

Berean Call A

CATHOLICISM—CHRISTIAN? OR CULTIC?

by Dave Hunt

**APRIL 2013** 

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B60134

#### APRIL 2013 • VOL XXVIII NO. 4

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# THE BEREAN EXECUTE CALL

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

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## Catholicism— Christian? Or Cultic?

Dave Hunt First published in June, 1991

The evangelical church today is being seduced as never in its history. It faces a danger so grave that, although we have discussed this problem before, it must be addressed again with new insight and vigor. If evangelicals succumb to the seduction, as they increasingly are doing, then their gospel witness will be submerged in confusion and could eventually be lost—a tragic and new dimension to the apostasy from which the church and the world will never recover. Most astonishing and alarming is the fact that (with few exceptions) evangelical leaders and even the major cult watchers refuse to acknowledge this threat. We are therefore compelled to address the subject once again with renewed concern.

For decades evangelicals have diligently and faithfully attempted to identify, analyze and warn the church against *cults*. Included in the standard list are Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Unity School of Christianity, Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church, etc. Yet the most seductive, dangerous, and largest cult (many times larger than all of the rest combined) is not included in the list! Most cult experts refuse to identify this horrendous cult as such! Instead, they accept it as "Christian."

Worst of all, this cult (which preaches a *false gospel* that is sending hundreds of millions into a Christless eternity) is now embraced as a partner in "evangelizing the world" by many groups that preach the biblical gospel. Major denominations, such as the Anglican and the Episcopalian church, are involved in merger talks with this cult. The Assemblies of God hierarchy has been engaged in "fruitful dialogue" with this cult, whose members are now widely perceived as born-again Christians. As a consequence, the evangelical church faces an unprecedented crisis that threatens its very survival.

The above is a severe, solemn, and devastating charge to make—a charge that we have documented in the past and in support of which additional evidence will now be given. We challenge any church leader to a public debate who declares that this assertion is false. If proven wrong, we will publicly

repent. But if this accusation is true, then a major shake-up in the evangelical church is required, including repentance by many of its most highly regarded leaders. We solicit your help in providing church leaders with the facts they need to identify this cult—facts of which I [Dave] was ignorant years ago when I, too, failed to identify the Roman Catholic Church as the cult that it is.

What is a "cult?" In his book, *Rise of the Cults*, Walter Martin defined cultism as "... any major deviation from orthodox Christianity relative to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith." Though unmentioned by Martin, Roman Catholicism is undeniably a "major deviation from orthodox Christianity" on many "cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith," and thus, by his

"Join me today in fasting and prayer for the 115 Cardinals seeking God's Will in a new leader."

— RICK WARREN TWITTER, 03/12/13

own definition, a cult. Recognition of this fact ignited the Reformation! To deny that Roman Catholicism is a cult is to repudiate the Reformation and mock the millions of martyrs who died at Rome's hands, as though they gave their lives in vain.

But, says someone, since the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the Roman Catholic Church no longer teaches and practices what it did at the time of the Reformation. That popular idea is false. To counter the Reformation, Rome's foremost theologians met from 1545-63 in the Council of Trent. Its Canons and Decrees, which rejected every Reformation doctrine, remain the standard authoritative statement of Roman Catholicism, and adherence thereto is required by Catholic catechisms. Opening Vatican II, Pope John XXIII declared, "I do accept entirely all that has been decided and declared at the Council of Trent." Vatican II went on to reaffirm Trent's Canons and Decrees. No, Rome has not changed since the Reformation—except superficially.

Were Luther, Calvin, and the other Reformers alive today, they would denounce Roman Catholicism as the largest and most dangerous cult on earth! Yet the Christian Research Institute and other counter-cult groups refuse to classify it as a cult. In the above book, Martin emphasized that the five major cults at that time had "a following exceeding 8.5 million persons...." Yet he overlooked Roman Catholicism's hundreds of millions!

Answers to Cultists at Your Door presents another example. Its authors, Bob and Gretchen Passantino, are described as "experts in cult research [who] have spent years in countercult ministry" (outside back cover of Witch Hunt). They include such marks of a cult as the claim that it "is the only organization on earth that is following God's will" and that its leader is "uniquely chosen by God to lead God's people" and that it alone "offer[s] the Bible's 'true' interpretation on all matters." Again, the Roman Catholic Church fully fits all of the criteria. It claims to be the only true church, says that its pope is uniquely chosen to lead all of God's people, and explains that only its hierarchy can interpret Scripture. Yet the Passantinos, like most other "cult experts," fail to include Roman Catholicism as a cult, though it meets all their own tests!

Mormons must blindly obey Joseph Smith and his successors, JWs dare not question The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, and other cultists must submit to their leaders. Such authoritarianism is the primary mark of a cult. The same blind submission is required of all Catholics. Canon 212 of Catholicism's Code of Canon Law requires that Catholics must give absolute obedience to their "sacred pastors." Vatican II states repeatedly that only Catholicism's hierarchy can interpret the Bible and that papal pronouncements must be obeyed without question. Canon 333 (Sec. 3) declares, "There is neither appeal nor recourse against a decision or decree of the Roman Pontiff." Vatican watchdog Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's recent 7,500word "Instruction" declares that dissent about church teachings cannot be "justified as a matter of following one's conscience." No cult demands surrender of mind and conscience more fully or arrogantly than Roman Catholicism.

