

23V14 – Correcting the Cults (Book Review)

(written by Dr. Kip Wehrman 07/25/2023)

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table. I would like to share with you a book I read by Norman Geisler and Ron Rhodes titled *“Correcting the Cults: Expert Responses to Their Scripture Twisting”*. I to share this with you as a potential resource that at least some of you might be interested in.

Correcting the Cults: Expert Responses to Their Scripture Twisting by Norman Geisler and Ron Rhodes begins with an introduction which lays out the purpose and reason for the book. The authors begin the introduction with a section about understanding the cults. This section has many statistics demonstrating how prevalent cults are and why Christians must take the threat seriously. The term cult is defined for the purposes of the book. The authors identify that doctrinal, sociological and moral arguments which constitute aspects of a cult. A summary of the doctrinal characteristics of a cult may include; new revelation, denial of the sole authority of the Bible, distorted views of God and Jesus, and denial of salvation by grace. A summary of sociological characteristics of a cult may include; authoritarianism, exclusivism, dogmatism, close-mindedness, susceptibility, isolationism, and antagonism. A summary of moral characteristics of a cult may include; legalism, sexual perversion, physical abuse, and intolerance toward others. The authors describe the cultic methodology as often engaging in moral deception and aggressive proselytizing. The question is why are cults growing? The authors outline several reasons for this growth including, doctrinal failures, increased relativism, the rise of eastern mysticism, the emphasis on self, the modern stress on feelings, moral rebellion, and the social breakdown of the family. The authors then take on the important question of, what makes a cult dangerous? There are three main categories of dangers, spiritual dangers, psychological dangers, and physical dangers. The purpose of this book is to identify how the cults are twisting scripture and provide informed responses to the ways cults twist scripture.

Genesis to Deuteronomy

The first four chapters address the twisted scriptures from the old testament books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. The responses for scriptures twisted from Genesis which are used to diminish the person of the Holy Spirit, advocate for more than one god, advocate that we are gods, advocate for the termination of soul at death, advocate against medical treatment like transfusions, endorsing bowing to images, endorsing homosexuality, and many others. The responses for scriptures twisted from Exodus which are used to advocate for sorcery, support of veneration of relics, support against jewelry or crosses, support of Saturday sabbath keeping, support for polygamy, support for venerating images, support for the treasury of merit, and many others. The responses for scriptures twisted from Leviticus which are used to advocate against blood transfusions and advocate for homosexuality. The responses for scriptures twisted from Deuteronomy which are used to disprove the doctrine of trinity, support of false prophets, advocate that the prophet Muhammad is spoken of in the Bible, excuses to advocate for homosexuality, and many others.

Joshua to 2 Chronicles

The next six chapters address the twisted scriptures from the old testament historical books of Joshua, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles. The responses for scriptures twisted from Joshua which are used to suggest the Bible promises prosperity. The responses for scriptures twisted from 1 Samuel which are used to advocate David and Jonathan were homosexuals, advocate hate for our enemies, and endorse witchcraft. The responses for scriptures twisted from 2 Samuel which are used to support venerating relics because of the reverence given to the ark of the covenant. The responses for scriptures twisted from 1 Kings which are used to support the practice of polygamy. The responses for scriptures twisted from 2 Kings which are used to support venerating relics and support various false beliefs about if the dead are asleep or conscious. The responses for scriptures twisted from 2 Chronicles which are used to advocate against medical treatments and/or medicine.

Job to Ecclesiastes

The first four chapters address the twisted scriptures from the old testament wisdom books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. The responses for scriptures twisted from Job which are used to support the practice of indulgences, advocate for the reincarnation, and contradict the Bible teachings about resurrection. The responses for scriptures twisted from Psalms which are used to advocate for meditation like those in Buddhism or Hindu. The responses for scriptures twisted from Psalms which are used to support the Muslim belief that the Bible predicts Muhammad. The responses for scriptures twisted from Psalms which are used to support the Mormon concept of Jesus was a heavenly child with heavenly parents, support for annihilation of the wicked, and advocate humans can become gods. The responses for scriptures twisted from Psalms which are used to support the Jehovah's witness belief some of God's people go to heaven and some stay on earth forever, and advocate against medical treatments. Yet other responses for scriptures twisted from Matthew which are used to support a variety of cultic views like the universalist claim everyone is saved, and many others. The responses for scriptures twisted from Proverbs which are used to advocate the Jehovah's witness claim Jesus was created, and support for the Christian Science mind over matter belief. The responses for scriptures twisted from Ecclesiastes which are used to support the Jehovah's witness claim humans and animals share the same destiny, and the Jehovah's witness belief there is no consciousness after death.

