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Call

SEPTEMBER 2014

GREAT IS THE MYSTERY

by DAVE HUNT

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THE BEREAN CALL

"[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so."—Acts 17:11

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Great Is the Mystery

Dave Hunt (May 2003)

In spite of thousands of years of inquiry into the universe and the super-technology of today's computer-aided science, we still know almost nothing in comparison to all there is to know. We don't know what energy is, or what gravity or light or space are. Referring to the physical universe, British astronomer Sir James Jeans declared that "we are not yet in touch with ultimate reality."

Much less do we know what life is. Living things are made up of chemical machines. The secret of life, however, lies not in the correct combination of the chemicals of which living things are built. Science seeks to discover how life is imparted to otherwise dead matter, hoping to reverse the death process and thereby create eternal life. The right conglomeration of chemicals that moments before was alive is still intact, but no scientific process can restore the life that has left a corpse. That secret will never be found by examining living creatures because the life they have is not their own.

We now know what Darwin never imagined: that life is based upon *information* encoded on DNA (See *TBC* Aug '02). Indisputably, no information is originated by the medium in which it is communicated (printed page, audio- or videotape, DNA, etc.).

Information can originate only from a conscious intelligence, a quality found only in personal beings. Clearly, the information that provides the instructions for constructing and operating the incredibly small and complex machines that make up living cells could only originate with an Intelligence beyond our capacity to comprehend.

Jesus claimed to be the Source of life: "I am the resurrection, and the life" (Jn 11:25)—and He proved it by laying down His life and rising from the dead. He said, "No man taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself...and I have power to take it again..." (Jn 10:17,18). And so He did.

There is, however, something more vital than physical life. Unquestionably, there is a nonphysical side to man. Words and the conceptual ideas they express (including those imprinted on DNA) are not a part of the dimensional, physical universe. The idea of "justice," for example, has nothing to do with and cannot be described in terms of any of the five senses. It lies in another realm.

Thoughts are not physical. They do not originate from matter nor do they occupy space. Our brains do not think, or we would be the prisoners of that few pounds of matter inside our craniums, waiting for the next orders it might give us. Man has not only physical but "intelligent" life. What could be its source?

Of Jesus, John said, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (Jn 1:4). Christ declared, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (Jn 8:12). The reference is not to physical light but to the spiritual light of truth—another abstract concept without any relationship to the physical universe.

NO MAN TAKETH [MY LIFE] FROM ME,
BUT I LAY IT DOWN OF MYSELF...AND
I HAVE POWER TO TAKE IT AGAIN...

—John 10:17, 18

"Truth" takes us beyond animal life; it has no meaning for animals. Their "intelligence" knows nothing of love, morals, compassion, mercy, or understanding but is confined to instinct and conditioned responses to stimuli. B. F. Skinner tried to fit man into the same mold, but our ability to form conceptual ideas and express them in speech cannot be explained in terms of stimulus/response reactions. There is an impassable chasm between man and animals.

Intelligence is nonphysical because it conceives of and uses nonphysical constructs that clearly do not originate with the material of the brain or body. This takes us beyond the physical universe into the realm of spirit. We do not know what a soul or a spirit is, or what it means that God "is a Spirit" (Jn 4:24) who "created man in his own image" (Gn 1:27).

God has given us sufficient proof in what we can verify to cause us to trust completely whatever His Word declares concerning things we cannot fully comprehend. That is where faith enters. There is much that, although we cannot understand it, we know is true. This is the case, for example, with the fact that God is without beginning or end. It boggles our minds, but we know it must be.

While seeking to unravel the secrets of the universe, science neglects its Creator. The universe can lead man only to a dead end, since ultimate knowledge is hidden in the God who brought all into existence.

Though not idol worshipers in the primitive sense, scientists, university professors, business executives, and political leaders, no matter how brilliant, who do not know Christ fit the description in Romans 1 of those who reject the witness of the universe and worship the creation instead of the Creator. It is possible for Christians also to be caught up in this same materialistic ambition and to miss *what God offers us in Himself*.

Paul's earnest desire was that all believers might attain unto "the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:2,3).

Our knowledge of both the physical and spiritual is limited at best. But one day we will fully know when we are with Christ in our glorified bodies: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor 13:12). When in His presence we wholly know Christ as He truly is, all limitations will have vanished, even our lack of power to fully overcome sin: when we see him, "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2). Knowing Christ is everything!

Secular knowledge pursued in our universities looks in the wrong direction. The treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ can never be discovered by scientific inquiry but can only be revealed by His Spirit through His Word to those who believe in Him.

The concept of one true God who exists eternally in three Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is rejected even by some who claim to be Christians. Yet this is taught all through Scripture, in the Old Testament as well as in the New. Consider: "I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I..." Surely the speaker who has been in existence forever must be God himself. Yet He declares, "the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me" (Is 48:16). We cannot comprehend the mystery of the Trinity; yet that is no more reason to doubt it than to doubt anything else that we know is real but cannot comprehend.

If God were a single being (as Muslims believe Allah to be and most Jews believe Yahweh is), He would have had to create creatures in order to experience love, fellowship and communion. The biblical God *is* love in Himself, manifesting plurality in the Godhead: “The Father loveth the Son...” (Jn 5:20). God must be one; but He must comprise both singularity and plurality.

Only God could pay the infinite penalty His justice demands for sin. But that would not be just, because “God is not a man...” (Nm 23:19). The incarnation is therefore essential—but impossible if God were a singular being. “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 Jn 4:14). It was Jesus who died on the cross, not the Father nor the Holy Spirit.

Neither could a mere man, being finite, pay that infinite penalty. All through the Old Testament, Yahweh declares that He is the only Savior (Is 43:3,11; 45:15,21; 49:26; Hos 13:4, etc.). Thus Jesus had to be Yahweh but also a man. When God the Son became a man He did not and could not cease to be God. Jesus was both God and man.

