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Berean Call

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"[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily,

[to see] whether those things were so."
—Acts 17:11

# Being a Berean

T. A. McMahon Originally published January 1, 1994

And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

—Acts 17:10-11

AS WE APPROACH the end of our second year as a ministry, we think it worthwhile to review two basic questions people often ask regarding the work of The Berean Call: "What exactly is a Berean?" and "What does TBC do?"

Although we've covered many aspects of those questions in various issues of our newsletter (and, in general, *The Berean Call* is an ongoing reflection of our work), we thought it might be helpful to our readers if we addressed "what we're about" in some depth.

Luke writes in Acts 17:10-11 that the Apostle Paul, having left Thessalonica and recently arrived in the city of Berea, preached in the synagogue of the *Berean* Jews. Paul's encouraging experience with the Bereans caused Luke to commend them. He wrote that they were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica because they received the Word of God from Paul "with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily" to know whether or not what he had to say was true.

The purpose of this ministry is to call

believers in Jesus Christ to be like the Bereans. They not only had a heart to hear the things of God but, more importantly, were able to discern what was truly of Him because they regarded the Scriptures as *the* authority in ascertaining the truth of what they were hearing. The Bereans practiced what Isaiah preached: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

TBC's chief concern is the spiritual welfare of the body of Christ, and in particular, the encouragement of biblical discernment. We believe the times reflect the necessity of our calling. Even a cursory review of what has taken place in the church during the last 25 years will reveal a fierce undermining of "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). You might even say that the Bereans of Paul's day "had it easy" compared to this generation. In those days the opposition to truth was in the secular world around them—it had not yet infiltrated the church under the guise of a more enlightened or advanced Christianity. While there were pressing pagan influences as well as some heretical teachings and practices here and there, they weren't subjected to anything like the flood of false beliefs, teachings, and practices surging in on the tidal wave of today's Christian media.

We have a heart for saving the lost; we also have a concern for rescuing those in bondage to cults. *Our primary ministry, however, is to believers.* In many ways the church has turned to the beliefs, teachings and practices of the world and the cults, from the penchant for humanistic psychology among conservative evangelicals to the cultic affinity for godhood and the demonstration of godlike powers

among more extreme charismatics. Popular movements and teachers are influencing the church to take dominion over the earth, to set up the Kingdom as a requirement for Christ to return, to produce signs and wonders, and to solve its problems through unbiblical methods such as self-esteem therapies, twelve-step recovery programs, inner-healing rituals, "binding demons" strategies, and "Christian" mysticism. Many professing Christian leaders promote unity by demoting doctrine and encourage ecumenism to include even overt paganism. They also foster the participation of false religious institutions (Mormon, Unification, Roman Catholic, etc.) in "Christian" political causes and co-evangelism projects.

We believe our calling is to exhort the body of Christ to abide in His Word, allowing the Scriptures, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, to be *the* authority and *all-sufficient* resource in the life of every believer. We want to encourage fellow Christians to be *Bereans*—not followers of The Berean Call, not followers of Dave Hunt or of any other man or institution. That would be the antithesis of our ministry! The fruit we desire are believers who proclaim as Jeremiah did, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jeremiah 15:16). The basic premise for our approach is found in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly [equipped for] all good works.

We want committed Christians to take every aspect of those two verses to heart. All Scripture is indeed *inspired* of God. The psalmist confirms, "Thy Word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever" (Psalms 119:160). Peter tells us that the revelation of God didn't originate from man, "but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

It is profitable for *doctrine*. Paul exhorted Timothy with these words: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16). Ignoring the Scriptures, numerous evangelical leaders today claim that a concern for doctrine causes division and therefore should be avoided for the sake of love and unity among the brethren. The Word, however, couldn't be more specific in its opposition to such a teaching: "...[M]ark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). Divisions are created by teachings that are contrary to sound doctrine. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9). Unity in the faith is impossible without the doctrine of Christ. Without such a foundation we have no basis for the faith, for the gospel, for knowing Jesus, or for knowing anything pertinent to the Truth.

All Scripture is profitable for *reproof*. Contrary to popular Christian self-esteem teachings, a biblical reproof is beneficial both for the individual and for a body of believers. Paul publicly reproved Peter, who, because of a fear of men, was undermining the faith of some believers by withdrawing from the Gentiles and compelling them to live under Jewish law (Galatians 2:12-14). It's interesting to note that Peter did not respond by complaining bitterly that Paul's *public* correction denigrated his ministry or caused a loss of support. In fact, as Peter reflects upon his "beloved brother Paul['s]" teachings he commends them for their wisdom and value to the church.

Peter rebuked Ananias and Sapphira. As a result, the early church was infused with a wholesome fear of God and His holiness. Examples found continuously throughout the Scriptures demonstrate the value of reproof for the conviction of sin and erroneous teaching which otherwise might have gone unheeded, leading to the destruction of the faith of some.

All Scripture is profitable for *correction*. Designed for the benefit of believers, this teaching of God's Word is very much out of favor among today's church leaders. It's astounding that page after page of the Bible involves some form of correction, yet any such application among Christians is generally avoided or viewed as emotionally harmful, "negative" and "unloving." On the contrary, correction is biblical and necessary. When it is a work of the Holy Spirit, which it must be to be fruitful, it is the most loving of ministries! The psalmist writes, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head" (Psalms 141:5).

Jesus was continually correcting: Peter, Thomas, His other disciples, the Jewish leaders, the multitudes, individuals who came to him, the woman accused of adultery as well as her accusers, the two on the road to Emmaus, the seven churches of Revelation, and on and on. His words in Hebrews may not be popular today but they cannot be denied: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth..." (Hebrews 12:5-6). Much of the New Testament is corrective in nature. It teaches us what to correct and how to go about it.