Isaiah to Malachi

The next seven chapters address the twisted scriptures from the old testament prophet books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Jonah, Habakkuk, and Malachi. The responses for scriptures twisted from Isaiah which are used to advocate that reason is not part of spirituality, disprove the doctrine of trinity, support the Jehovah's witness claim Jesus is a lesser god, support Muslim claims the Bible predicts the coming of Muhammad, support for the book of Mormon, advocate that physical healing is guaranteed in atonement, support for the spiritual death of Jesus on the cross, support

that homosexuals will be in the kingdom of God, and many others. The responses for scriptures twisted from Jeremiah which are used to support new age and Mormon doctrine of reincarnation. The responses for scriptures twisted from Ezekiel which are used to support the existence of UFOs and extraterrestrials, advocate that the sin of Sodom was selfishness rather than homosexuality, support for Jehovah's witness belief about man's immaterial nature, and support of a prophecy about the book of Mormon. The responses for scriptures twisted from Amos which are used to support the Mormon concept that there must always be a prophet on earth, i.e., the Mormon president. The responses for scriptures twisted from Jonah which are used to support that the Bible prophets made mistakes and not all Bible prophecy must come true. The responses for scriptures twisted from Habakkuk which are used to support the Muslim belief that the Bible predicts the coming of the prophet Muhammad. The responses for scriptures twisted from Malachi which are used to support the Mormon claim that God always communicates through new revelation and new scripture, and support for the Mormon claim of baptism for the dead.

Matthew to John

The next four chapters address the twisted scriptures from the new testament gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The responses for scriptures twisted from Matthew which are used to support Mormon beliefs about; the practice of polytheism, that we become more and more perfect during this life to attain exaltation in the next life, and that hell is not a place of darkness. Additional, responses for scriptures twisted from Matthew which are used to support the new age beliefs; that everyone has divinity in them, the concept of a "cosmic Christ" that lives in everyone, the mystical "third eye" that gives us spiritual perception, focus on our inner divinity, that only those who recognize their inner divinity can withstand the storms of life, and that Jesus spoke of esoteric meanings in the Scriptures. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from Matthew which are used to support Jehovah's witness beliefs that; hell is the grave not a place of torment, claim Jesus was not God but just a man, birthdays should not be celebrated, Jesus' return invisibly in 1914, references to the Watch Tower organization, no eternal punishment for the wicked, and arguments against the trinity. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from Matthew which are used to support Roman Catholic beliefs like; the doctrine of purgatory and papal infallibility, Peter was given the special authority to forgive sins and was the first pope, support the Roman Catholic practice of praying to the dead, support for the visible authority of the Roman Catholic church on earth, and evidence for the bodily assumption of Mary. Yet other responses for scriptures twisted from Matthew which are used to support a variety of cultic views like; the practice of astrology, support that Christians are still under the law of Moses, support for reincarnation in the story of John the Baptist, support for yoga, prediction of the migration to America, scripture support against public criticism of a pastor, unity of all world religions, reincarnation, oneness doctrines of a one person God, support for the Christian Science view that they are the only true religion, and others.

Responses for scriptures twisted from Mark which are used to support Jehovah's witness beliefs that; the Holy Spirit is not a person, Jesus is not Almighty God, Jesus did

not know of His second coming thus not God, and Jesus had different bodies after the resurrection. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from Mark which are used to support Word-Faith beliefs about anything when we ask in faith, financial and material gifts are promised, and bypassing reason in order to be truly spiritual. Yet other responses for scriptures twisted from Mark which are used to support a variety of cultic views like; annihilationism, and baptism requirement of salvation.

Responses for scriptures twisted from Luke which are used to support Roman Catholic beliefs like; Mary being the source of grace, Mary lived a sinless life, venerating of Mary above all other creatures, and proof for the salvation by works doctrine. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from Luke which are used to support Jehovah's witness beliefs that; they are the only anointed class, unconsciousness after death, Jesus' resurrection appearances were merely visions, Jesus spontaneously dematerializes, and Jesus has other bodies after the resurrection. Yet other responses for scriptures twisted from Luke which are used to support a variety of cultic views like; Jesus traveling to India as a child in the so called lost years, Christian Science concept that the human kingdom is unreal and mankind is divine, and many others.

