

☆ Shepherd's Voice ☆

Orcutt Christian Church Newsletter



Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

The Minister's Musings

Bro. Archie Miller

June 2017



THE SHACK

The movie, *THE SHACK*, is currently showing at the Edwards Theatre here in Santa Maria. It cost 20 million to produce the movie, and it has shown a 69 million dollar profit. And to be completely honest, I haven't seen the movie, and have no desire to. However, I did read the book when it came out in 2007.

The reviews of the book are interesting. **Christian Broadcast Network (CBN)** reviewer, Belinda Elliott, says: "As a novel, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the story quickly pulled me in and kept me turning pages. It is a quite heartwarming and satisfying work of fiction. As a work of heresy, however, I was sorely disappointed. I just couldn't find much in the book that I would consider heretical."

Metro is a free daily newspaper "written and designed for young and ambitious professionals. Designed for a 20-minute read, the paper gives metropolitans all they need to know, Monday through Friday, during their morning commutes." Metro says: "The evangelical entertainment 'The Shack' is almost a real movie... This is a different breed of evangelical cinema. And yet it's still not very good. Despite decent production values and a minimum of chintzy TBN F/X, "The Shack" is still shackled to a genre of toxic sincerity, questionable logic and sloppy drama."

MovieGuide.org, reviews movies from a Christian perspective for families and works in Hollywood to redeem the media. Movie Guide says: "The more important question is this: Will *THE SHACK* encourage or reinforce false doctrine among those who are theologically susceptible? Having seen the movie, there's no doubt that there are positive, faith affirming elements to the story that Christians can glean from it. ... Nearly the whole movie has God the Father gently trying to convince Mack to come back into the fold. I'm sorry, but when did the Judge, the Creator of Universe, the Holy Triune God, get put on trial? ... *THE SHACK* has very little to say about Jesus's Crucifixion and Resurrection because, ultimately, it falsely says that people are not innately evil. In fact, it suggests that even the worst of us are just that way because of something that was done to us in our childhood. This, of course, is a cheap grace that misses the mark. ... When you consider that this movie is made by the producers of *THE LIFE OF PI*, which argues that we should simply believe the truth we want to believe, it's not surprising that *THE SHACK* is made acceptable for all religions. Thus, nearly every major religion may find something they like in *THE SHACK* that will reinforce their worldview."

As a congregation of Christians that adheres to the principle of sound doctrine, our critique is different than the above. The book, and apparently the movie, does have some good points, but these are overshadowed by it's faulty presentation of the God of the Bible. The book has a serious false doctrine in presenting God **ONLY** as a God of love. The very essence of Christianity depends upon distinguishing **TWO** sides within God's moral nature, and in seeing them as equally ultimate. The two sides are (1) *love* (mercy, grace) and (2) *holiness* (wrath, retribution).

Romans 11:22 (NASB)

²² Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

There are extra special days for Christian and Jewish believers in June. Have an idea as to what is special? It has to do with **Shavuot**. Shavuot is celebrated for two days outside of the Land of Israel. This year Shavuot begins on Tuesday night, May 30th, and ends Friday June 2nd.

"What's special about" that you ask?

It's the second of the three major festivals, and comes exactly 50 days after the holiday of Passover. It marks the giving of the **Torah** by God to the entire Jewish people on Mount Sinai 3,000+ years ago. In Hebrew, the word "**Shavuot**" means "**weeks**" and stands for the seven weeks during which the Jewish people prepared themselves for the giving of the Torah.

Together they proclaimed: "**We will do and we will listen**" (**Exodus 24:7**). Each year on the holiday of Shavuot, this historic event is relived as our Jewish brethren commit ourselves anew to observing the Torah. The Hasadic Jews say, "*During the course of the holiday we don't go to work, drive, write, or switch on or off electric devices. We are permitted to cook, to kindle a stove with a flame that existed before the holiday (or which was lit from such a flame), and to carry outdoors.*"

Now, if I recall my Old Testament studies correctly, the word Torah is an archery term. It means something like "to **hit** the target." The idea, of course, is that the Torah keeps Jewish believers on target with their relationship to God.

Now think of the New Testament word for **sin**, which is also an archery term, and means something like "to **miss** the target."

On that day of Pentecost (*June 4th this year*) when the Apostle Peter stood and preached the first Gospel message, he tied these two concepts together.

If we want "to hit the target", "We will do and we will listen." When Peter preached that day, his stirring words prompted people to ask how to get back on target. Peter's answer is classic: "**Change your hearts and each one of you must be immersed by the authority of Jesus the Messiah, so that your sins may be forgiven. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**"

The Torah could never provide an answer to how to have our sins forgiven. Peter gave God's prescription for the removal of sin on the day they were celebrating receiving the Torah. Hallelujah!

Hebrews 13:20 (NASB)

20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,

Here the Apostle Paul reminds us of the two key Christological events of the new covenant: the cross (**the blood of the eternal covenant** and the resurrection (**brought up from the dead**).

The **eternal covenant** is opposed to the temporary covenant with Israel, which they broke, and the removal of which made room for the better covenant, which can never grow old, having been in the mind of the Godhead from eternity, and shall abide for ever.