Some have complained (a form of "correction"?) that The Berean Call corrects too much, that it majors on error rather than on teaching the truth, that it hurts individuals and their ministries by mentioning names, and that the ministry has thus become unloving and divisive. Such a development is far from our intent. And since we believe in correction, we try our best to make sure we're "walking our talk." Our prayerful intention from newsletter to newsletter is to be acutely sensitive to such concerns, while at the same time trying to be true to what the Lord has put on our heart to communicate. We guard against our

corrections becoming intemperate and sincerely want them to be beneficial.

We mention the names of Christian leaders or ministries which we believe to be promoting certain errors because, in many cases, their false teachings undermine the faith of millions of Christians and must be corrected publicly. While it is possible to deal with a false teaching without "naming names," it's impossible to document its scope and impact without giving examples. Paul's naming of Peter and Barnabas, Alexander the coppersmith, Hymenaeus and Philetus, and John's exposure of Diotrephes are just a few biblical examples of public correction.

Some assert that such matters should be dealt with privately, according to Matthew 18. But those verses address matters of *personal* offense—issues between individuals, not false teachings or practices which subvert the gospel and are promoted publicly.

Our love for all who teach in the name of our Lord compels us to exhort them to reflect biblical truth and we hope and pray they will respond to our concerns. When an influential individual or ministry wittingly or unwittingly teaches something contrary to the Word of God, then recognizes the error and publicly repents and corrects that teaching, the whole body of Christ is encouraged and edified. What man, woman or ministry of God would not want that? This seems to be Peter's heart when (after being publicly corrected) he commends the one who rebuked him and then does some correcting of his own, warning believers to beware of scripture-twisting teachers and of being led away from the faith (2 Peter 3:14-17).

Exhortation to discernment is not without certain occupational hazards, both for us and for those with whom we communicate. We must examine our hearts constantly to make sure we are ministering according to the instructions of 2 Timothy 2:24-26: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." Falling short of such an approach can open the way for the very antithesis of what we desire: self-righteousness, judgmentalism, a critical spirit, legalism, and "bashing" persons or ministries rather than shedding light on their unbiblical teachings and practices. Nevertheless, as we continue to apply biblical correction to our own personal lives as well as our public outreach, His grace will help us avoid such pitfalls and enable us to *speak the truth in love*.

All Scripture is profitable for *instruction in righteousness*. As most of you know, TBC is committed to the Scriptures. Our perspective is that righteousness is found in knowing God's way and in doing things God's way, according to the absolute authority of God's inerrant and all-sufficient Word. Our heart's desire is to encourage those who love the Lord to major in discernment in these days of religious confusion, delusion and deception, and to fill their hearts and minds with God's Word, the only true resource for living a fruitful and productive life.

Concluding its litany of profitable uses of the Scripture, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 declares that God's Word is *the sufficient resource* for every child of Christ to become mature in Him, its content consisting of *all* that we need to know in order to lead fruitful lives unto the Lord. Exhorting believers in the truth by pointing them to the Person of Jesus Christ and His Word is our calling. Our heart is simply to encourage those who love the Lord to heed His words: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

In fulfilling what the Lord would have us do, we believe it is important to direct believers to or supply them with informative materials which will help them avoid being led away from biblical truth. The Lord has raised up a

number of vessels in the Body with concerns similar to ours, and their endeavors, whether books, tapes or articles, offer tremendous insights regarding issues adversely influencing the church. Getting such excellent teachings to those who would personally benefit or use them for the benefit of others is one of our major goals. It's also our hope to expand our own resource materials. We want to communicate through a variety of ways those specific things which the Lord has put on our heart. And by getting the message out in different media (print, audio, video, radio, television), we hope to reach a greater range and number of believers.

Though TBC is presently a very small operation, our desire is to greatly expand our outreach as the Lord enables and directs. We want to make a definite impact for good, to be a true and increasing help to more and more of the millions who know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. In response to present needs, we hope to sponsor regional conferences designed to inform and help pastors deal with unbiblical teachings and practices (particularly those influenced by the church's growing affinity for psychology), and conferences for general audiences dealing with critical doctrinal issues in these days of increasing compromise and apostasy. Should the Lord tarry, we believe it will be necessary to develop more effective ways and means of equipping believers in biblical discernment, as well as ways of mobilizing them to contend for the faith.

Please pray that we will "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith [we] are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

**TBC** 

# QUOTABLE .....

Only the Bible has written the details of history centuries and even thousands of years before they happened. It is this fact, above all, that puts the Bible in a class of its own. Its many plainly stated prophecies (not in guarded, ambiguous language like the French quatrains of Nostradamus) were recorded centuries and even thousands of years before their accurate fulfillment. These prophecies are so numerous, stated in perfect agreement by so many different biblical prophets who had no contact with one another, and many of the prophecies so unlikely ever to happen given the normal course of events, that the probability of fulfillment by chance is infinitely remote. Yet they have all been fulfilled with 100 percent accuracy—a fact that cannot be explained away by the skeptics on any rational basis. One is forced from this evidence alone to admit the supernatural origin of the Bible.

There are no prophecies of verifiable date of origin and documented fulfillment centuries later—not one—in the Qur'an, in the Hindu Vedas, in the sayings of Buddha, in the sayings of Confucius, or in any other scriptures of the world's religions. The Bible, however, is about 28 percent prophecy, and its thousands of prophecies cover a wide range of subjects and events.

—Dave Hunt (excerpted from *Seeking* and *Finding God*, pp. 85-86)

# **Q&A** .....

QUESTION: We have been asked to respond to the question of whether or not someone who is a believer and commits suicide will still go to heaven. The individual who committed suicide had some form of depression for years, which caused great suffering.

