

First Vespers

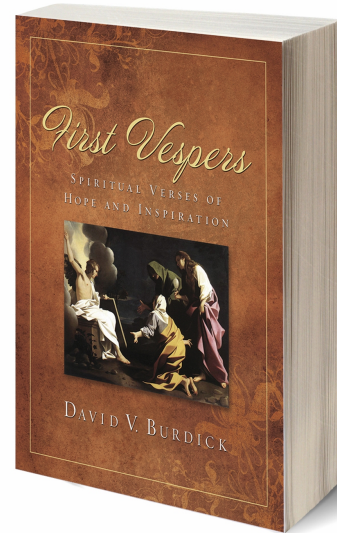
David Burdick

If you've ever sat outside after supper as the sun goes down and you've heard the church bells ring in the distance, you've heard First Vespers. This collection of inspirational poetry and classic paintings is an answering to a call by God, a vesper to tell His story in a meaningful way. Described as poignant and atmospheric, David Burdick's poems brush past the veil sometimes introduced by organized religion and ritual, to offer a fresh vision of Christ, the beautiful Savior.

The Bible is filled with poetry by men and women who range in social class, crying out to the Lord in praise, gratitude, need, and lament. Poetic verse is one of the earliest forms of artistic expression. From David's psalms of grief and thanksgiving, to Hannah's songs of praise, to Solomon's keen observations of a meaningless life—poetry has always been an important aspect of prayer, meditation, and worship.

Years ago, Christian poet David Burdick was stationed far from home, meditating in his room, wondering how he would remain strong for his wife. Would his marriage survive? As he sought comfort in his Bible, God whispered to his heart: "This is your time on the mountain; use it wisely." Burdick began penning the verses that would become *First Vespers*. His poetry is true to God's word, non-denominational, and filled with light and hope. Lavished throughout are photos of classic works of art as well as original colorizations of ancient Bible illustrations.

Burdick's desire is for the reader to come to know and love God in the intimate way he has. God is not a hellfire-and-brimstone purveyor of guilt waiting to punish and cast us out. He is an all-forgiving God, gracious and long-suffering, desperately hoping we would come to repentance—so that none might perish.



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BOOKS

David Burdick – Clay, NY

David Burdick is a Navy Veteran, who went to college under the GI Bill and holds degrees in electronics engineering and mathematics. With over thirty years in the nuclear power industry, he now travels as an independent consultant to many of the country's nuclear power plants, helping with the problem identification and resolution process. David has been happily married to his wife, Ann, for thirty years, and together they have two adult sons who reside in upstate New York.



Endorsements for *First Vespers*:

“David Burdick has the gift of marrying statement with sentiment, detail with drama, and information with insight. His poetry, drawn from numerous narratives of Scripture, will stop you in your tracks and make you think and feel emotions you may not have experienced in a long time. May God use this book in its readers’ lives to revive a fresh passion for knowing God’s Word and a recognition of its applicability and relevance to our own daily narrative.”

—**Dan Woodard, director of leadership development, InterAct Ministries of Canada**

“*First Vespers* is like an artist painting with words. David is very gifted in using poems to paint a picture and stirring my heart. His work is soulful and touching, like hearing the brush strokes of an artist painting. A beautiful book; I recommend it for all.”

—**Rick Ables, pastor of Community Bible Church, Southport, NC**

“Reading *First Vespers* helped me to reflect greatly on what my Heavenly Father did to save me. Without my faith and the precious love of Jesus Christ, I would never have survived this far. This book is very deep, and I was honored and thankful to read it.”

—**Toni Dubiel, Praise 96.3FM, Premier Southern Gospel Radio, Knoxville, TN**

Suggested Interview Questions for David Burdick, Author of *First Vespers*

1. What inspired you to write a book of Christian poetry?

God Himself was my first inspiration to write a book of Christian poetry. After working in the same job for more than 20 years, I found myself working a new job and being hundreds of miles away from my wife and family. One night while saying my evening prayers, God spoke to me; saying, “This is your time on the mountain. Use it wisely.” Wanting to use this time wisely, I remembered that I had been recognized for my poetry in college and decided to try my hand at Christian poetry. I wrote a poem about the crucifixion called, “Imagine knowing,” sent a copy to a Christian friend, and said a prayer: “God, if this is how I shall serve you, give me a sign that I will know it.” Two hours later, I received an e-mail from a later-to-be pastor friend that I had not yet met. It was a request to use my poem that I had just written in an upcoming joint Good Friday Service with the participation of multiple congregations and clergy friends. One thing led to another and here I am six years later with a book.

