

FOREWORD

Well, there it is. You cannot see it because you are reading the text on a printed page. The annoying green wiggly line is only on my computer screen, flagging "there it is." Sometimes I see wiggly lines that are green, sometimes red, but no matter what color they are, they irritate me and I know that the only way to make them disappear is to stop what I am doing, stop what I am thinking, and deal with them.

I am required to hover the cursor over the wiggly line, right click the mouse, and read and respond to the dialogue box that appears. If the line is red, the computer tells me that my word choice deviates from the standard dictionary, and if the line is green, the problem is my grammar. Then, my computer asks me (ever so gently) if I really meant to spell the word that way or if I really meant to use the word in that peculiar fashion. I can respond with several options. I can insert a correctly spelled word from a list, I can insert a grammatically corrected sentence, I can scrap what I have written and begin again, or I can ignore the problem and settle for being incorrect.

I am sure that somewhere in my computer software there is a way for me to disable my annoying wiggly lines. I choose not to. As annoying as it is to have my thought processes interrupted, I realize that when misspelled words and poor grammar appear in a text that bears my name, I inevitably lose credibility in the eyes of discerning readers. How convincing can my argument be if I cannot choose the right word for a sentence?

I call the wiggly lines essential annoyances.

You are holding in your hands a book that may well become for you an essential annoyance. David Rudel's *Who Really Goes to Hell? — The Gospel You've Never Heard* is an important book. He will posit ideas and ask questions about the Bible's teachings and about the Church's use of those teachings that may trouble you. The questions are honest, thoroughly researched, meticulously argued, and will wash over you like incessant waves. Most annoyingly, his questions are always referenced to scripture as the standard.

I don't agree with all of Rudel's conclusions and I question some of his Biblical-critical methods, but it isn't his conclusions that annoy me. Somehow, the questions that he asks have become embedded in my mind-in my operating system. They open in a dialogue box in my head and they require a response. Rudel's questions have become a kind annoying filter through which I must pass my sermons and my sermon preparation, my Bible teaching and the reading that informs it, my public prayers and the very personal contemplation that gives birth to them, and even my intimate thoughts about salvation, damnation, eternal life, death, heaven, and hell.

Well, there it is. If you love God's Word and treasure God's Church, this book will be an essential, albeit annoying, challenge.

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