**RESPONSE:** This is certainly a difficult question to ask and whether we take one position or the other, we still have to admit that we can't see

what's going on in an individual's mind. We have prayed for an individual whose spouse had a stroke that changed their personality. They knew the Lord and throughout married life the individual was a good and kind spouse. But post-stroke the victim's personality changed. We can't say they "willfully" changed their personality. Did they arrange for the stroke to happen? Their spouse said they constantly struggled to control their temper. When we are saved, scripture tells us we are a new creation, old things have passed away (sins are forgiven), and all things have become new (2 Cor 5:17). But, we still inhabit a body subject to illness and pain.

Scripture very clearly says "the old man" is still active in our life. Paul writes in Romans 7 about his struggle. That will continue until we die or are raptured. Then, and only then, "we shall all be changed" (1 Cor 15:51). That is, the old body we inhabit will undergo a resurrection and all the "evil" is done away with. In the meanwhile, the Scriptures speak of the security of the believer.

I remember a conversation I had with a Christian doctor when he was briefing me about some oral surgery I was advised to have. I made a joke, saying, "Please don't record what I say under anesthesia." The doctor laughed and said he wouldn't listen and then spoke of some patients he described as "beautiful grandmothers who were saved and yet under anesthesia would sometimes say some of the most vile things."

And, let's also acknowledge mental issues. We're not talking about psychology. As Tom and Dave both noted and medical science has shown, there can be biological damage to the brain that affects someone's ability to communicate, whether the damage is from an accident, internal tumors, or other disease. The question then arises: is there a point where disease or other factors bring an individual to a point where they are not thinking with a right mind? James 4:17 tells us, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

We must also consider the biological issues that come with old age. We don't have the insight to understand what is physically happening to an elderly person's brain. But, if things progress to where an individual isn't fully in control of themselves, can we arbitrarily believe God will send them to hell for that? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen 18:25).

Question: I am a registered psychotherapist and I reject Freudian and Jungian beliefs. However, I did find that when you remove these demonic influences and stick with the "science" behind psychology and filter it through the Bible that it's a powerful tool. Proverbs in particular along with New Testament scriptures encourage us to guard our heart and mind, renew our mind with God's Word, and find peace of mind. The Bible is actually the BASIS of TRUE Psychotherapy if you study the subject biblically. What do you say?

**RESPONSE:** It's instructive that just in the last week we have been contacted by Christian psychologists who insist that "psychotherapy" by name has been discarded by Christians who limit themselves to being called Biblical Counselors. Further, secular psychologists have also gone down this path. We appreciate your "rejection" of Freudian and Jungian beliefs. It is clear that your heart is for those you seek to help. With that in mind, the pertinent question to ask, however, is how thorough that process has been? We say that because some of these counselors are still using the teachings of those you correctly label as "demonic influences."

Other psychologists have "come out" with the same concern for how they have been trained, and what they have learned in practices that span several decades.

More recently, the Transgender movement has shown that "science" has very little to do with an utterly emotional, anti-science practice. So, we have to make sure we've gutted the structure of psychology/psychotherapy.

There is, however, the often seen reference to the "Science" of psychology. There's a fascinating article entitled The Puzzle of Paul Meehl: An intellectual history of research criticism in psychology (i.e., checking them out from the perspective of real science [https://bit. ly/4ihy1qX]).

Professor Andrew Gelman writes, "There's nothing wrong with Meehl. He's great. The Puzzle of Paul Meehl is that everything we're saying now, all this stuff about the problems with Psychological Science and PPNAS and Ted Talks and all that, Paul Meehl was saying 50 years ago. And it was no secret. So how is it that all this was happening, in plain sight, and now here we are?"

Meehl concluded his 1967 article by saying, "Some of the more horrible examples of this process would require the combined analytic and reconstructive efforts of Carnap, Hempel, and Popper to unscramble the logical relationships of theories and hypotheses to evidence. Meanwhile our eager-beaver researcher, undismayed by logic-of-science considerations and relying blissfully on the 'exactitude' of modem statistical hypothesis-testing, has produced a long publication list and been promoted to a full professorship. In terms of his contribution to the enduring body of psychological knowledge, he has done hardly anything."

We will pray that as you devise your way, the Lord will direct your steps further.

QUESTION: I go to a Presbyterian church and they do communion monthly. I used to attend a non-denomination that did that as well. Are we not to do communion if we attend a church that does it?? I'm still trying to unlearn a lot of false teachings I learned over the years. But God is so good, and I'm grateful He's gotten me out of those things.

**RESPONSE:** Communion is a memorial as Paul carefully explains: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor 11:26). As Peter points out, we need to have our memories constantly

jogged (2 Pet 1:13), in order to remember what the Lord has already done (Heb 10:12).

Paul's remarks concerning communion clearly show the importance of this event. Although partaking of communion does not contribute to our salvation and should only be done by those already saved, it serves as a reminder of what the Lord Jesus has done for us.

"And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, **as oft as ye drink it**, in remembrance of me" (1 Cor 11:24-25).