2. Who do you feel will benefit most from reading *First Vespers*?

The book is intended to encourage the believer, to guide those who are disappointed by organized religion, and most importantly, to find those who are lost and guide them home. *First Vespers* underscores the story, the meaning and the focus of God’s intent in poetic verse. It is an answering to a call by God to tell His story in a memorable way. The book contains photographs of religious paintings by many of the old masters and an introduction to each poem that is meant to convey the direction and intent of the poem, as well as the lessons learned in my search to find the truth of God. It is meant to cut to the true message of Christ and to strip away the veil that is sometimes introduced by organized religion and ritual. It is dedicated to the Son of Man who re-wrote history through the fulfillment of prophesy.

3. What set you on a path to find the truth of God?

My research and personal experience has shown me that many religions, Christian and non-Christian alike emphasize only a portion of their doctrine, usually out of context and in support of their religious practices. I was taught many things in my religious upbringing that could not be substantiated. God has been with me my entire life, at times closer than others. I find that the more I acknowledge God in my life, the more He intervenes in my life. Knowing that God exists and seeing His grace and mercy in my life was enough to make me seek the truth of Him. To my amazement, believers who study the word of God in its entirety and without prejudice to what they are willing to accept as the truth, will all come to a nearly identical understanding, the common truth of God. That is the miracle of God’s word.

4. What do you hope to accomplish with your book?

My desire is for the reader to come to know God as I have come to know Him. God is not the hell fire

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and brimstone purveyor of guilt who waits to punish and cast us into a lake of fire that I learned about in my youth. He is an all-forgiving God, gracious and longsuffering; wishing that all should come to repentance and that none should perish. If we believe that His son, Jesus Christ was crucified for our sins, died and was buried, preached the Gospel in hell, and rose again on the third day to conquer death and bring us the keys to the kingdom, then our ransom has already been paid and we live not under the law of the ten commandments; but rather, by the power of the Holy Spirit of God within us. To know God as I know Him is to love Him, to instinctively want to be with Him, and to daily confide in Him. The greatest commandment of all is love and there is no greater proof of that than God Himself.

5. Who had their greatest impact on you as a poet?

My grandmother on my father's side, Nora Burdick had the greatest impact on me as a poet. Both of my parents worked and Nora often lived with us and watched over my sister and I while our parents worked. She was a previous schoolteacher, a widow of an old-time preacher, and a devoutly religious woman who dabbled in poetry and read the Bible daily. Nora loved to talk about God; she took Christian correspondence courses well into her eighties and always encouraged me in whatever I did. She was both a fan and a critic of my early non-Christian poetry in college.

6. What was your most surprising discovery in your search for the truth of God?

I have been forgiven for sins I have not even committed yet and I live under the grace of God not under the Ten Commandments. True faith in Christ is the end of law.

7. Why do you feel that God's message needs any further interpretation beyond that provided in the Bible?

Few people I meet have actually read the entire Bible cover to cover, let alone continue to read it every day. Most people that I speak with rely on their church for what they know of God's word. The problem with that is that most religions only discuss the sections of the Bible that support their beliefs. Seldom is anything beyond the Gospels discussed. In my search for the truth, I have found that Jesus seeks to have a personal relationship with each one of us.

8. What special qualifications do you have to explain or interpret the Bible?

I guess my greatest qualification to interpret the Bible is that I've read it in its entirety and I continue to study it on a daily basis. This is not typically true for the majority of the people I seek to reach. Nothing is new under the sun and prudence is crowned with its knowing. As it specifically pertains to *First Vespers*, each verse and each poem was reviewed for truth and alignment with God's word by a Christian pastor and / or a church elder from two different Christian churches over the course of five years. Great study and prayer went into writing the book and all was submitted for review and comment.

9. What is your religious background?

I was raised as a Catholic by a devoutly religious woman who proudly woke-up three hours before she had to go to work each morning to ensure I made it to church where I enjoyed serving as an altar boy before school. My father had little use for church or religion and neither encouraged nor discouraged my service as an altar boy. As a decorated Korean War Veteran and a prison guard at Attica during the Attica riot, my father saw and participated in many things that were hard for him to reconcile. Both my mother and father thought I would become a Catholic priest, but I had a different idea. I joined the military directly out of high school at the age of seventeen. After being honorably discharged, I was helping my mother go through some boxes in her basement when I came across the personalized Bible that Grandma Burdick had purchased for me a dozen years earlier. I began to read it that night and I've been reading it ever since.

10. What discourages you most about organized religion?

Organized religion tends to embrace ritual and tradition, regardless of the cost. I recognize the value of ritual and tradition; however, what I see is that without strong spiritual leadership, many well meaning Christians get so consumed by ritual and tradition that they lose sight of the purpose for gathering. We as Christians gather to honor the Sabbath, to walk with the Spirit, to publicly acknowledge the presence of God, and to worship. True worship has little to do with when a particular candle is lit, who collects tithes, who gives tithes, how often we stand or kneel, when a particular prayer is recited, or what type of incense we burn.