How could God become a man? Again that is only possible through the Trinity. The Father didn’t become man, nor did the Holy Spirit. Even though we cannot understand this, we know it must be so. The penalty for our sins is infinite because God and His justice are infinite. Consequently, those who reject Christ’s payment on their behalf will be separated from God forever.

How evil could arise in God’s “good” universe (Gn 1:31) is a mystery—“the mystery of iniquity” (2 Thes 2:7). It will reach its fullness in Antichrist through whom Satan will rule the world. In Antichrist, Satan will be manifest in the flesh, as God was, and is, in Christ.

Satan must be brilliant beyond our comprehension, apparently second only to God in power and understanding. It is a mystery that Satan, having known intimately the holy and glorious presence and power of God on His throne, could ever have dared, much less desired, to rebel. How could he have imagined that he could ever defeat God? Surely this is a great mystery!

Satan was not raised in a “dysfunctional family” or in a ghetto, nor was he “abused as a child.” None of the standard excuses for rebellious and selfish behavior accepted by today’s Christian psychologists applies to Satan—or to Adam and Eve. To accept any explanation for evil that doesn’t fit them is to be deceived. Certainly today’s popular diagnosis of “low self-esteem” or a “poor self-image” was not Satan’s problem!

Scripture says he was lifted up with pride: “O covering cherub....Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou

hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness” (Ezk 28:16-17). He is apparently a self-deceived ego-maniac, blinded by pride in his own power and abilities.

Here is the mystery of iniquity: In the very presence of God, in the heart of the cherub closest to God, the ultimate evil was conceived. By one fateful choice, the most beautiful, powerful, and intelligent angelic being became for all time the ultimate in evil: the arch enemy of God and man, the “great dragon...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world” (Rv 12:9; 20:2).

Paul warns that a man should not become an elder until he is mature in the faith, “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil” (1 Tm 3:6). This tells us again that pride was Satan’s downfall—and is man’s besetting sin as well. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prv 16:18).

It is also a mystery that Eve would believe the serpent’s lie contradicting what her gracious Creator had said. Adam was not deceived (1 Tm 2:14). No doubt out of love for Eve and not wanting to be separated from her, he joined her in disobedience, knowing the consequences. It remains a mystery, however, that anyone would rebel against God, that *anyone* would choose the pleasures of the moment in exchange for eternal separation from God.

The heart of this mystery is the autonomy of intelligent created beings who clearly have something called self-will. At least some angels (Satan and those who joined his rebellion) and all men have the power of choice. In deciding upon beliefs or actions, though evidence may be weighed, ultimately reason is set aside in order to bow before the throne of self. We are our own worst enemies.

Self had its awful birth when Eve made the choice of disobedience for all of her descendants. Christ said there is no hope except we deny self (Mt 16:24). And the only way that can be done effectively is to embrace the cross of Christ as our own so that we can say with Paul, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...” (Gal 2:20).

The solution to evil through the incarnation is also a mystery: “...great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tm 3:16).

“*God was manifest in the flesh.*” What a mystery! God could become a fetus in Mary’s womb? John the Baptist as a 6-month-old fetus leapt in the womb of Elizabeth in recognition that Mary was pregnant with the Messiah. Amazing!

“*Seen of angels.*” These heavenly beings must have watched in astonishment. The One whom they had known as God the Son, one with the Father, for at least 4,000 years by earth time (we know not how much earlier angels were created), was growing in the virgin Mary’s womb, soon to be born a babe needing a mother’s milk and care—truly man, yet at the same time truly God. Mystery of mysteries!

“*Believed on in the world.*” The Apostle John speaks in awe of this One whom “we have heard...seen with our eyes...looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)” (1 Jn 1:1,2). In his Gospel John says, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14).

Yes, “*Believed on in the world.*” Certainly John believed, as did Paul, that Jesus the Messiah of Israel was truly “God manifest in the flesh.” To be a Christian one must believe that Jesus Christ is God come as a man to redeem us. What love to come from so high to stoop so low—to be rejected, hated, misunderstood, mocked, maligned, stripped, scourged, and crucified by those He came to redeem!

“*Received up into glory.*” His sacrifice accepted by the Father, He is glorified at the Father’s right hand and interceding there for us (Rom 8:34). But even before that great meeting in His presence in the Father’s house, “beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, [we] are changed into the same image...by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:18).

Surely if the incarnation is the great mystery of godliness, then for us to live godly lives we must have Christ dwelling within us and living His life through us: “Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach...” (Col 1:27, 28). This is the “hope of his calling” which Paul prayed that the Ephesian saints would understand. Peter explains that God “hath called us unto his eternal glory” (1 Pt 5:10). We are going to be like Christ. The glory that the disciples beheld in Christ will be manifested in us!

We are transformed by His Word, the Word of Truth upon which we feed for spiritual nourishment. The written instructions which God spoke into DNA and which are essential for physical life present a powerful picture of the “words that...are spirit, and...life” (Jn 6:63). This is the living Word of God, which when believed (1 Pt 1:23-25) creates and nourishes spiritual life.

Quotable

If fellowship with God is our first concern, then we can have fellowship with Him in the kitchen, in sickness, in any kind of trying and difficult situation. Whatever lies across our path to be done, even the most irksome chore, is there to be done for God and for His glory. Gone will be the former striving, bondage, and frustration. We shall be at peace with our God and ourselves.