### LETTERS .....

#### Dear TBC,

The better part of the entire Old Testament is about the lineage to Jesus the Messiah. Tracing it and the many ways it was attempted to be broken, and the many ways the attempts were thwarted and corrected. [In] Genesis 3:15 the LORD God promised a Redeemer that would "bruise the head" of the serpent, and the Old Testament tells the many stories of how the serpent attempted to keep Him from ever coming. MW (email)

#### Dear TBC,

My wife and I were sad to hear [about T. A.'s retirement]; we were expecting it eventually, but it still hurts. We're sad to see all the guys who have been holding things together by God's grace are starting to go. We've gone through a few stages of losing cherished Biblical teachers, all while we have fewer and fewer to replace them. We really hope to see more people take up the biblical mantle (KJV), and wise, loving teaching. We pray there are other ministries that also pop up, sticking to fundamentals, not seeker-friendly liberal garbage. Thank you, T. A. McMahon, for your service

to our Lord Jesus Christ, teaching truth, and exposing apostasy. D (email)

#### Dear TBC,

Tonight, I visited a friend who has been Catholic her whole life. She attends a weekly Bible study at a neighbor's house. Her neighbor is not Catholic, but I don't know what she believes. I asked my friend what they are studying at Bible study now. The Book of Matthew. She said Matthew is her favorite because she thinks he had ADHD. She told me other things that I would never have known about Matthew. He was the scribe as they went around with Jesus. His family rejected him because he was a tax collector. Having just watched [Visual Idolatry, see—https://bit.ly/42cVHpD]...I immediately thought that my friend has been watching The Chosen.

I said to my friend, "That's not in the Bible," about Matthew having ADHD. I said, "I wouldn't have gotten that idea from reading the Bible." At one point, I asked where she got that idea and she said, "I saw it. I read it." I think the truth is she saw it in *The Chosen*.

Now we have to unravel the lies from the truth. How will these people ever sort it out and be able to discard the lies and get back to the baseline? I think it might be easier to deal with people who know nothing of the Bible than people who think things that are wrong. DS (email)

#### Dear TBC,

These video and cinematographic false renditions of God's Word (include *The Chosen* TV series) are successes only because of the biblical ILLITERACY of Christ followers in today's culture. And to a large extent the blame for that can be laid squarely upon the pulpits in the land, as they give out a watered-down, compromised, ear-tickling, and man-pleasing gospel. We are living in the Laodicean church era, where Jesus is knocking at the door of the church, requesting admission. Is it that serious? Yes, it is that serious. AM (email)

#### Dear TBC,

Thank you. "My sheep hear my voice...and they follow me." Most churchianity don't hear HIS voice. When is the last time that you heard any preacher/teacher say to pray and do what the Holy Spirit tells you to do? They con you into doing what THEY say. By the way, what is repentance? "Go forth and DO works that are meet for repentance...." Your life should show that you have repented: have you asked those that you have wronged for forgiveness? "And forgive us our tresspasses, AS WE have forgiven those who have trespassed against us." Ouch. R (email)

#### Dear TBC,

I (like so many others) am TRULY GRATE-FUL for Brother [McMahon], and all that have been on your staff to keep Solidifying the TRUTH and exposing the Satanic lies and culture that control this present world. Thank you so much for giving your heart and life to this work all these years! I AM CONFIDENT that TBC will continue to help shine a bright light in this dark world, and will continue to support the ministry as I can through Prayers and financially when I can.... [Tom,] may God continue to bless you and your family as He already has. ENJOY this new chapter in your life by having FUN & maybe doing some "bucket list" items you may have. Respectfully, CT (email)

#### Dear TBC,

It is sad to see those like Brother McMahon stepping down. Although I know he has served the Lord well and deserves his time to rest in his later years...it feels like we are losing too many of those who speak the truth as they grow older. We do need to pray that God will raise up younger men and women who are truly born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, and who know and believe the word of God. That He will raise up labourers for the harvest to reach the lost and to warn and exhort the true church. The world is getting darker all the time and we need true men of God. Thank you, Berean Call, Dave Hunt, and T. A. McMahon

for the encouragement, teachings and warnings you have given us over the years. But we know our hope and our faith is in God alone and He will provide. PW (email)

NOTE: Our purpose in this section is to simply show what kind of feedback we receive. We may respond to some of them in private whether or not we agree with their views.

## NEWSWATCH .....

# BREAKING NEWS: ANCIENT MOLLUSKS WERE COMPLEX

ICR. org, 2/6/25, "Breaking News: Ancient Mollusks Were Complex" [Excerpts]: Mollusks consist of a wide range of invertebrates that include the intelligent octopus, pulmonated snails (gastropods), and bivalves (clams). They appear suddenly in the early Cambrian about 514 million years ago according to evolution theory. In 2020, evolutionists said there is "no good record of molluscs before they had shells, and there can be some doubt that certain early fossil shells are really remains of molluscs." Five years later, evolutionists writing in *Nature* said, "Mollusca is the second most species-rich animal phylum, but the pathways of early molluscan evolution have long been controversial."

Indeed, the story of mollusk evolution has been rewritten again in light of the discovery of spiky fossils called *Punk ferox* and *Emo vorticaudum*. They belong to the molluscan group Aculifera (e.g., chitons). Evolutionists have long seen this group of mollusks as primitive and rudimentary. But science writer Sanjana Gajbhiye stated, "this discovery paints a different picture, revealing their complexity and evolutionary ingenuity." Additionally, Sutton et al. reported in *Nature* that the two species had a mode of locomotion that was "novel" and "unusual."

The intricacy of these creatures is no surprise to creationists, who expect these "primitive"

aculiferan species to be very complex. But notice that credit is given not to the Creator but to evolution for being clever, resourceful, and imaginative. Is there anything this mindless, random process can't do?

(https://bit.ly/4h33M6t)

critic of Israel and its military actions in Gaza during the war against Hamas terrorists controlling the enclave who orchestrated the deadly terrorist attack across southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

(https://bit.ly/3CU6Bsq)

# JEWISH ACTOR WALLACE SHAWN CALLS ISRAEL "DEMONICALLY EVIL"

ALGEMEINER.COM, 2/5/25, "JEWISH ACTOR WALLACE SHAWN CALLS ISRAEL 'DEMONICALLY EVIL'" [EXCERPTS]: Jewish actor Wallace Shawn, who is most famous for his roles in Clueless, the Toy Story franchise, and The Princess Bride, compared Israel's military actions in the Gaza Strip during the Israel-Hamas war to the war crimes committed by Nazis against Jews during World War II.