Responses for scriptures twisted from John which are used to support Mormon beliefs about; Jesus was married, and we can become gods. Additional, responses for scriptures twisted from John which are used to support the new age beliefs; Jesus taught reincarnation, that I am is the divine presence in all humans, and we get whatever we ask in the name of Jesus. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from John which are used to support Jehovah's witness beliefs that; Jesus is a little 'g' god, only the anointed class are born again and live forever in heaven, Jesus is a created being, only God the Father should be worshipped not Jesus, argue Jesus was preexistent not eternally preexistent, the two flocks doctrine of earth and heavenly flocks, Jesus was one with the Father in purpose not equivalent, no conscious existence after death, and Jesus thought of Himself as less than God. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from John which are used to support Roman Catholic beliefs like; Jesus literally told us to eat His literal body and drink His literal blood, worship of the consecrated host as a form of idolatry, papal infallibility, Jesus praying that they all may be one requires all Christians to be unified with the Roman Catholic Church, Jesus conveys to Mary from the cross the meatrix for redemption, claim priests have the power to forgive sins, and Peter was the first pope. Yet other responses for scriptures twisted from John which are used to support a variety of cultic views like; the impersonal God, Jesus preexisted only in God's foreknowledge, Jesus lost His deity when He became human, baptism requirement for salvation, Jesus teaches salvation by works, oneness Pentecostals belief that Jesus is the name of the Father, reincarnation, Jesus had children with several women including Mary and Martha, pantheism, Muslim claim that Muhammad is the promised helper, Word-Faith beliefs that God imparts his divine nature to human spirits, Love one another supports open sex culture, Jesus predicted the coming of cult leader Baha'u'llah, and many others.

Acts

The next chapter addresses the twisted scriptures from Acts of the Apostles. Responses for scriptures twisted from Acts which are used to support Mormon beliefs about the heavenly father and heavenly mother giving birth to spirit children. Additional, responses for scriptures twisted from Acts which are used to support Jehovah's witness beliefs that; the second coming of Christ will be an invisible event, Holy Spirit filling the disciples proves he is not a person, and arguments against medical treatment and blood transfusions. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from Acts which are used to support Roman Catholic beliefs like; Peter was the leader of the first Church who presided over the Jerusalem Council, and dogma of relics. Yet other responses for scriptures twisted from Acts which are used to support a variety of cultic views like; baptism is required for salvation, everything in common is support for free sex, early Christians practiced communism, universalism claims that God will restore all things to Himself, claims Christ is not the only way of salvation, Adventist view sabbath is still binding, Paul supports pantheism, and many others.

Romans to Philemon

The next thirteen chapters address the twisted scriptures from the new testament epistles of the apostle Paul. The responses for scriptures twisted from Romans which are used to support the Mormon belief that prior to physical birth on earth everyone was a spiritual child of our heavenly father and mother. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from Romans which are used to support Jehovah's witness beliefs that; immortality is acquired or possessed, and only those who call upon the name of Jehovah will be saved. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from Romans which are used to support Roman Catholic beliefs like; that the Roman Catholic church is the only visible church on earth today, and good works are a condition of salvation. Yet other responses for scriptures twisted from Romans which are used to support a variety of cultic views like; Oneness Pentecostal view that Jesus is really God the Father, homosexual should not be heterosexual because it is unnatural to them, Paul teaches universalism, one should seek spiritual meanings of scripture rather than literal ones, we all become gods, support for open sex views, and many others.

The responses for scriptures twisted from 1 Corinthians which are used to support Mormon beliefs about; there are many gods in the universe, the only true church must have a living prophet or apostle, baptism of the dead, and three kingdoms of glory we can inhabit in the next life. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from 1 Corinthians which are used to support Jehovah's witness beliefs that; Jesus in no God almighty only the Father is, don't wear a cross, doctrine of trinity is not true, resurrection body is a spirit body, and Jesus was a life giving spirit after the resurrection not a physical body. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from 1 Corinthians which are used to support Roman Catholic beliefs like; purgatory, the Bible is not sufficient for practice and faith, and the assumption of Mary. Yet other responses for scriptures twisted from 1 Corinthians used to support a variety of cultic views like; Oneness Pentecostal view that Jesus is the Father God, baptism is a condition for salvation, questions about Paul's condemnation of homosexual acts as his own idea, the body is destroyed so there can be no bodily resurrection, if idols are nothing then why does God

care, claim that Paul's call to imitate himself is justification for authoritarianism, Paul teaches universalism, that Paul quoting of a pagan poet makes the pagan writing scripture, and that Paul teaches a form of reincarnation.

