’s letter of commendation. If people wondered if they should trust Paul, they had only to look at the people to whom Paul ministered. Their lives gave evidence of the truth of Paul’s words. The same is true with us. We should be the Bible’s letter of commendation (2 Cor. 14:26). This requires a sincere (and perhaps painful) examination of our own lives. We may discover ways we are ignoring God’s Word. The Christian’s life, however imperfect, should reflect just the opposite. As we examine our own lives we should find compelling evidence that God has spoken, and His Word is true. 📖

~ Aaron Menikoff



function of the Spirit in the context of Acts is to support and build up the Church as it struggles to find its existence. The Holy Spirit is the backbone of the Church.

As the church grew, it became clear that Christianity was not a spectators’ sport. It was and is a daily fight and struggle for believers to persevere in the faith. So in chapter nine, Smith explains Paul’s instructions from his epistles that show believers how to “fight the good fight” (124).

The final chapter brings the Bible’s story to its consummation found in the book of Revelation. It is all too easy to get lost in the book’s imagery and attempt to explain it using charts and pictures. Smith breaks it down with a refreshing simplicity. He rightly explains Revelation as a story of Paradise restored with the city of a new Jerusalem where believers dwell with God (135). It is a city, the final kingdom, of eternal bliss and joy.

Response

With several Bible studies focusing on individual books of the Bible, it is helpful to see the one storyline that points to Jesus Christ. Whether you have read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation several times over or are only familiar with smaller portions, I would recommend reading *10 Keys For Unlocking The Bible* as a primer for knowing the Bible’s theme. 📖

**10 Keys For Unlocking The Bible* by Colin S. Smith is published by Moody Press in Chicago, 2002, pp 141.

1	Roselyn McDonnell	16	Helen Brown
	Bob Neal		Louise Sweet
	Cheryl Knight		Carol Strawn
2	Fletcher Anderson	17	Leyna Vaughter
3	Doug Stanfield	19	Jackie Tamsamani
	Gery Groslimond		Amber Fouts
5	Marian Spiceland	21	Pat Lehman
	Bill Timmons	22	Bryan Pillsbury
6	Art Haley		Brooke Reid
7	Devra Brown		Kyle Timmons
8	Ted Noble	23	Ron Kath
9	Julie Lester		Brian Ferguson
10	Justin Miller		Brian Johnson
11	Lisa Tingle	24	Ashley Lowery
12	Sherron Davis	25	Boo Elliott
13	Donna Clark	26	Maya Rivera
14	Sherri Austin		Callie Henderson
	Erin Tatum	28	Laura Thompson
15	Jeff Neal	30	Diane Preston-Reilly
	Scott Oliver		Candace Thayer
		31	Mikell Mitchell

A uniquely designed weekly Bible study for children kindergarten through fourth grade where they will have their own time to learn and fellowship during the regular Sunday evening Service. This Bible study will begin on January 11.

→ YOUTH SKI TRIP
JANUARY 30 – FEBRUARY 1
This promises to be a fun and exciting weekend in which we will ski on the slopes of North Carolina and study the book of Hosea.

FITNESS CENTER



Hours:

Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 8:00 PM

Usage Fee:

\$100 per person/year
\$150/year family max

Cardio and weight rooms are available for members of MVBC at least 16 years of age and their guests (maximum 2 guests per visit). Children ages 13-15 will be permitted with direct supervision of an adult. A \$10 deposit for each swipe card will be collected at the time it is issued.

Contact Anne Russo to purchase your membership and access pass at 404-303-8033 x241 or annerusso@mvbchurch.org.

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

Our church's goal for this year's Lottie Moon Offering is:

\$25,000

We will collect donations until January 31.



SUNDAY, JANUARY 11
9:15-10:15 AM IN THE MOUNT VERNON ROOM
JOIN US FOR A FIRST LOOK AT MOUNT VERNON!
COME AND LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR CHURCH AS
YOU MAKE YOUR MEMBERSHIP DECISION.

Faith & Film

Everything in life can and should be used to point others and ourselves to Jesus. The Student Ministry of Mount Vernon wants students to think critically and carefully about the world in which they live. The movies picked are popular movies so that the participants will be able to take what they have learned into a cultural setting. Each movie selected is checked for content and language, as well as reading the reviews on the PluggedIn portion of the Focus on the Family website. January 18th will be the first Faith and Film of 2009 and we are anticipating a time of enjoyment and spiritual growth.



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