The New York-born actor and playwright, 81, said during an appearance on the podcast "The Katie Halper Show" on Monday that Igrael is "doing ovil just as great

Israel is "doing evil just as great as what the Nazis did."

"The Israelis invaded someone else's territory. They took people's homes and they did many of the things that the Nazis did to the Jews," he

claimed while speaking to Halper, a Jewish comedian and author. "And now they're really doing it. You can't be more evil than what they're doing."

"And in some ways it's worse, because they kind of boast about it," Shawn added. "Hitler had the decency to try to keep it secret. For some reason, Hitler didn't want people to know he was doing these things to the Jews. The Israelis are almost proud of it, and it's demonically evil. You can't be more evil."

The Young Sheldon star has been a longtime

# JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SPENT \$100 MILLION PUSHING DEI IN SCHOOLS

THECOLLEGEFIX.COM, 2/12/25, "JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SPENT \$100 MILLION PUSHING DEI IN SCHOOLS, WATCHDOG FINDS" [EXCERPTS]: The Department of Justice poured more than \$100 million into "diversity, equity, and inclusion" initiatives at schools from K-12, including grants to Temple University, Bowling Green State, and Pennsylvania State Universities, a watchdog report found.

The universities received funding for "restorative justice, DEI, and social emotional learning," according to Parents Defending Educa-

News stories are selected for

reader awareness and as an

exercise in discerning the times

from a biblical perspective.

tion, a nonprofit that advocates for parental rights.

"While SEL [Social and Emotional Learning] was originally intended to teach children skills like self-awareness, self-management, and goal set-

ting, the definitional shift to 'Transformative SEL' prioritizes equity and 'the collective'—it has become another avenue to bring DEI into the classroom," the report states.

Vice President Caroline Moore told *The College Fix* via email that "the current Department of Education believes this politicization of public schools is more important than English, science, history, and math."

(https://bit.ly/3X6tqQs)

# "LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED" — PART ONE

EXCERPTED FROM HOW CLOSE ARE WE? • BY DAVE HUNT

When shall these things be [the destruction of the temple]? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered [in the next 28 verses He gives numerous signs and then He says] ... when ye shall see all these things [signs He has given], know that it [the Second Coming] is near, even at the doors. Therefore, be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (Matthew 24:3, 33, 44).

WHAT CONTRADICTIONS are these! Can it be? On the one hand, Christ declares that His coming will follow immediately upon the heels of multiple and unusual signs widely scattered around the globe: wars, pestilences, famines, earthquakes, a time of trouble (the Great Tribulation) such as the world has never known nor ever shall know again. There will be supernatural occurrences in the sky: a darkened sun and moon and "the sign of the Son of Man," visible to all. These signs will be apparent to everyone on the earth. There will not be the slightest doubt in anyone's mind that Christ's coming is at hand, "even at the doors." No one will be taken by surprise.

On the other hand, Christ with no less clarity declares that His coming will catch almost everyone by surprise. The contradiction could hardly be more blatant. Quite easy to reconcile, is the answer some give. Only the Christians will heed the signs. Didn't Paul say, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:4)? Those who are spiritually blind, however, won't recognize the signs, and they are the ones who will be caught by surprise. So goes the argument, but it doesn't fit the Word of God.

# CATACLYSMIC EVENTS THAT WILL TERRORIZE THE WORLD

The signs which Christ and the apostles and prophets mention are not of such a subtle nature that it would take any spiritual discernment at all to recognize them. On the contrary, the signs are so overwhelming that they can't be overlooked or ignored by anyone. The Second Coming takes no one on earth by surprise.

The events leading up to Christ's return to the Mount of Olives are so unprecedented and universally calamitous that the whole world knows the time has come for the prophesied face-to-face confrontation between Christ and Antichrist. The Bible declares that "the beast [Antichrist], and the kings of the earth, and their armies" will gather together at Armageddon to make war with Christ (Revelation 19:19). They know that the fatal hour has arrived for the final showdown.

Consider again the signs of His return which Jesus enumerates in Matthew 24. Then read the terrifying description of the incredible devastation occurring on earth which is mentioned only in chapter 6 of Revelation. Forget the mind-boggling destruction mentioned elsewhere. At this early stage in the Great Tribulation one-fourth of the earth's population has already been killed. That's [over 2 billion] people! Natural disasters beyond imagination assault this beleaguered planet. Catastrophic meteor showers rain down upon the earth, accompanied by gigantic earthquakes and volcanic upheavals of such magnitude that "every mountain and island [moves] out of their places." Every person on the earth realizes that God's wrath is being poured out from heaven. Proud leaders are so terrified that they cry out to the mountains and rocks to fall upon them to hide them from God's fierce anger (Revelation 6:15-17).

No, Christ does not warn us to be "ready" because we might otherwise not have the godly discernment to recognize the subtle spiritual signs that will herald His coming. Those signs will be physical and of such magnitude that they can't be overlooked or ignored by anyone, no matter how spiritually blind.

#### AN INESCAPABLE CONTRADICTION

Christ warns us to "watch" for an entirely different reason. He will come at a time when mankind, confident and complacent—and a sleeping church (Matthew 25:5)—will least expect Him: "At such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44). There will have been no signs. For that to be the case, the disasters mentioned above could not yet have occurred. God's judgment is the last thing the world of that day will be expecting. There will be no advance warning. It will be like the calm before a hurricane—but in this case there will be no sense of a storm impending.

Jesus warned that He would come when conditions would be like those just prior to the flood: "They did eat, they drank, they married wives...until the day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:27). His coming will occur at a time of business as usual, of pleasure, of optimism for the future. Just as it was immediately before the flood, the last thing the world will expect is judgment from God.