Roman Catholicism is not only left out of the list of cults by the experts, but it is explicitly approved. For example, in *Scripture Twisting*, James W. Sire, longtime

Editor-In-Chief of InterVarsity Press, defines a cult as having "doctrines and/or practices that contradict those of the Scriptures as interpreted by traditional Christianity as represented by the major Catholic and Protestant denominations..." (emphasis his). Sire makes Catholicism a standard of orthodoxy against which cults are to be judged. Yet he accuses the cults of twisting Scripture, a technique of which Rome is surely the ultimate master. Sire indicts Mormonism as a cult for adding other revelations to the Bible—but Rome has added far more new revelations to the Bible than the Mormon Church. Sire declares, "There is no guru class in biblical Christianity, no illuminati, no people through whom all proper interpretation must come"—yet that is exactly the situation in the Roman Catholic Church! How, then, does he make it the standard of orthodoxy?

Consider also *The Agony of Deceit* published by Moody. Each chapter is written by a leading evangelical about a specific false teaching within today's church. While Agony mostly repeats much that was found in Seduction of Christianity five years earlier, it is another voice issuing many of the same warnings, for which we are thankful. Yet it, too, whitewashes Roman Catholicism. On page 65 it states, "Traditional Roman Catholicism...hold[s] to biblical inerrancy." In fact, Catholicism explicitly denies biblical inerrancy! The next sentence does acknowledge that the "messages [of Protestantism and Catholicism] are poles apart," but moves right on without identifying the vital differences.

Page 111 declares, "The Catholic church resisted the mounting heresies with regard to the Person of Christ, and...Protestants would continue to affirm Catholic Christology." Again, terribly false! Catholicism's Christology is heretical. It denies Christ's exclusive role as mediator between God and man, making Mary "co-mediatrix"; it denies the exclusivity of His redemptive work, making Mary "co-redemptrix" (Vatican II credits Mary with a perpetual "salvific role; she continues to obtain by her constant intercession the graces we need for eternal salvation"); and it denies the sufficiency of His redemptive work, declaring that the redeemed must, in addition to Christ's suffering for them upon the cross, suffer for their own sins here and/or in purgatory, etc. A great deal more heresy is involved in Catholic Christology, such as presenting Him as perpetually an infant or child subject to His mother, perpetually on the cross—but lack of space prevents further detail. The "Christ" of Roman Catholicism

is just as false as its "Mary"—as much "another Jesus" as that of Mormonism or any other cult. Let's admit it!

Several times in *Agony* it is stated that Protestants and Catholics embrace the same apostolic creeds. This is a partially true but seriously misleading statement. The implication is that the creeds are an all-encompassing statement of biblical Christianity, which they are not. Furthermore, there is a vast difference between the meaning that Catholics and Protestants attach to what the creeds say. For example, while affirming that Christ "suffered under Pontius Pilate," Catholicism teaches that His suffering was insufficient. In addition to Christ's suffering, we must each suffer for our sins in order to be saved. We can even suffer for the salvation of others. (The Apostolic Constitution of Jan. 1,

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1967, Indulgentarium Doctrina, #1687, urges Catholics to carry "each one his own cross in expiation of their sins and of the sins of others...assist[ing] their brothers to obtain salvation from God.") This is rank heresy to Protestants. Yet Agony implies that Catholics mean the same thing as Protestants by the creeds—an inexcusable and deadly error in a book by eminent Christian scholars written to point out errors within the church. Though this and the other books cited above contain much that commends them, their approval of Catholicism is tragically misleading.

The deviation by Catholicism from biblical Christianity goes to the heart of the faith, to salvation itself, and thus affects the eternal destiny of those who are deceived thereby. Roman Catholicism rejects salvation by faith and preaches a false gospel of works that cannot save—salvation is not in Christ but in the Church through submission to its edicts and sacraments. The *Basic Catechism of Christian Doctrine* calls the sacraments "the chief means of our salvation."

The first of the seven sacraments is baptism, which is performed upon 98 percent of Catholics as infants. It is declared in Canon 849 to be the means "by which men and women are freed from their sins, are reborn as children of God...." The *Basic Catechism* declares that baptism "is necessary for salvation...cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christians...." Another sacrament is the Mass, which the *Catechism* declares to be "one and the same Sacrifice with that of the Cross, inasmuch as Christ... continues to offer himself...on the altar, through the ministry of his priests." Canon 904 states that "the work of redemption is continually accomplished in the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice," thus denying Christ's triumphant "It is finished!"

Let me remind you of Hugh Latimer's last words, spoken through the flames to his companion who was bound to the same stake: "Be of good courage, master Ridley... for we shall by God's grace this day light such a 'candle' in England as I pray shall never go out!" Tragically, the "candle" lit by hundreds of thousands of faithful martyrs burned at the stake, if not already out, is barely flickering and in danger of being snuffed completely. Paul Crouch, head of the largest Christian TV worldwide network, demeans the martyrs by calling the issues they died for mere semantics; and he makes a mockery of the Reformers by declaring orthodox the heresies that sparked the Reformation.

Those who believe Rome's lies and follow her gospel of works for salvation are lost. Failing to recognize this fact, many evangelical leaders and cult experts have themselves been deceived by Rome and need to be confronted and informed. How tragic to assume that Catholics are Christians who merely have some peripheral beliefs and practices which seem peculiar to Protestants but which will not prevent them from being saved. A false gospel is a false gospel, and it damns those who believe it, whether preached by Mormonism or Catholicism. A cult is a cult. Roman Catholics, like the members of other cults, need to be treated with compassion, warned of cultic lies, and presented with the true gospel, which alone can save them.