—Roy and Revel Hession,
We Would See Jesus

Q&A

QUESTION: I disagree with your stance regarding Rome being identified with Catholicism. Vatican City is a separate entity from Rome. Rome itself is associated with Catholicism, as you state, but they are not married. The Vatican is married with Catholic dogma for sure. You have stated that the responsibility is upon Catholics to disprove the premise that Revelation 17-18 is speaking about the end-times religious system called the harlot. I immediately thought of the rebuttal that Catholics have made.

RESPONSE: The “rebuttal” the Catholics have made is of no value at all, particularly since Catholic eschatology teachers and commentators recognize the identification of the Great Harlot with an “apostate Rome” in comparison with today’s supposedly non-apostate variety. Catholic “apologists” have a problem with any supposed rebuttal.

We would suggest that some critical points have been missed regarding Rome. You said, “Rome itself is associated with Catholicism, as you state, but they are not married.” That’s not true. Many of the titles used in the Vatican are taken from Roman sources. “Pontiff” and “Vicar” are derived from Imperial Rome. Note the following: “Pontifex - (Latin: ‘bridge builder’)... member of a council of priests in ancient Rome. The college, or collegium, of the pontifices was the most important Roman priesthood...” (Britannica.com).

Catholic sources note: “[*Pontifex maximus*] borrowed from the vocabulary of pagan religion at Rome... designated... members of the council of [pagan] priests forming the Pontifical College, which ranked as the highest priestly organization at Rome and, was presided over by the pontifex maximus” (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. XI).

Catholicism has always been identified with Rome, and its “borrowings” are but further evidence of the linkage. As Dave Hunt noted, “Though it is built on seven hills, there would be no reason to accuse Rio

de Janeiro of spiritual fornication. It makes no claim of having a special relationship with God. And though Jerusalem has that relationship, it cannot be the woman riding on the beast, for it is not built on seven hills. Nor does it meet the other criteria by which this woman is to be identified.

“Against only one other *city* in history could a charge of fornication be leveled. That city is Rome, and more specifically *Vatican City*. She claims to have been the worldwide headquarters of Christianity since its beginning and maintains that claim to this day. Her pope enthroned in Rome claims to be the exclusive representative of God, the vicar of Christ. Rome is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, and in that too she is unique” (Hunt, “A City on Seven Hills, A Woman Rides the Beast: The Roman Catholic Church in the Last Days,” p. 69). From time immemorial the Catholic Church has been referred to as the *Roman* Catholic Church, not the *Vatican* Catholic Church.

QUESTION [COMPOSITE OF SEVERAL]: In April’s Q&A you stated, “I’ve tried to explain in many writings that ‘the Word of God cannot be presented visually without destroying its truth.’” If this statement is true, how can we attempt to show God’s love through our daily lives?

RESPONSE: The attempt to present the Scriptures visually in dramatic form (a movie or a play, for example) is far different from believers living their lives in obedience to God’s Word, which is a witness to all who observe their godliness being manifested. We are commanded to do the latter in God’s Word: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

The major problem with attempting to translate the Bible visually is that it will always be a subjective presentation based upon the requirements of the visual medium and therefore at odds with biblical truth. The *written* Word is an objective medium. Believers discussing the meaning of particular scriptures can “reason together” by considering things such as context, grammar, meanings of words, the literal-versus-figurative use of words, etc., in order to come to an objective understanding of what God has communicated. That is what hermeneutics is all about.

The nature of a *visual* translation of the Bible, on the other hand, does not allow for such objective scrutiny. Evaluations are based upon cinematography, directing, acting, art direction, and many other considerations and decisions that go into a production. Both the decision-making and its evaluation by viewers are nearly always

subjective, i.e., involving emotions and feelings. Furthermore, a visual interpretation of the Bible will always involve adding to or subtracting from God’s Word, which Scripture condemns. The actor Russell Crowe, star of the movie *Noah*, made a statement that biblical Christians need to consider. He noted that the Bible itself does not provide enough information for a feature film, and therefore dialogue and other information must be added. That insight alone should be enough to turn true believers away from translating the Bible visually, but there are many other problems as well. (See McMahon, *Showtime for the Sheep?*)

QUESTION: I have been born again for 20-some years and began taking an [exercise] class about four years ago. My teacher is a self-proclaimed gay man. I struggle with supporting him even in a small way. He does sometimes question me about Bible issues, [and] I never back down but quote the verses that condemn homosexuality. Am I wrong taking lessons from him?

RESPONSE: To begin, we shall be praying that the Lord will give you wisdom and discernment as you seek to witness for Him.

In 1 Corinthians 5:9-10 we are told, “I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: *Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world*, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; *for then must ye needs go out of the world.*” (Emphasis added)

Verses 11-12 of that passage tell us that we are not to continue to fellowship *with those within the body of Christ* who continually engage in immoral behavior, but that they are to be judged. On the other hand, the scripture tells us that to avoid those who are not believers and are living contrary to the Bible would be impossible. As long as we are in this world we will be in contact with sinful people. We may have no idea whether the grocers, repairmen, service personnel, doctors, et al., are engaged in homosexuality, or are drunks, fornicators, extortionists, or involved in any other immoral behavior. If we use the opportunity of this contact to share the gospel, who knows what seeds we may sow for His kingdom? You say that you have had liberty to share Scripture with this man. Isaiah 55:11 tells us that God’s Word shall not “return unto [Him] void, but it shall accomplish that which [He] please[s], and it shall prosper in the thing whereto [He] sent it.”

To sum up, because we will have some contact with those who continually practice sin, we must be prepared to share the gospel, to pray for them, and to trust the Lord to give the increase.



IN DEFENSE *of the* FAITH

BIBLICAL ANSWERS *to* CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

Is Divine Inspiration Essential?

QUESTION: There is no doubt that the Bible contains some of the most sublime teachings on morals to be found in the world's literature. Whether these words were borrowed from other religions or came from the pen of Solomon or the lips of Christ or were written centuries later and wrongly attributed to them seems to me to be beside the point. It is the teachings that count. Nor does the fact that the Bible obviously has many errors and contradictions in it detract from its moral teachings. I don't see why the Bible has to be defended as infallible.