Surely Christ is not describing the Second Coming in the midst of Armageddon! Normal business conditions, complacency and surprise could only apply to a previous coming—the Rapture. At the time of the Second Coming mankind has endured perhaps four years of God's wrath and is expecting more. This world is in ruins and teetering on the brink of total destruction.

For Christ's coming to be without warning and to catch everyone by surprise it must occur *before* the time of great disaster He refers to in Matthew 24. He comes before God pours out His wrath upon earth as described in Revelation. Otherwise He could not say that His coming would be at a time similar to the days of Noah just before the flood.

Yet, just as clearly, He declared that He would come *after* these horrible disasters have wreaked their awful toll and *after* God's wrath has been poured out for several years upon this earth. These catastrophes will be the signs which Christ says will herald His coming. Moreover, His coming will not take place until *all* of these events have occurred, so that no one will have any doubt that His coming is "at the doors."

All of mankind will know that He is about to descend from heaven, because of the unmistakable signs that herald His return. So Jesus declared in unequivocal language. Yet just as clearly He warned that there would be no signs at all to signal His coming. It will occur when conditions on earth make it seem, even to His own, that He surely wouldn't be coming then: "in such an hour as ye think not." That's when He will come!

The contradiction is inescapable: He comes when there have been no warning signs, yet He comes after all of the signs have been displayed to a terrified world; He comes like a thief when no one would expect Him, yet He comes when every one will expect Him.

# TWO SEPARATE EVENTS: THE RAPTURE AND THE SECOND COMING

How can Christ come immediately following unmistakable signs which are intended to warn of His coming—and at the same time come as a thief in the night when few if any of His followers would expect Him? How can He come "when they say peace and safety" (1 Thessalonians 5:3) and at the same time come

in the midst of Armageddon, the most destructive war the world has ever known? How can the saints be *caught up from earth to heaven* to dwell with Christ eternally and at the same time come with Him *from heaven* to execute judgment upon this earth?

How can two scenarios that are so contrary to one another both be true? There is only one possible answer to that question. Obviously, these diametrically contradictory descriptions of His coming cannot refer to the same event.

We saw that what the Old Testament prophets said of Christ's coming could not fit into one time frame and one event. Thus two comings of the Messiah were required, though the prophets didn't say so directly. There was no excuse for Christ's contemporaries not to realize that fact. Likewise it is inexcusable today not to realize that what the Bible says of His return simply cannot fit into one time frame and one event.

There must be two separate comings of Christ, both still future, which occur at two distinctly different periods of time. There is no other possible way to reconcile the otherwise contradictory statements in Scripture concerning Christ's return. According to Christ's own words, the conditions on earth at one coming will be the exact opposite of those at His other coming.

There is no way to combine in one event and in the same time frame an ecstatic catching away of all believers to heaven with the descent of Christ and all believers from heaven to rescue Israel at Armageddon. The Second Coming takes place after the incredible devastation of earth, called the Great Tribulation, which the Bible predicts for that time. The Rapture takes place before the Great Tribulation. The whole world will know that the Second Coming is about to take place. No unbelievers, and even very few Christians, will be expecting the Rapture when it occurs.

The Second Coming, which is the climactic event of the Great Tribulation, will occur in the midst of Armageddon. The armies of the

world will have conquered much of Israel and will be pressing their attack against Jerusalem. They will be intent upon effecting what Hitler called the "final solution to the Jewish problem"—the enraged extermination of every Israeli and probably of all Jews on planet earth (Zechariah 12).

Threatened with total destruction, Israel, in desperation, will undoubtedly retaliate with nuclear weapons. The entire human race—indeed, all life on this planet—will be in danger of annihilation as this nuclear exchange escalates. Christ referred to that moment with these solemn words: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved [alive]" (Matthew 24:22). He will have to intervene, not only to save Israel, but to preserve life itself on earth. We will come back to those Scriptures later.

#### YES, A SECRET RAPTURE!

Clearly, the Rapture and the Second Coming must be two separate events. The Second Coming, occurring at the end of the Great Tribulation and in the midst of Armageddon, will surprise no one. The Rapture, occurring at a time of normalcy and complacency, will catch the world and a sleeping church by surprise.

Millions of Christians—and quite likely all infants—will suddenly vanish from earth, but how or why will not be known by the world. Nor will those left behind believe that Christ has caught away those who have disappeared and taken them to His Father's house in heaven. A seemingly plausible explanation (which we will discuss later), will be provided by the Antichrist, who will take over world leadership at that time. His hypothesis will satisfy the world, but it will be a lie.

Several times Christ's coming is likened to that of a thief who creeps in when all are asleep. Peter writes: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief" (2 Peter 3:10); and Paul adds, "as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2). A thief deliberately comes in such a time and

manner that no one is aware of his presence. He secretly takes what he is after and leaves without anyone's knowledge.

In like manner, the Rapture will be a secret snatching away of a prize from this earth. Christ declared: "Behold, I come as a thief" (Revelation 16:15). Secretly, like a thief, Christ will take out of this world His church. The world will not know it is happening until suddenly millions are missing. Those who complain that a "secret Rapture" isn't biblical need to look at such Scriptures again.

#### NO SIGNS FOR THE RAPTURE

We are not only asserting that the Rapture (coming *for* His saints) takes place first, followed seven years later by the Second Coming (with His saints for Israel). We are also establishing that there will be no signs for the Rapture, no warning that it is about to occur. The signs are for the Second Coming.

When Christ comes secretly to catch His saints up to heaven, the world will be living in self-complacency and pleasure, seemingly on the way to solving its ecological problems and establishing perpetual international peace. Any thought of the Rapture will be widely ridiculed. Even few Christians will expect that long-promised event, although it should be their hope. One could say that such is already the general attitude even in the evangelical Church. How many are eagerly watching and longing for Christ to take them to heaven?