If you are concerned about the growing cooperation between Catholic organizations and major evangelical ministries, please write to them and ask where they stand on this critical issue. The questions could be: 1) What is your organization's position regarding Catholic doctrines? 2) What is your position regarding organizational participation with Catholics in matters of world evangelization? 3) Are you presently either officially or unofficially involved with any Catholic lay or clerical groups or organizations? If so, on what basis...and to what end?

## Quotable .....

Like the prophets of old, we must warn Israel of their impending travail and stand with the nation as it approaches the birth pains of the Tribulation. And, like the prophets of old, we must bring to Israel the comforting message that there is hope and victory in Jesus, the Messiah.

—David M. Levy, Revelation: Hearing the Last Word

## Q&A.....

QUESTION: With the pope's suddenly stepping down, what's Mr. Hunt's view on the St. Malachy prophecy as it relates to Bible prophecy and Revelation 13, 17, and the false prophet being the pope?

RESPONSE: Dave has stated in the past that he believes the St. Malachy prophecies are a distraction from the truth. St. Malachy was a medieval Irish priest and Kabbalist. Consequently, giving credence to the man is a step in the direction of much of the metaphysical nonsense afflicting too many today. Malachy's prophecies allegedly came in a vision and have no connection to Scripture. That is sufficient reason to reject them.

With the excitement of a true believer in St. Malachy, a Catholic writer for the *Cleveland Leader* wrote: "In 1139, Malachy was Archbishop and traveled to Rome from Ireland to give an account of his affairs. While in Rome, Malachy received a vision about the future, which included the name of every pope, 112 in total, from his time until the end of time" (http://www.clevelandleader.com/node/20116).

In truth, and in stark contrast to the detailed prophecy of Scripture, Malachy didn't specifically name all the popes. Instead, he gave a phrase supposedly describing each pontificate. Much like the quatrains of Nostradamus, these little phrases are open to speculation and can mean almost anything to anyone. Therefore, one can always find an "amazingly accurate" point of agreement with whichever pope is in the line of succession.

The Catholic apologist group Catholic Answers dashed the hopes of Malachy's followers further when they wrote, "There have been many more misses, though. Describing the popes to follow John XXIII are the phrases 'flower of flowers' (Paul VI), 'from a half-moon' (John Paul I), and 'from the toil of the sun' (John Paul II), none of which is an obvious connection. After our current pope, there are only two left in Malachy's prophecy, 'the glory of the olive' and 'Peter

the Roman.' The latter will supposedly lead the Church through many tribulations, concluding with the last judgment" (http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/do-the-prophecies-of-st-malachy-suggest-we-are-living-in-the-end-times).

In short, these prophecies may be exciting and interesting to some but in the end simply lead us away from the sure word of Scripture.

QUESTION [COMPOSITE OF SEVERAL]: I am a new convert to the truth in God's word of eternal security. I was once a "conditional securist," but I no longer believe in this false doctrine. However, I have a question. In the book of John, in many places it is recorded that Jesus says that we have eternal life now in the present, but elsewhere in the Scriptures it seems to say that we have the hope of eternal life but don't actually possess it. Does the Bible mean that we actually have eternal life now and will just enter into it when we die? Or does it teach that we don't yet have eternal life, but we will obtain eternal life in the future?

RESPONSE: When a person honestly responds in faith to the gospel (see 1 Cor 15:1-4) recognizing that he is a lost sinner and that only Christ's sacrifice on the Cross can pay the penalty for his sin, he is "eternally secure." Acts 16:31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...."

What else does God's Word say? The Apostle John wrote in 1 John 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye *have* eternal life...." That *knowing* is present knowledge and that *having* is present possession. When anyone puts his faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, he receives the "gift of God," which is "eternal life" (Rom 6:23, our emphasis). The gift is received immediately and lasts forever.

We must also understand that "eternal life" refers to more than *quantity* of life (i.e., "never ending"). It also refers to the *quality* of that life. Salvation in Scripture is discussed in the following manner:

I. Positionally, we "are saved." Consider the Savior's declarations throughout John (for just one example). John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation; but is *passed* from death unto life." [Our emphasis]

John 6:37: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

John 6:39: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath

given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

John 6:40: "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:51: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The clearest statement of the Savior's intent can be found in John 10:27-29. He makes eight declarative statements with absolutely no qualifications: 1) My sheep hear my voice. 2) I know them. 3) They follow me. 4) I give unto them eternal life. 5) They shall never perish. 6) Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 7) My Father...is greater than all. 8) No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

What this scripture doesn't tell us is how closely they follow, how far they straggle, or how dim the voice of the Shepherd may seem to them during their straggling, which brings us to the next aspect of salvation:

- II. We are "being saved." That is, we come into this relationship with a lot of baggage, habits, behaviors, etc. We are "being saved" in that the Lord is daily working in us to conform us to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29). Also, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6). Consequently, we are being "saved" from our past lives. We are being *changed*.
- III. We "will be saved"—that is, when we leave this world and stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will not be condemned with the world, who will stand before the Great White Throne (Rv 20:11-15). And yet, there will be an accounting of how our life is spent: "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor 3:14-15).