RESPONSE: There are several problems with your thesis. The Bible doesn't just present some "sublime moral teachings," but it makes many inescapable claims that have a bearing upon its teachings. It repeatedly claims to be the inerrant Word of God and that its teachings are inspired from God, not invented by men or borrowed from some religion. If it lies about its very foundation, then why should I accept anything else it offers? Furthermore, such a mixture of lies and sublime moral precepts would present a contradiction difficult to explain.

The Bible also claims to tell the true history of the Jews and of other ancient nations; the true account of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ; the true account of the early church, its persecution by the rabbis and Roman authorities, the conversion of Paul and his missionary travels, and Paul's teachings, which he claimed to have received not from the other apostles but directly from the resurrected Christ in heaven, if these and many other claims are not true, then the Bible is literally filled with lies. Would you not admit that if the Bible is filled with lies, that fact would reflect badly upon its moral teachings?

Furthermore, these other elements presented in the Bible in addition to its moral teachings are so interwoven with the whole as to constitute an integral part of the Christian faith. The Bible must either be accepted or rejected in its entirety. If it is not true in even one area, then Christianity becomes untenable. Each part of the Bible is intimately tied to every other, so that if one falls the whole falls with it. The Bible does not contain errors and contradictions, as you suggest; and if it did, it would not be worthy of our trust.

Attorney Irwin H. Linton carefully examined the Bible just as he would a case in court. He based his faith in the Bible upon the evidence. Linton explained

the vital importance of whether or not the Bible in its entirety is actually God's Word:


"The accuracy of the record of a case on appeal is a thing that must be settled beyond dispute before an appellate court will undertake or form an opinion about the trial below; and the infallibility of the record upon which rest the eternal essentials of our faith—the deity of Christ, His voluntary, atoning death, bodily resurrection and impending return in power and glory—are all rendered uncertain in a mind in which the accuracy of the Bible record is in doubt.

"If we do not give full faith and credit to the Written Word which we have seen, experience proves that we are in great danger sooner or later of diminishing the love and honor we give the Living Word [Christ] whom we have not seen; for our conviction that . . . God became flesh and dwelt among us . . . is based upon the facts on which such conclusion rests; and if the record of the facts be impugned, who can retain the conclusion based upon them?

"The deadly effect upon my faith and the insuperable difficulties in which I found myself involved when I made a tentative trial of the view . . . that the Bible may be wrong, and is only human in all but its religious teachings, made this matter clear to me for all time."

YOUR words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.


— JEREMIAH 15:16



WHAT A PRECIOUS JEWEL the Word of God is to us today! In a time much like Jeremiah's where the idolatry around us can be depressing and discouraging, we can see the world and our country moving further and further away from God. But like Jeremiah, we too have God's Word as a source of joy and rejoicing. We too can remember that we are called by the name of the Lord of Hosts. We are His children, His family, His purchased possession.

We are the joy that was set before the Lord that caused Him to endure the cross and despise the shame. We are the ones who can never be separated from His love. We are the ones He will never leave nor forsake. We are the ones who can do all things through our strength in Christ. We are the ones who can take all these reminders in His Word and let them be our food—food that brings joy and rejoicing in heart, though hearts all around us are hard and will not heed the call of God.

Thank the Lord for His Word today. Have some for lunch and see how it changes the rest of your day. Listen to it, pray it; just stay connected to it. This simple “up look” will change your entire outlook. It did just that for the man known as the Weeping Prophet, and it will do the same for you!



— *Excerpted from Body Builders: A Daily Devotional (see page 16 to order) by Barry Stagner, Sr. Pastor at Calvary Chapel Twstin, CA, and featured speaker on the nationally broadcast radio program The Truth about God.*

TBC NewsWatch

LATEST THREAT TO EVANGELICAL SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

THE TOWER.COM, 7/14, "THE LATEST THREAT TO EVANGELICAL SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL" [EXCERPTS]: [The 2010 film, *With God On Our Side*]...perfectly encapsulated the erosion of Evangelical Christian support for Israel. [The film] has been repackaged and promoted again and again by anti-Israel activists in some of the most influential Evangelical institutions in the United States. These activists, often in high positions, have found eager disciples in places like Willow Creek and the academic halls of Wheaton College, one of America's pre-eminent Evangelical institutions. And they have been able to exploit the resources of popular Evangelical development organizations like World Vision.

Before he grew dreadlocks and donned his trademark homemade smock, Shane Claiborne worked for Willow Creek. For many young Evangelicals today, he represents the pinnacle of Christian social justice activism. In 2012, Claiborne enthralled the audience at the pro-Palestinian "Christ at the Checkpoint" conference in Bethlehem. But his performance was also deeply troubling. He spoke, for example, about his participation in Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) at the start of the US invasion of Iraq, but was strangely silent about Saddam Hussein's slaughter of thousands of his own people and support for the families of Palestinian suicide bombers. Like [Lynne] Hybels, Shane fervently disavows the use of violence and rejects the idea that he is anti-Israel, but there is no question that he has become a useful tool in the campaign to turn Evangelicals against the Jewish state.

Both Mae Canon, World Vision's Senior Director of Advocacy and Outreach-Middle East, and Steve Haas, World Vision's Vice President and Chief Catalyst, formerly worked at Willow Creek. And like Willow Creek, World Vision is an incredibly influential organization in the Evangelical world [and] rarely crosses the line into political or theological controversies. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an exception. World Vision makes no secret of its distaste for Zionism, both Jewish and Christian.