As we shall see in the following pages, many of the signs of the Second Coming are already in the world today. Others are clearly on the horizon, casting their long shadows in our direction. There can be no doubt that the props are being set in place and the curtain is about to rise on the final drama in human history. The principal actors, including the Antichrist, are waiting in the wings, eager to effect their will. In fact, they will play their roles precisely as the prophets have foretold.

The final act, called "the day of the Lord"

(1 Thessalonians 5:2), must begin with the Rapture, for that time period is ushered in "as a thief in the night." The Second Coming cannot mark the beginning of "the day of the Lord," for it comes as no surprise. It is essential to understand that all the signs the Bible gives pertain to the Second Coming.

No signs precede the Rapture. It can only be that coming which will take place without warning, when the world and even most Christians least expect it. Everything on this earth will be changed after that event. The Rapture could occur at any moment. That has always been the case.

The reasons to expect our Lord now, however, are more compelling than ever. How close are we? Today's sleeping Church, sinking ever deeper into apostasy, is one of the primary marks of the nearness of Christ's return. The signs of the Second Coming are building, and the Rapture must precede that event by seven years. Surely we are very close.

#### SIGNS OF THE TIMES

When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straight way ye say. There cometh a shower, and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? (Luke 12:54-56)

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT that Jesus Christ, who is God, came to this earth as a man through a virgin birth, lived a perfect, sinless life, died for our sins, and rose from the dead the third day. Historically these events are firmly established. We have, however, an even more powerful witness. That Christ came to this earth in the past is not only a matter of history. It is also a matter of fulfilled prophecy. Consider what that means!

Christ's first coming more than 1900 years ago, as we have already seen, fulfilled dozens

of specific prophecies made by the Hebrew prophets and recorded centuries earlier in the Old Testament. So will the Rapture of His church and His Second Coming fulfill even more details of the prophetic blueprint. Furthermore, these events are not independent of one another, but part of an overall plan of God. They all fit together like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. Each event can be understood only in relation to the whole.

Here we confront another aspect of the uniqueness of Christ that sets Him apart from all others. No prophecy foretold the coming of Buddha, Confucius, Muhammad, or any other of the leaders of the world's religions. Muslims suggest that Christ's statement, "I will send you another Comforter," foretold the coming of Muhammad. However, that claim doesn't fit by any stretch of the imagination.

Christ said that the Comforter would "come from the Father" (John 14:26; 15:26). Yet Muhammad denied that God was a father or had a son. Christ said of the Comforter, "He dwelleth with you and shall be in you" (John 14:17). So the Comforter, who was already with the disciples more than 500 years before Muhammad was born, obviously could not have been Muhammad.

Christ came once, nearly 2000 years ago. The how and where of His coming and all that He suffered and accomplished was exactly as the prophets foretold. He is coming again, and very soon. That coming, too, in every detail, will be exactly as prophesied. It is those prophecies which we will examine in the following pages.

# PROPHECY PROVIDES FOOLPROOF IDENTIFICATION

Why were such prophecies given? There are at least two fairly obvious reasons. First of all, prophecy indicates that the God who created us has not lost interest in His creatures nor has He lost control of events. He is in charge of history and will see that it works out according to His plan. That plan involves His people, Israel.

It also involves the Messiah and the Church. God wants us to know His plan in advance and has revealed it through His prophets.

Secondly, at His comings there must be no doubt as to the identity of the Messiah. Antichrist, as we shall see, will try to pass himself off as the Christ. The deception will be clever and persuasive. Those who know prophecy will be armed in advance with the facts that unmask Satan's most brilliant deceit.

All that was needed to identify Christ at His first advent, and all that will be needed to identify Him when He comes again, has already been stated by the prophets. That overwhelming proof of His identity provides absolute assurance of our salvation. Of equal importance, we can share with others the proof prophecy provides. It is the most powerful means of convincing unbelievers and of introducing them to the Savior. There is another important significance of prophecy which is not as readily accepted. God wants us to know the signs of the times that reveal the nearness of Christ's return. We have seen how neglect and ignorance of prophecy caused both the secular and religious authorities to crucify Christ at His first advent. In view of today's neglect of prophecy, there is every reason to expect a comparable confusion when Christ comes again. To prevent such tragic misunderstandings—for those who are willing to take a fresh look at the Messianic prophecies—is a major purpose of this book.

As we have seen, Israel's religious leaders of that day were blind to the fact that the Messiah would be rejected by His own people and crucified. The same was true, until after the resurrection, of even Christ's closest followers. They were blind also to the fact that when Christ made that solemn promise, "I will come again" it was one more proof that He was the Savior. As we have already seen, a most vital part of the testimony of the Old Testament prophets was that the Messiah must come more than once. Centuries beforehand, the Hebrew prophets had given their stamp of authenticity to the electrifying words which

the disciples would find so incomprehensible: "I will come again."

# AFTER THESE MANY CENTURIES—WHY NOW?

Christ's declaration, however, confronts us with a dilemma. After the passage of nearly 2000 years, He has not come as He promised. Succeeding generations of believers have watched and waited and have gone to their graves without seeing their earnest hopes and prayers realized. Why should we be anymore likely than they to see this promise fulfilled in our time? How close are we? Is it presumption even to ask that question? Some Christians think so. However, since so much has been revealed by the prophets, might it not be that the answer even to this question is contained in the very prophecies which the rabbis overlooked and which we neglect today? Surely the possibility of discovering an answer to that burning question makes the careful study of what the prophets had to say more than worthwhile.