Regarding the time when we finally step into eternity with our King, the Bible tells us: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn 3:2). And 1 Corinthians 13:12 gives us a little more: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." What a day that will be!



## Contradictory Concepts of God—Which Is Correct?

QUESTION: The oldest and most popular concepts of God are either pantheism, the belief that everything [i.e. the universe] is God, or polytheism, the belief that there are many gods.... Why is the Bible so adamant against these beliefs, and why does it so severely condemn what it calls the pagans who have...held these beliefs...long before Jesus Christ came along?

Response: Pantheism is really the same as atheism. Obviously, if *everything* is God, then *nothing* is God, because the very term has lost any meaning. Pantheism leads to numerous contradictions: God would be the emptiness of a vacuum as well as the substance of matter; He would be sickness as well as health, death as well as life, evil as well as good. Furthermore, if the universe itself is God, then there is no outside reference point from which the universe can be evaluated and given purpose and significance. Nor is there any hope of changing its downward course or that of mankind.

Nothing has meaning or value in and of itself but only as some personal being has use for it and values it.... A car has no meaning in itself, no purpose unless there is someone to drive it. The most costly diamond ring has no value unless there is someone who wants to buy and own and wear it, and so on. Obviously, what is true of every part of the universe is equally true of the whole.

According to the law of entropy, this universe is running down like a clock. Left to itself and without some outside Intelligence of infinite power rescuing the universe from its certain doom, all of man's personal and corporate dreams and schemes will one day be like sand castles washed out into a cosmic ocean of nothingness. The entire universe will be approaching absolute zero, and all will be as though it had never been.... Without a Creator who had an eternal purpose for His creation and who is able to reach in from outside (not with reincarnation or evolution but with *resurrection* and new creation), neither the universe nor man in it could have any ultimate meaning. Pantheism can offer only meaninglessness, hopelessness, and ultimate despair....

In academia...ecotheology (the old pantheism) is now [respected] by some highly educated people....Georgetown University professor Victor Ferkiss, says it "starts with the premise that the Universe is God." Ferkiss seems to think that the pantheistic worship of nature will "prevent the environmental exploitation of the Universe."

One can't worship both the creation and the Creator. The Bible says there are serious consequences that come from worshiping the creation *instead of* the Creator (Rom 1:18–32). One's conscience becomes dull, and mankind falls prey to all kinds of evil and cruel behavior because there are no morals in nature....

Historian/philosopher Herbert Schlossberg reminds us, "Animals do not act morally or immorally; they only act naturally. A system of ethics that says human beings ought to base their behavior on nature...justifies any behavior, because nature knows no ethic." Nobelist Sir John Eccles agrees: "The concepts of injustice, unfairness...the obligations to honor, to respect...are intelligible only within a *moral* context and to moral beings. In the mindless universe of mere nature...there is neither justice nor mercy, neither liberty nor fairness. There are only facts."

The temptation to worship the universe seems to be an occupational hazard for atheistic scientists. Their arguments against God betray an...adoption of pantheism both as an excuse for denying the infinite Creator (to whom man would be accountable) and an attempt to find another basis for purpose and meaning.... A compendium of atheism titled 400 Years of Freethought, published in 1894 explains the cornerstone of Freethought...as the rejection of "all authority" and "the conquest of nature." Athiest Carl Sagan [now deceased] became very reverent and worshipful in the presence of the Cosmos, which he credited with having spawned us and all life.... He says it makes sense to reverence the sun and moon! On what basis? And how is that different from bowing down to a piece of wood or stone as one's god? What could the sun or moon have to do with morals, with purpose and meaning, with love and beauty?

...If one God is stronger or has more authority than the others, then none of the rest of the gods can really be God, so we are back to monotheism. As the Bible says: "Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord....For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone" (Ps 86:8, 10).

If there are many gods, to which god should one pray? To one's favorite? On what basis is it a favorite?...St. Christopher, the patron saint of travelers to whom millions looked for protection, has been removed from the Catholic pantheon. It is now admitted by the Church that Christopher was a myth and that any power he seemed to have wielded...was obviously a delusion. So it is with all the gods of the world's many religions. In fact, they are worse than myths; they are representatives of Satan and his minions. Behind each idol is a demon using it to draw people away from the true God, as Paul states: "The things which the Gentiles [pagans] sacrifice [to their gods] they sacrifice to devils and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils" (1 Cor 10:20–21).

There is no compromise with God. At stake is the eternal destiny of every person who has ever lived or will ever live. Suppose a certain man convinces a large group of people to give him their possessions and to follow him to what he promises will be a veritable paradise on earth—and instead he leads them into a swamp where they are all swallowed up in quicksand. Should he not be prosecuted as a liar and murderer? How much more serious is it to promote false gods and to sell tickets to heaven that actually take people to hell!

7

## TBC NewsWatch

### WHAT FALSE PROPHETS?

RUSSIAN TIMES ONLINE, 1/28/13, "BRAIN STOPPER NO. 3: 'WHAT FALSE PROPHETS?' WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU LET A FOX GUARD A HEN HOUSE?" [EXCERPTS]: Dead chickens. You may wonder what this old proverb has to do with the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) movement. Unfortunately—a lot. Let me explain.

In my last post, I pointed out the repeated warnings in the Bible about false prophets. The message is clear: There will be false prophets in the church, and there will be lots of them. So be on guard.