World Vision's antagonism toward Israel is largely the work of an activist named Tom Getman. Getman served as director of World Vision's program in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza before being tasked with establishing

World Vision's office in Washington, DC. After he left World Vision, he was able to abandon his veneer of neutrality and joined the boards of the ferociously pro-Palestinian groups Evangelicals for Mid-East Understandings, Sabeel, Sojourners, and KairosUSA. In a brief interview with fellow anti-Israel activist Rev. Stephen Sizer, Getman bragged about his connections in the White House and on Capitol Hill. These "friends," he claimed, would encourage the US government to engage in dialogue with other friends of his, who happen to be leaders of the Lebanese terrorist group Hezbollah.

(<http://goo.gl/MB3ZfS>)

BIG BANG'S BIG PROBLEM BEDEVILS RESEARCHERS

WORLD NEWS SERVICE, 7/22/14, "THE BIG BANG'S BIG PROBLEM BEDEVILS RESEARCHERS" [EXCERPTS]: If the Big Bang theory is correct, our universe should not exist, according to research published last month by physicists at King's College in London. The shocking discovery implies the universe should have collapsed less than a second after it exploded into existence.

Christians are divided on whether or not the Big Bang theory fits with the biblical description of creation. But the theory has been an enormous concession for many secular scientists. For years they clung to belief in a universe that was steady and that had existed indefinitely. But recent advances in physics have forced most scientists to admit that the universe had a beginning and that it has been expanding ever since by a process dubbed cosmic inflation.

For Christians, the universe having a beginning point is no new discovery. These scientists were upstaged more than 2,500 years ago by Job, Moses, David, and other Bible authors.

The researchers of the current study combined data from observations made possible by the BICEP2 telescope with new information developed from the discovery of the Higgs Boson, a particle thought to be responsible for the mass of everything that exists. The scientists said the universe lies in a valley of the Higgs Field, an energy field that exists throughout the universe. It contains the Higgs Boson particle and sets the limits on its behavior. The universe is prevented from entering an even deeper valley by a large energy barrier... But, according to the Big Bang theory, the researchers say cosmic inflation would have kicked the universe over the hill and into the deeper valley where it would have collapsed in less than a second.

"We have to extend our theories to explain why this didn't happen," said Robert Hogan, a doctoral student at King's College who led the study, in the Royal Astronomical Society. The researchers conclude there must be some process yet undiscovered.

"For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream," said Robert Jastrow, founder of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and a self-proclaimed agnostic. "He has scaled the mountains of ignorance, he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."

(<http://goo.gl/ADilvP>)

PENTECOSTAL CHURCH WELCOMES POPE FRANCIS

ONE NEWS NOW.COM, 7/29/14, "PENTECOSTAL CHURCH WELCOMES POPE FRANCIS" [EXCERPTS]: Pope Francis has become the first pope to visit a Pentecostal church, pressing his outreach to evangelicals who represent Catholicism's greatest competition for Christian souls around the globe.

Francis flew by helicopter to visit the under-construction Pentecostal Church of Reconciliation in the southern city of Caserta [Italy.] He met privately with a Pentecostal preacher who is an old friend. Speaking to some 350 Pentecostal faithful in the church, Francis apologized for Catholic persecution of Pentecostals during Italy's fascist regime and stressed the unity in diversity within Christianity.

He acknowledged the remarkable nature of his visit, saying: "Someone will be surprised: 'The pope went to visit the evangelicals?' But he went to see his brothers."

Francis has met unofficially with several Pentecostal and evangelical preachers recently.

(<http://goo.gl/C5lykg>)

[TBC: In 1990's Global Peace, Dave wrote: "Cardinal Bea, who was Pope Pius XII's personal confessor...saw the blossoming charismatic movement as a vehicle for Roman Catholicism's ecumenical goals. The cardinal sought out David DuPlessis (known as 'Mr. Pentecost'), whom he invited to the Second Vatican Council. DuPlessis and other leading Pentecostals and charismatics accepted gladly and became Rome's unwitting pawns. Thus began a growing acceptance of Catholicism by protestant charismatics. Today's charismatic movement is a major bridge to Rome."]

T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

- Sep 6** **Midwest Hebrew Ministries**
Arden Hills, MN
(763) 427-7162
- Sep 21** **Calvary Chapel Spring Creek**
Elko, NV
775-753-9258
- Oct 17-18** **Discern for Life Youth Conf.**
Niles, MI (near South Bend, IN)
(903) 567-6423
www.discernment-ministries.org
- Nov 7-9** **Berean Assembly**
Spring Hill, FL
(352) 597-3640

STS 24/7 Broadcast Schedule

- Sep 5** **Dave & Tom Classic**
A Look Back at 9/11 (pt 2)
- Sep 12/19** **Mike Oppenheimer**
UFOs
- Sep 26/Oct 3** **Paul Wilkinson**

Listen to Search the Scriptures 24/7 at:
www.theberean.org/radio
(Schedule is subject to change.)

Letters

Dear TBC,

I just *finally* (whew) got done reading *What Love Is This?* I wish I could hug Dave for making this final effort. My daughter is caught in this doctrine through the encouragement of her husband. She now believes that her whole upbringing was based on false premises and that her choosing Jesus was based on works. [She wants to please her husband] by following TULIP...I pray that I will be given grace [and] the right words to speak truth into the lives of my son-in-law and my dear sweet daughter. It has caused a huge rift in our family. TK (email)

Dear Staff,

I am finding your article on Minecraft interesting. After being a fan of Nintendo for 30+ years I have had to part ways with Nintendo. Their video games like Zelda have a tendency toward some sort of Hinduism. Generally, I could overlook the paganism, but since they have become hostile to Christians and scripture in their Miiverse I have contacted them to let them know that after being a fan from my childhood...they have lost me, as I am not ashamed of Jesus Christ or the Word of God. If their Miiverse is going to be hostile to my religion while promoting theirs, I am done. They didn't seem to care much. I suppose that might change if

people cared more about their faith than their video games. I sold my Wii U and have no intention of returning to Nintendo, although I might pick up a secondhand Game Cube sometime and get back to the old-fashioned games. CR (email)

Dear Tom,

We thank God for you and for the ministry of The Berean Call. We pray regularly for you as you have the responsibility of directing TBC and seeking God's will in what to address and print in each issue. We are encouraged by the excerpts you include from Dave's writing too.