Those thrilling but as yet unfulfilled words, "I will come again," must be taken in the context of all of Scripture. Let us not forget that the One who made that promise had come to fulfill specific, detailed, and numerous Old Testament prophecies. Everything He said and did and all that man did to Him was only the culmination of what the prophets had long before declared.

Yet there can be no doubt that Christ left this earth without fulfilling all messianic prophecies. Thus He must return to complete His mission, and He must do so exactly as the prophets have foretold. The disciples' perspective of prophecy was too narrow. There was a much larger picture which they did not comprehend. We must beware of missing it as well. If we are to understand when and why and for whom Christ will return, then we must see His promise to do so in the full context of God's eternal plan.

God had taken great care to inspire His

prophets and guard His Word to provide His people with sufficient means of recognizing the time of the Messiah's first advent. Would He not inspire His prophets to give similar insight into the Rapture and Second Coming as well? We believe that He has, and will substantiate that from Scripture.

Jesus indicted Israel's religious leaders for failing to recognize the signs of the times in which they lived: "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" (Luke 12:56). Apparently they were responsible to know the signs given in Scripture, to recognize when they were present, and to conduct themselves accordingly. That same accountability is ours today.

#### "SIGNS" OF HIS COMING?

As far as most Christians are concerned, when Christ comes He comes, so why not let it go at that? After all, there's nothing that can be done either to hasten or delay that day. Raising children, holding the family together, earning a living, and preparing for retirement leave little time even to think about an event that will not likely happen in one's lifetime. Fear of repeating past fanaticisms and follies seems reason enough to avoid focusing any attention upon Christ's return. Reason enough, that is, until one reads the words of Jesus more carefully.

One cannot escape the fact that Christ and His apostles gave definite signs to watch for that would herald the nearness of His return. Why give these signs if some generation at sometime in the future was not expected to recognize them and know that His Second Coming was, as He Himself said, "near, even at the doors"?

Yes, but if the Rapture occurs seven years prior to the Second Coming, then those signs are not for us. So it would seem. Yet Christ commanded His own to watch for His coming and warned against being caught by surprise at His return and surprise could only apply to the Rapture. Are we faced again with a contradiction,

and this time one that cannot be resolved?

We may be certain that the answers are to be found if we desire to know them and diligently search His Word. Jesus also said, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then lookup, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). When these things begin...look up. The commencement of the signs cannot herald the Second Coming, for that event cannot occur until the signs are all complete. Therefore, with this statement, Christ can only be referring to the Rapture.

When Jesus, in response to His disciples' request for signs of His return, enumerated a long list of events (wars, rumors of wars, pestilence, earthquakes, famines, etc.), He also used that same word, *begin*. He made this interesting comment: "All these are the *beginning* of sorrows" (Matthew 24:8). The Greek word Jesus used for "sorrow" is most interesting as well. It referred especially to a woman's birth pangs.

Jesus is apparently revealing that these signs will begin to occur substantially ahead of the Second Coming. They will increase in frequency and intensity like birth pangs. Moreover, it would seem that these signs *begin* prior to the Rapture. Then how could the Rapture come as a surprise? Because these signs when they *begin*, will by their very nature be phenomena which have always been known on the world scene: earthquakes, famines, pestilences, wars.

There are some peculiarities, however, which have never before been known but which, for the first time in history, could now occur at any moment. We will discuss them in a later chapter.

Fanaticism and date setting are folly. It would seem to be at least equal folly, however, to ignore Christ's warnings about being caught by surprise. We are responsible, as every generation before us has been, to know the signs of His coming and to determine whether they are applicable to our day. No matter that others have misinterpreted Scripture and mistakenly set a time for Christ's return, only to be

proved wrong. We are responsible to know the signs and to apply that knowledge biblically.

Though past generations have so consistently misinterpreted the Scriptures, is it possible that we now possess the insight they lacked? Isn't such a suggestion the very height of conceit? It could be, except for one obvious but overlooked fact, which we will also discuss later. As we shall see, ours is the first generation to whom certain special signs Christ foretold could possibly apply!

#### CHRIST'S TOTAL MISSION IS THE KEY

In our attempt to understand the full meaning of Christ's promise, "I will come again" and to establish how close we are to that event—we must examine the full range of biblical prophecies. It is not enough merely to look at Christ's own words and the events and teaching of the apostles which followed His departure from earth. The Old Testament prophets foretold not only His first advent, but His Second Coming as well. It is to the Old Testament, then, that we must first of all turn to begin our investigation. Nor shall we have proceeded far in this careful study until we will be forced to conclude that prophecy is the backbone of God's Word. Without prophecy the Bible would lose much of its uniqueness and power to convince the searching soul.

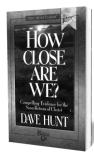
God has stated unequivocally: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants, the prophets" (Amos 3:7). If we would know God's secrets and understand all that He has planned, then we must study what He has spoken through His prophets. For it is through the prophets that God has declared His eternal purpose—and even the details of how He will work it all out for our good and His glory.

Christ's crucifixion and departure from this earth were not the unfortunate results of an aborted mission but the successful completion of *phase one*. Thus, His promise to return was the pledge to finish the remainder of a

task which the prophets had laid out in no uncertain terms. The mission which brought the Messiah to this earth was much larger than His disciples imagined.

Christ's purpose in coming back again will be to bring to a grand conclusion His total objective. Consequently, we must understand God's plan from eternity past to eternity future or we cannot possibly reach a valid conclusion from the Scriptures concerning the timing of His triumphant return in power and glory to the scene of His rejection and crucifixion. Let us turn, then, to the Scriptural account of the origin of evil which necessitated the coming of the Messiah to this earth.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



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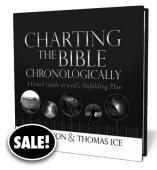
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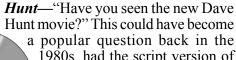
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