You would think that, given these warnings, Christians would be on high alert for false prophets. Sadly, this is not the case. Even those churches that talk the most about prophets and the gift of prophecy—the Pentecostal and charismatic churches—say very little about the need for discerning false prophets.

And what's worse: many of the prophets in the NAR movement are actually telling their followers that they don't need to worry about false prophets. Imagine that!

Why don't people need to worry about false prophets? Their answer: Because there just aren't that many false prophets around. The following comment, from influential NAR prophet Bill Hamon, is typical:

"Despite the occasional false prophet we encounter, we should not let the counterfeit keep us from receiving the genuine....The percentage of false prophets is certainly much lower than the devil would have us believe. Out of the 600 pages of personal prophecy I have received over the years, only two were absolutely false, and perhaps were a person's own opinion rather than God's word to me. But I am more than willing to put up with the fraction of a percent that are bad in order to receive the overwhelming majority that are God-inspired" (Prophets and Personal Prophecy, 128).

Pay close attention to Hamon's words. He says false prophets' appearances in the church are only "occasional," and that the percentage of false prophecies given is only a "fraction of a percent."

Wow. There is a marked difference between Hamon's careless dismissal of the possibility of false prophets in contrast to the sober words of Jesus and the apostles.

Why would any church leaderand especially one who calls himself a prophet-attempt to downplay the threat of false prophets? If Hamon were a true prophet, then he would honor God's Word–not dishonor it by contradicting its teachings about false prophets.

And a true prophet would show more concern for God's people by warning them about the serious threat posed by false prophets.

There is no good explanation for why Hamon would encourage his followers to let down their guard.

That is unless this is a case of a fox guarding the hen house.

(http://www.spiritoferror.org/2013/01/brain-stopper-no-3-what-false-prophets/2326)

#### MAHER GOES FULL-BORE ANTI-SEMITIC

FRONT PAGE MAG, 2/19/13, "BILL MAHER GOES FULL-BORE ANTI-SEMITIC" [EXCERPTS]: "Based on every statement out of any Republican in the last two years," Bill Maher said on HBO's Real Time on Friday night, "the Israelis are controlling our government." It's not the first time the formerly-funny-jester-dwarf-turned-partisan-hack has gone off the deep end on Israel. It's just the most obvious anti-Semitic canard to emerge from his potty-mouth.

Maher was referring, of course, to the political story that has brought all the leftist anti-Semites rushing from the woodwork: the hold-up of Barack Obama's Secretary of Defense nominee Chuck Hagel, he of the "Jewish lobby" hatred and the anti-Israel isolationism. Said Maher: "What is it about him that's suspicious? He voted for the Iraq war, he voted for the Afghanistan war, he voted for the Patriot Act, he voted for Homeland Security, Star Wars, he's a right-wing Republican and that's not good enough?"

Sitting by and watching this ridiculous charade was Vice Chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee, [Donna Brazile, who] interjected: "Bill, what they're doing is going after every speech." When Jamie Weinstein of The Daily Caller explained that one of those speeches may have contained Hagel ripping the State Department as a wing of the Israeli Foreign ministry, Maher dropped the "Israel-controls-our-government" bombshell. Brazile sat there and said nothing. In fact, her next remarks were in defense of Hagel: "They keep changing the goalposts, Bill.'

To oppose certain policies of the State of Israel is not anti-Semitic. Everyone has done it based on the administration in Israel, which changes, as it does in every democracy. But to suggest moral equivalence between the democratic, casualty-minimizing Israelis, and the fascistic, terrorizing Palestinians is anti-Semitic. To suggest that Israel controls American foreign policy is conspiratorial anti-Semitic nonsense.

Because leftism is the true Hollywood religion, the number of self-hating Jews or atheists of Jewish origin here is skyrocketing. Jewishness is now seen as a charming rite of passage or a way to identify as non-white, a moral shield against charges of being part of the dominant demographic strain in America. But Judaism as a coherent religion and philosophy is seen as a mockery, a joke, the basis for intolerance and inhumanity. Which is why, at root, leftism must reject Judaism, and thus the legitimacy of the State of Israel.

(http://frontpagemag.com/2013/ben-shapiro/bill-maher-goes-full-bore-anti-semitic/)

#### U OF MO TO RECOGNIZE WICCAN, PAGAN HOLIDAYS

WASHINGTON POST, 2/17/13, "UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI TO RECOGNIZE WICCAN, PAGAN HOLIDAYS" [EXCERPTS]: The University of Missouri is making it easy for students to celebrate Wiccan or pagan holidays, as they've been included in the university's Guide to Religions.

There are 42 holidays listed in the university's calendar, with Jewish holidays counting for eleven, Wiccan and pagan holidays for eight and Christian holidays for seven. The other holidays include Hindu, Muslim, Baha'i, Shinto, Buddhist and Sikh holidays.

"The holidays and accommodations section of this guide is provided to faculty, staff and student leaders as an educational resource for the myriad of religious holy days celebrated at Mizzou," the guide reads. "Not only does this section offer crucial information about dates and practices, we also hope that the information about recommended academic and food accommodations will be valuable to those planning classroom activities and other academic and co-curricular events."

Among the holidays listed for Wiccan followers is Beltane, an event in May to celebrate the arrival of summer and wishing for fertility in the coming year.