I read "Minecraft: Friend or Foe?" [July 2014] to my wife, and we were both surprised to find no words of caution from TBC at the close of the article. Part of our problem may be because we are not "gamers." We are retired missionaries who spent over 30 years seeking to bring the gospel to Muslims in West Africa.

To take up Minecraft in order to get in touch with non-Christian "gamers" may be an acceptable way of reaching the lost, but the approach of the writers raises questions in our minds that disturb us...[It] may lead to effective witnessing, or it may lead to the Christian getting involved in teaching that corrupts and deadens his own faith. It is true that some who play this game will find it stimulating to study and use the Word of God. It is also true that to focus on the thinking of unregenerate people can have the wrong effect on ungrounded or immature Christians. Whether young Christian children or untaught Christians should be encouraged to use Minecraft "to get the answers and know how to go back to the Bible to find truth" is debatable, to say the least.... We don't question the sincerity and motives of the authors in their desire to use games and the Bible to reach people for Christ. We do have questions as to the advisability of using or advising others to use this approach as presented in the TBC article. In a day when too many Christians are untaught and ungrounded in the Word, it is questionable as to whether children and adults should be encouraged to play more games, or if the words of Paul have an application in the matter (1 Cor 13:11).... May God continue to bless, guide, and encourage you in your much needed ministry in these last days. CF (FL)

Dear T. A. and Staff,

Your July TBC Notes "How's It Going?" reminded me of the fact that in all the different churches I have attended, I cannot think of one time when people were exhorted to daily read the Word. I think it is assumed they will but that is not usually the case. I began reading thru the Bible once a year in 1986.... You are correct when you say how

important daily reading is—and to read the whole Bible and not just parts of it. Even the "boring" parts and genealogies are there for a reason.... I am glad you stand firm against the heresies of Catholicism when so many others refuse to. Thanks, too, for your stand against psychology. Been there, done that. What a bunch of hooey! PM (WA)

To the TBC Staff,

Please convey my thanks and appreciation to Mr. T. A. McMahon for a "whopper" of an article [June 2014, *How Does Your Church Counsel?*]. This is definitely going into a project I'm working on (for which you've given your consent). I studied psychology at diploma level for three years before I was a Christian, and even in my anti-God/unsaved state I sensed something was wrong with it when I couldn't find the word "love" anywhere. SS (South Africa)

TBC Notes

Other Directed...

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:3-4).

Being "other directed" may be our biggest struggle in life. To say that it doesn't come naturally should be obvious to everyone. Even for those whose life has been transformed in Christ, who are now new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17), the battle continues regarding putting others ahead of ourselves. The Apostle Paul tells us as much in his letter to the Philippians: "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (2:21). The good news is it's not a condition that's impossible to overcome. If it were, the verses quoted above (Philippians 2:3-4) would be an exercise in futility. Instead, it's something we need to work at—first of all to please God, and then to bless others.

How might such a practice bear fruit in our lives and in our relationship with spouses, children, brothers and sisters in Christ, relatives, co-workers, etc.? Think about it. It has to be at the top of the list regarding the witness of our being followers of Jesus.

T. A. McMAHON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE AGE OF THE EARTH DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

PART TWO – EXCERPTED FROM *LET THERE BE LIGHT* BY JAY SEEGERT

[The following is a continuation of the article in the TBC August 2014 issue by Jay Seegert of the Creation Education Center. Jay now takes a closer look at the various scientific methods of observation regarding the age of the earth. See page 13 for resources from Jay Seegert.]

EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD

The earth is like a giant magnet, and scientists have been measuring its strength for more than 170 years. From these measurements, they have determined that the earth's magnetic field has a half-life of about 1,400 years. This simply means that every 1,400 years, it loses half of its strength. The most interesting aspect of this phenomenon is not related to the future of the field but its past. About 1,400 years ago, the magnetic field would have been twice as strong as it is today. Going back another 1,400 years (c. 800 B.C.) it would be four times as strong. A greatly increased magnetic field means a greatly heated core in the earth (due to frictional effects of electrical currents within the core). So how far back could we possibly go? ...A plausible limit is about 10,000 years. Much beyond that, and the earth's structure would not be able to withstand the heat. So could the earth actually be billions of years old? Not according to its magnetic field. (Note: some have attempted to counter this by reference to "magnetic reversals." However, the actual evidence shows that these reversals happened relatively quickly—related to the flood—and are in no way a valid counter-argument.)

RADIOHALOS

At currently measured rates, it would take billions of years for Uranium 238 (238U) to completely decay into its final daughter element, Lead 206 (206Pb). As mentioned in part 1 of this series, the implied assumption is that the rate of decay has been constant (equal to the current rate) throughout the entire history of the earth...However, there is compelling scientific evidence to reject this assumption.

Unlike Uranium, the element Polonium (produced during the decay of Uranium) decays very rapidly. Uranium decay produces three isotopes (versions) of Polonium: 218Po, 214Po and 210Po. These three elements have half-lives of just 3.1 minutes, 164 micro-seconds, and 138 days, respectively. This means that these elements decay very quickly, not over millions or billions of years, but in days, minutes, or fractions of a second!