The responses for scriptures twisted from 2 Corinthians which are used to support the Mormon belief about three degrees of glorified afterlife, the Jehovah's witness belief that Paul does not support the doctrine of the trinity, the Roman Catholic belief that Paul supports the doctrine of indulgences, the Oneness Pentecostal modalistic views, the Word-Faith beliefs that Jesus was made sin becoming of the nature of Satan and prosperity is atonement, and the universalism view that all will be saved in the end. The responses for scriptures twisted from Galatians which are used to support the Mormon belief about early church becoming apostate resulting in the need for restoration through the Mormon church, the Roman Catholic beliefs of a treasury of merit based on the idea of bearing one another's burdens, and a variety of cultic views like reincarnation. The responses for scriptures twisted from Ephesians which are used to support the Mormon belief that the Mormon church is the same as the early church with living prophets and apostles, the Roman Catholic belief that the organizational unity in the church is under the Roman Catholic Church, and other cultic views like universalism. The responses for scriptures twisted from Philippians which are used to support the Jehovah's witness belief that if Jesus emptied himself of deity while on earth he is not God and we can earn salvation, and the universalistic view all will be saved by confessing Christ is Lord. The responses for scriptures twisted from Colossians which are used to support the Jehovah's witness beliefs; that Jesus was the firstborn or created first not God, that Christians should not study philosophy, and that Jesus only had divine qualities not really God. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from Colossians which are used to support a variety of cultic beliefs like the Roman Catholic belief that Jesus suffering on the cross was not sufficient for our sins, the Word-Faith belief Jesus was born again in Hell, the universalist belief all will be saved in the end, the Oneness Pentecostal belief that Jesus is both God the Father and the Holy Spirit all in one, and the Adventist belief Christians are obligated to keep the sabbath. The responses for scriptures twisted from 1 Thessalonians which are used to support the Seventh day Adventist belief of soul sleep, and the Jehovah's witness doctrine that Jesus is the archangel Michael. The responses for scriptures twisted from 2 Thessalonians which are used to support the Jehovah's witness belief that the wicked will be annihilated, and the Roman Catholic belief that scripture is not enough but that oral traditions are needed. The responses for scriptures twisted from 1 Timothy which are used to support the Mormon belief that Paul indicates that the early church would fall in to total apostasy there by pointing to the restoration in the Mormon church, the Jehovah's witness belief that the fact that Christ is a mediator between God and humans means he is not God, and the cultic view that Paul exhorts us to pray to kings and others who are dead. The responses for scriptures twisted from 2 Timothy which are used to support the Roman Catholic beliefs that Paul's prayer for Onesiphorus supports the doctrine of praying for the dead, and that Paul was being made an offering is about indulgencies to save people from purgatory, and the cultic view that Paul is supporting a hierarchical system in discipleship. The responses for scriptures twisted from Titus which are used to support the Jehovah's witness belief that there is no trinity

only God the Father. The responses for scriptures twisted from Philemon which are used to support the institution of slavery.

Hebrews to 3 John

The next seven chapters address the twisted scriptures from the new testament non-Pauline epistles. The responses for scriptures twisted from Hebrews which are used to support the Mormon belief that the Father has a physical flesh and bones, the Jehovah's witness beliefs that Christ is just to be honored not worshiped, and other cultic views like reincarnation, and Word-Faith belief that faith is the substance God used to create the universe. The responses for scriptures twisted from James which are used to support the Mormon belief that we should pray about the book of Mormon, the Roman Catholic belief that Abraham was justified by works and that confessing sins to one another means confessing to priests, and cultic views like the course of nature refers to reincarnation, and James is talking about mind over matter. The responses for scriptures twisted from 1 Peter which are used to support the Mormon belief that people have a second chance to be saved after they die, the Jehovah's witness belief that Jesus was only resurrected in the spirit, and Word-Faith belief that redemption is based on Christ suffering in hell for three days not the shedding of blood on the cross. The responses for scriptures twisted from 2 Peter which are used to support the Jehovah's witness belief of annihilation. The responses for scriptures twisted from 1 John which are used to support the Jehovah's witness beliefs that Jesus was not bodily resurrected, that the absence of a verse in 1 John in many modern translations is proof the Trinity is not true, and that the Holy Spirit is not a person. The responses for scriptures twisted from 2 John which are used to support not letting cultist into our homes. The responses for scriptures twisted from 3 John which are used to support the Word-Faith doctrine that God desires us to be financially prosperous.

Revelation

The last chapter addresses the twisted scriptures from the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The responses for scriptures twisted from Revelation which are used to support the Jehovah's witness beliefs that the second coming will be invisible, that the alpha and omega reference is proof Jesus is not God, Jesus a created being not God, and the 144,000 represent the anointed class which is the Jehovah's witness only. Additional responses for scriptures twisted from Revelation which are used to support the Roman Catholic belief that the woman taken into heaven represents the assumption of Mary and white robes of the saints represent the righteous acts of the saints. Yet other responses for scriptures twisted from Revelation which are used to support a variety of cultic views like; Masonic belief of works based salvation, the prophecy of the coming of Reverend Moon of the Unification Church, the little book representing Mary Baker Eddy's book of Christian Science, the Seventh day Adventist belief that the sabbath will be restored, and demons can perform miracles. **Let's Pray.**

I personally really like this book. If you are looking for a book that gives to answers for how a cult is twisting the scripture, then this is the book for you.

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table today, I hope you'll join us again. If you liked the message, please share the link with a friend. Send me comments, my email should be on the screen.

Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.