(http://www.washingtontimes.com/ news/2013/feb/17/no-exams-wiccan-paganholidays-university-missouri/)

## T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

May 24-27

**Christian Renewal Center** Silverton, OR

Aug 23-24

**TBC Conference** Bend, OR (800) 937-6638

(503) 873-7743

## STS 24/7 Broadcast Schedule

April 5 & 12 Greg Durel

Roman Catholicism

April 19 & 26 Mark Dinsmore

New Apostolic Reformation

May 3 & 10 James McCarthy

Discipleship

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

#### Dear Berean Call,

I have long seen your account name on YouTube and wondered if it was another "new cult." I am so happy to have done some research today and discovered your Mission Statement. It gave me great joy to realize I wasn't looking at another misguided Christian group. God bless your work in leading Christians into pure and increased discernment. I will enjoy searching your website for some good teaching. GS (email)

#### Dear Mr. McMahon,

I read your article "The Upcoming Psychologized Generation" in the November 2012 issue of *The Berean Call*. I have my M.A. in Counseling Psychology [and] my B.A. in Christian Education.

I was deeply appreciative of [my college's] teaching that encouraged everyone to develop their way of counseling as they saw fit. We were free to debate and argue for our own thinking in the class setting.

The Christian students soon found each other, as you can imagine. We had a good many debates among ourselves that helped us when we were presenting to the whole class. We all were training to be Christian Counselors, even though that isn't in [their] curriculum.

How could we not counsel as Christians? We deal with sin issues on a daily basis with our clients. I have always used biblical counseling with my clients, whether they are Christians or not. I just can't quote scripture to them very often because they see no power in it, but I certainly paraphrase it without changing the meaning. If a client

claims to be a Christian then I explain the ministry of the Holy Spirit to them. They have extra help from God Himself. I also quote scripture and use prayer....

There are uncounted numbers of counselors out there that are using the Scriptures as their counseling manual. We don't condone homosexuality, drugs and alcohol, and the whole plethora of sin that Satan is pushing. We are working with the church, not against it. GE (WA)

#### Dear Dave,

I spent 7 years in Lausanne, Switzerland, and upon my return to the US I began to research the foundation of my beliefs. I used to think that America was founded by God-fearing people and in some way had a covenant with God. I believed that the Republican Party was a group that was trying to get the country back to the correct place under God. After my research, which includes eight books by you, I know now that I was dead wrong. Now I feel a lot of frustration because I want to open the eyes of my friends and family but I don't know how. My aunt encouraged me to read *The* Harbinger. She believed that it was true revelation about America. From the premise of the book and the author, I knew it was heresy but I read it as a way to begin a discussion with her. I hope to use it as a way to convince her of the truth....I was getting really discouraged when I couldn't find even one preacher that was on the right path. That is when I ran across your website and books. JA (email)

#### To TBC Staff,

Your newsletters have been a tremendous blessing to me. About three years ago I came across Dave Hunt's book The Seduction of Christianity [in] the prison chapel library. The book was very informative and it opened a whole new understanding of my Christian walk. Then I noticed in the back of the book an address for receiving The Berean Call. I sent for it immediately and continued reading every issue and passing it on to my fellow inmates. Then came time for my release, but I wanted to continue to receive your monthly newsletter, so I sent a letter to your staff requesting TBC to be forwarded to my new address. The day of my release, God bless your staff, I had two issues already waiting for me.

Thank you for your continued support. Now I can pass on your newsletters to the members of my congregation. Bless you all and may God reign supreme in all of our lives. DJ (email)

#### Dear Tom and staff,

Thank you so much for the update on Dave and Ruth. I have been praying for

them and will continue to ask for strength via the Spirit in the inner man and also physical strength for them both. Also, no matter what condition they are placed in, that they both will continue to be a light for the Lord and an example of His grace, mercy, strength, and love!

Thank you, too, for your comments about Mother Teresa. I thank the Lord for your continued boldness in taking a stand against those who offer another Jesus. I have felt that in my spirit about her for a very long time. You will probably receive a lot of flack for taking such a stand but if the Lord be for you, who can stand against you and prosper! We all can rejoice that the gates of hell shall not prevail against us (His church)!

I will continue to uphold you in prayer to keep on that straight and narrow path. All these trials shall soon be over. Praise the Lord! MT (NY)

## TBC Notes

# "Search the Scriptures 24/7" Up and Running

By the grace of God, we have launched our audio interview program, which is being presented on our TBC website, TBC Facebook, oneplace. com, and a number of radio stations that are running the programs gratis. Email subscriptions are also available on our website. Initial responses have been very gratifying, and it's our prayer that the topics will be timely, edifying, and an encouragement to our listeners to grow in discernment through their discipline in reading God's Word daily.

In the weeks to come, some of our programs include interviews with Dick Fisher of Personal Freedom Outreach on the growing apostasy, Caryl Matrisciana of Caryl Productions on yoga in the church, James McCarthy of Good News for Catholics on biblical discipleship, TBC staffers Mark Dinsmore on the New Apostolic Reformation and Ed Newby on the 10-hour History Channel series *The Bible*, and much more.

Please pray that our series will clearly underscore the importance of knowing and living out the Scriptures in these days of tremendous confusion and delusion in the church.