Why does any of this matter? Scientists have discovered numerous examples of Polonium "halos" within granite rocks. When Polonium decays, the radioactivity damages the surrounding structure (biotite—a mica mineral) and leaves a spherical pattern. The general term for these patterns is "radiohalos," short for "radioactive halos." Polonium halos are radiohalos specifically formed by Polonium decay. So where is this all leading? The radiohalos can only form in hardened rock, but Polonium decays very quickly. If it truly took millions or billions of years for the Uranium to decay and millions of years for the rocks to cool, the Polonium halos would not form. The rocks must have formed and cooled in much less time.

The existence of Polonium halos indicates that 100 million years of Uranium decay were necessary to produce enough Polonium to create these halos. However, since Polonium decays so quickly, it shouldn't have left any record in the rocks (which supposedly were still in the process of cooling for millions of years). But the halos *are* there! This is evidence of accelerated radioactive decay rates. It appears that 100 million years of decay took place in a number of days! This would account for the appearance of the halos and would also indicate that Uranium decay was accelerated approximately 1 billion times the current rate—evidence of a young earth and against the assumption of constant decay rates.

POLYSTRATE FOSSILS

Polystrate fossils are fossils (usually trees) that extend through multiple layers of rock that were supposedly deposited over multiplied

thousands or millions of years....If those layers were truly laid down over such a long period of time, the trees would have rotted long before ever getting completely buried and thus would never turn into a fossil! It's interesting that when we find these trees (and there are many of them), we generally don't find the root systems intact, meaning that these trees were not growing there; they were catastrophically uprooted from their original location and *rapidly deposited*.

HELIUM ABUNDANCE IN MINERALS

When uranium (U238) decays into lead (Pb206), it goes through a series of "steps" during the process. It releases helium (He) 8 different times. This helium is "slippery" and easily escapes from the rock in which the uranium exists, out into the atmosphere. If the rocks are millions or billions of years old, we would not expect to find much helium within because it would have escaped long ago. Conversely, we should find quite a bit of helium in the atmosphere, since most helium atoms cannot reach the necessary velocity to escape the earth's gravitational pull. In reality, we find much more helium in the rocks than should be expected and not much at all in the atmosphere! Recent research on this (by the RATE Group from the Institute for Creation Research) has shown that not only does this limit the age of the rocks and atmosphere to a number of thousands of years, but it also shows evidence of accelerated radiometric decay—billions of years worth within a very short burst of time (or a few bursts of time—similar to the previous "radio halo" example). [See www.icr.org/rate]

MILLIONS OF YEARS TO FORM?

We all know that it takes millions of years to form oil... And the same goes for coal... And diamonds—millions of years...right? WRONG!

Oil supposedly formed over millions of years from the breakdown of organic material buried within the earth. However, scientists today are able to produce oil in a matter of minutes in the laboratory (*Discover*, May 2, 2003). It takes the right materials and conditions—not the magic of millions of years. The main ingredients are organic material, pressure, heat, and water. This is exactly what the flood would have provided! Lots of water burying tons of organic material, forming huge layers of sediment, creating tremendous pressure, which in turn created great amounts of heat.

More recent studies have indicated that oil may even be forming today by non-biotic (*abiotic*) methods. According to WorldNetDaily.com (2/1/08) "*hydrocarbons are naturally produced on a continual basis throughout the solar system, including within the mantle of the earth. The advocates believe the oil seeps up through bedrock cracks to deposit in sedimentary rock.*"

The same goes for coal. Argonne National Laboratories has proven that coal can be formed under natural conditions in a matter of weeks. Some laboratories have even produced it within hours under special conditions. (http://www.creationworldview.org/articles_view.asp?id=51—last accessed 1/25/09)

Scientists have also been able to create diamonds that are indistinguishable from natural diamonds using carbon dioxide, metallic sodium, high pressure, and a temperature of 440°C in just 12 hours!

CARBON-14 LEVELS

Carbon-14 (C14) dating is a method that is used to measure the age of things that were once living (fossil bones, remains of skin, etc.). C14 is a radioactive (unstable) form of Carbon. It slowly decays back into Nitrogen-14 (where it originally came from). Scientists measure the amount of C14 in a specimen to determine how old it is (or more specifically,

how long ago it died). Space doesn't permit a detailed explanation of how this method works, but I want to expose a few myths that most of us have grown up believing. (For more information, see our booklet entitled *What Exactly is Carbon-14 Dating?*)

Dinosaurs supposedly became extinct 65 million years ago. If that were the case, their bones should have no evidence of C14, because all measurable amounts would have decayed away in less than 100,000 years. As a surprise to evolutionists, scientists have found C14 in some dinosaur bones, indicating that they have not been around for millions of years.

(For more information on dinosaurs, see *Dinosaurs—Where Do They Fit in the Bible?*)

With coal supposedly being millions of years old, you wouldn't expect to find any amount of Carbon-14 remaining, but surprisingly, no coal sample has ever been found to be completely void of C14.

Diamonds are the hardest substance known to man and are extremely impervious to contamination. Allegedly millions to billions of years old, they also should not contain any C14, but recent studies have shown that they do, dispelling the idea of vast ages.

DECAY OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL

Biological material is certainly not as resilient as geologic material, such as granite, and is especially susceptible to decay. In spite of the fact that researchers say that DNA cannot survive in its natural environment for more than 10,000 years, we have discovered it in places where it "ought not be"! One example is in insects that were imbedded in amber. Another was in some dinosaur bones. (They've even found dinosaur bones with blood cells and soft tissue, un-decomposed! But dinosaurs are supposed to be at least 65 million years old!) Lastly, they have evidently revived bacteria (supposedly 250 million years old) with completely undamaged DNA [*Nature* 407:897-900 (19 October 2000)]. This is a huge conundrum for evolutionists but fits very comfortably with a young earth.

FOLDED MOUNTAINS

Have you ever tried folding rocks?...I haven't either. It's interesting to note, however, that there are a number of places on earth where we see great "folds" in solid rock. How did this occur? Experiments have shown that if there is enough pressure and heat, rocks can fold to some extent. In these cases, the rocks show evidence of having experienced great amounts of heat. However, there are many instances where the rocks show no evidence of great heat and also yield evidence that the rocks were in a "soft and plastic" state when they were folded (not having had enough time to harden). This fits perfectly with a global flood, depositing the layers rapidly that were then uplifted and deformed by subsequent tectonic movements, all before they had time to harden.

CONCLUSION

We are inundated with stories of millions and billions of years from the media and scientific community, but the empirical evidence is significantly lacking. Numerous scientific indicators show that the earth cannot possibly be billions of years old, as the evolutionary model indicates, and those who won't question the validity of this model will generally not even consider any evidence that would counter the idea of eons of time.

From a biblical perspective, the case for millions of years is not supported by the text. Furthermore, importing millions of years into Scripture causes several serious exegetical and theological problems....

Our eternal destiny is not dependent upon our belief regarding the age of the earth, but a careful and reverential study of the Bible warrants against being too quick to adopt the conventional secular thoughts in geology and astronomy, especially when they appear to oppose the straightforward reading of God's Word. "*Let God be true, and every man a liar.*" (Rom 3:4)

PERSPECTIVE: THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

As interesting or important as the subject of the age of the earth might be, there is something infinitely more significant, and it relates to your eternal destiny.

I think it's safe to say that when your life is over and you find yourself standing (more likely kneeling) before God, He won't be asking your opinion on the age of the earth or quizzing you about radiometric dating! At that point, there will only be one subject on the table, and I wish to close with this brief thought.

The Bible clearly teaches the following:

God created everything, including mankind. (Col 1:16; Gn 1:27, Jn 1:3)

Man rebelled against God and was consequently spiritually separated from Him. This sin brought a curse, including death, to all of God's creation. (Rom 5:12)

God's standard is 100 percent holiness because He is 100 percent holy. However, we cannot be "good enough" to obtain this standard, no matter how hard we try. 1 Pt 1:16; Rom 3:20; Ja 2:10, Isa 64:6

The penalty for sin is death, but God has paid the price for those who fully trust in Christ. (Rom 6:23; Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8)

Contrary to popular belief, there are not "many ways" to God. (Jn 14:6, Acts 4:12)

Restoring your relationship with God comes not from "head knowledge" or acknowledging the historical existence of Jesus but as a result of repenting of your sins and placing your faith completely in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (as payment for your sins).... Here's the personal challenge...before the day is over, ask yourself this question:

If I were to die tonight and find myself standing before God, and He asked "*Why should I let you into heaven?*" what would my response be?

Is there any rational reason that today you would not confess your sins and place your faith in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins and assurance of your eternal salvation?

"I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."—2 Cor 6:2

Don't put it off another day...

"And I'll say to myself, '...Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.'" —Lk 12:19-21

You may be sensing that you don't know for sure what would happen to you if you were to die today and that you truly need to commit your life to Christ, but you aren't quite sure "how" to do it. It's not by saying some magical phrase and doing something highly mystical but simply by honestly and sincerely saying something like following:

Dear God, I know that you created me and that I have not lived according to your standards. Your word tells me that "*trying to be good enough*" does not earn your favor. Because of your great love for me, you sent your Son (Jesus) to die on a cross to pay the penalty for my own sins so that I don't have to spend eternity separated from you in judgment. I am asking today for you to forgive my sins and am accepting the free gift of eternal life that you are offering to me through your son Jesus Christ. I want to live my life in a way that is honoring and pleasing to you. When I do sin in the future, help me to confess those sins and thank you for the fact that they too are also forgiven in Jesus. Amen!

If you sincerely pray a prayer similar to the one above, you can have peace, knowing where you will spend eternity! It doesn't mean that everything else in your life will be easy but that you can have confidence in your own eternal destiny (and you now have a new-found relationship with the Creator of the universe, who cares for you!). Isn't that just a bit more exciting than learning about the age of the earth? (Jn 5:24; Jn 10:28-29; 1 Pt 5:7; Phil 4:13)

NEW! TRUTH ABOUT NOAH'S FLOOD AND THE GRAND CANYON!



Grand Canyon: The Puzzle on the Plateau

Mission: Imperative!—The Grand Canyon is one of the most breathtaking sights in the world. First time visitors often stare, spellbound...“How did this happen?!” Standard geological interpretations (that always involve millions of years) cannot explain many of the strange features and anomalies. On the other hand, creationists have often assumed that receding flood waters

formed the canyon. This view includes its own set of problems that cannot be explained. As it turns out, the pieces of the puzzle have been lying in full view all along, but nobody properly fit them together until Dr. Walter Brown, president of the Center for Scientific Creation, unlocked the “puzzle on the plateau.” His pioneering research has taken him far beyond the canyon itself. Amazingly, the events that carved the canyon also explain most of the fascinating geological features in the entire area (e.g., Monument Valley, the Petrified Forest, Canyonlands, Arches, etc.). Furthermore, they all formed very quickly! This video presents all the information you’ll need to know about the formation of these natural wonders. Mike Snavelly, president of Mission Imperative, is your host on this amazing adventure. Also, as a bonus documentary, join Mike as he describes his 300-mile raft journey on the Colorado River through the entire canyon! 1 DVD, 53 min.

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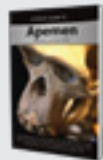
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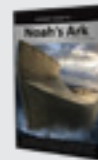
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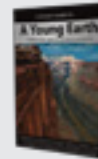
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