T. A. McMahon
Executive Director

## Quick Reference Guide: Catholicism vs. The Bible

A point - by - point comparison — Excerpted from The Gospel According to Rome by James McCarthy



## THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES:

- Justification is a transformation of the soul in which original sin is removed and sanctifying grace infused [1987-1995].
- Initial justification is by means of baptism [1262-1274].
- Adults must prepare for justification through faith and good works [1247-1249].
- The justified are in themselves beautiful and holy in God's sight [1992, 1999-2000, 2024].
- Justification is furthered by sacraments and good works [1212, 1392, 2010].
- Justification is lost through mortal sin [1033, 1855, 1874]. 6.
- Catholics guilty of mortal sin are justified again through the sacrament of penance [980, 1446].
- Salvation from the eternal consequences of sin is a lifelong process [161-162, 1254-1255].
- Salvation is attained by cooperating with grace through faith, good works, and participation in the sacraments [183, 1129, 1815, 2002].
- 10. Faith is belief in God and the firm acceptance of all that the Church proposes for belief [181-182, 1814].
- 11. Sanctifying grace is a quality of the soul, a supernatural disposition that perfects the soul [1999-2000].
- 12. The sacraments are necessary channels for the continual infusion of grace. They bestow grace in virtue of the rite performed [1127-1129].
- 13. Grace is merited by good works [2010, 2027].
- 14. Venial sins do not incur eternal punishment [1855, 1863].
- 15. Serious sins must be confessed to a priest [1456-1457].
- 16. The priest forgives sin as a judge [1442, 1461].
- 17. When the guilt of sin is forgiven, temporal punishment remains [1472-1473].
- 18. Acts of penance make satisfaction for the temporal punishment of sin [1434, 1459-1460].
- 19. Indulgences dispensed by the Church for acts of piety release sinners from temporal punishment [1471-1473].
- 20. Purgatory is necessary to atone for sin and cleanse the soul [1030-1031].
- 21. Poor souls suffering in purgatory can be helped by those alive on earth offering up prayers, good works, and the sacrifice of the Mass [1032, 1371, 1479].
- 22. No one can know if he will attain to eternal life [1036, 2005].
- 23. Eternal life is a merited reward [1821, 2010].
- 24. The Roman Catholic Church is necessary for salvation [846].

NOTE: Numbered paragraphs refer to the Catechism of the Catholic Church.



## THE BIBLE TEACHES:

- Justification is an act of God in which He declares a sinner to be righteous in His sight, having forgiven his sins and imputed to him God's own righteousness (Rom 3:21-4:8).
- Justification is by faith alone (Rom 3:28).
- God justifies ungodly sinners who believe (Rom 4:5). Good works are the result of salvation, not the cause (Eph 2:8-10).
- The justified are in Christ holy and blameless before God (Eph 1:1-14).
- Justification is the imputation of the perfect righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21). In Christ the believer has been made complete
- Justification cannot be lost. Those whom God justifies will be saved from the wrath of God (Rom 5:8, 9).
- There is no second justification. Those whom God justifies He also will glorify (Rom 8:30).
- Salvation is from the eternal consequences of sin is an instantaneous and secure act of God coinciding with justification (Romans 5:9).
- Salvation is attained by grace through faith apart from works (Eph 2:8, 9). Good works are the result, not the cause, of salvation (Eph 2:10).
- 10. Saving faith is the entrusting of oneself to Christ as Lord and Savior (Rom 10:8-17).
- 11. Grace is the undeserved favor of God (Eph 1:7, 8).
- 12. The child of God is the constant object of the Father's grace (Rom 5:1, 2).
- 13. Grace is a free gift (Rom 11:6).
- 14. Every sin is punishable by eternal death (Rom 6:23).
- 15. Sin is to be confessed directly to God (Ezra 10:11).
- 16. No one can forgive sin but God alone (Mark 2:7).
- 17. When God forgives sin, He completely forgives (Col 2:13; Isaiah 43:25).
- 18. Jesus made perfect satisfaction for all sins (1 John 2:1, 2).
- 19. Jesus releases believers from their sins by His blood (Rev 1:5).
- 20. Purgatory does not exist. Jesus made purification for sins on the cross (Heb 1:3).
- 21. Those who sleep in Christ need no help. To be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8).
- 22. The believer can know that he has eternal life by the Word of God (1 John 5:13).
- 23. Eternal life is the free gift of God (Rom 6:23).
- 24. There is salvation in no one but the Lord Jesus Christ, "for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

## KABBALAH, CAHN, AND HEBREW MYSTICISM

Excerpted from The Harbinger: Fact or Fiction? By David James

JONATHAN CAHN has over 1,700 of his messages available through the Hope of the World website. The descriptions of many of these messages are quite revealing about his approach to handling the Word of God—which appears to be mystical at its core:

- 1. MESSIAH'S CATACLYSM & THE HIDDEN WRITINGS OF 30 A.D. (The amazing signs contained in the hidden writings of the rabbis that happened c. 30 A.D. . . .)
- 2. THE COSMIC TSULAV & THE MYSTERY OF PURIM (The deep mystery at the center of Purim, and the center of the existence itself, the mystery hidden in the Sistine Chapel, Dante's Inferno, Josephus, the Septuagint, and in the ancient Biblical account the mystery of the Tsulav, the Cross, the Xulon.)
- 3. THE SWORD OF AMALEK & THE MYSTERY OF PURIM (From the day of the Red Sea, Pharaoh's chariots and Amalek, to the Third Reich, Joseph Stalin, Saddam Hussein, and the nuclear sabers of Iran, the amazing mystery of Amalek, the hand of God, and what it has to do with your life.)
- 4. THE PRODIGAL SON REVELATION! (The most universal and personal of Messiah's parables also contains a mystery behind the present age, the Jew, the Gentile, Israel, the Church, and the last days.)
- 5. THE MESSIAH BEARER! (From the deep and mystery filled Book of Hebrews, the mystery of the Messiah Bearer—what it means for your life.)
- 6. THE MYSTERY OF THE COSMIC FRINGE (The Kraspedon Mysteries come to their conclusion—The mystery of Messiah's sacred garment and the mystery of its fringe and a hint: It has everything to do with you.)
- 7. THE NISAN GOSPEL MYSTERY (All the events of our salvation happened in one single time period the Biblical month of Nisan Discover the mystery of Nisan, of your salvation, & the powers you have for breakthrough.)
- 8. THE COSMIC KEYCHAIN (As real as a keychain has many keys to unlock...a house there is a supernatural keychain with supernatural power to unlock the closed doors of your life.)
- 9. THE COSMIC KEYCHAIN II (Messiah has given you a keychain with specific powers of breakthrough learn how to use the keys & it will change your life.)
- 10. ENTERING YOUR PROPHETIC DESTINY! (One of the most important and very awesome principles operating in your life and how to walk into your prophetic destiny...!)

In the last chapter of [*The Harbinger*], Kaplan explains to Goren how he figured out the meaning of his personal clay seal.... Between the last sentence in the quote below and what can be seen from the titles above, the real mystery of *The Harbinger* may be that its foundation is actually Jewish mysticism:

[Kaplan] "The writing on the seal was in a language I had never seen before. But I remembered the words of The Prophet that day we first met on the bench, when he took the seal to examine it. He said it was Hebrew, but a different form of Hebrew—Paleo-Hebrew, an older version."

[GOREN] "And did you know anybody who could read Paleo-Hebrew?"

[Kaplan] "No. But I knew someone who studied Hebrew from biblical and rabbinical writings. I looked up the Paleo-Hebrew alphabet, then transcribed each of the letters into its modern Hebrew equivalent. Then I made a trip to Brooklyn. That's where my friend was, an Orthodox Jewish man who ran a little bookstore, in back of which was a study, a library of all sorts of mystical Hebrew writings. That was his passion—finding meaning in mystical Hebrew literature."

The introduction of Jewish mystical writings into the storyline of *The Harbinger* is very problematic, and one has to wonder why Cahn would have done this.

Mysticism and mystical experiences have been a part of Judaism since the earliest days. . . . The mystical school of thought came to be known as Kabbalah, from the Hebrew root Qof-Beit-Lamed, meaning "to receive, to accept." The word is usually translated as "tradition."

"Kabbalah" is a doctrine of esoteric knowledge concerning God and the universe, asserted to have come down as a revelation to the Sages from a remote past, and preserved only by a privileged few. Kabbalah is considered part of the Jewish Oral Law. It is the traditional mystical understanding of the Torah.... Kabbalah includes the understanding of the spiritual spheres in creation, and the rules and ways by which God administers the existence of the Universe.

Most forms of Kabbalah teach that every letter, word, number, and accent of scripture contains a hidden sense; and it teaches the methods of interpretation for ascertaining these occult meanings.

That Cahn would include this reference to Jewish mysticism in the book is not necessarily an anomaly. Cahn gave a message at his church that also included detailed references to mystical writings, titled "Gulgatah: The Cosmic Skull: The Rabbinic Mysteries V."

A segment from near the end of this message was uploaded to YouTube on February 25, 2010, titled "The Zohar Speaks." The following description accompanies the video: "Something *never before revealed*, to the glory of Messiah! The Cosmic Skull, the mercy of God, and the hidden and mystical writings of the Rabbis that point to Messiah." The description coincides exactly with the overall trajectory of Cahn's messages, and that of *The Harbinger*, which is to reveal to the world mysteries that have been hidden until he discovers and proclaims them.

The Judaism 101 website notes the following:

In the middle ages, many of these mystical teachings were committed to writing in books like the Zohar. Many of these writings were asserted to be secret ancient writings or compilations of secret ancient writings.

Even though he introduces the Zohar as a "hostile witness," the way Cahn describes its teachings gives the impression that he views the Zohar as being a credible source of truth:

Incredible thing. Blew me away. I found it in the mystical Jewish writings of the Zohar. Something I never heard mentioned anywhere, ever. . . . The Zohar speaks, the rabbis are writing of the redemption of the world with Messiah's coming. They speak of life from the dead. They speak of resurrection, the redemption of the world. . . . They say it all will come, the power of all this, the miracle of all this will come from a sacred thing, a sacred place. And this place, this thing, is where all the mercy of God is stored. All the mercy of God pours out from this place, this thing. What is it? Very strange. They call it the "gulgatah." This holy, mystical thing. . . . The most famous scene in human history, the center of salvation. Messiah dying on that hill which appears as a skull. That's why they called it "gulgatah"—Golgatha. And which signifies God's mercy. All His mercy. Why on earth would the rabbis put it there? Makes no sense at all—except that God just puts it in.

"God just puts it in." In other words, God inspired the rabbis to write about redemption *coming from a skull*, yet they had no idea what it meant. So, in this message Cahn presents concepts that are reflected in *The Harbinger*. The first is that Isaiah 9:10 contains a mystery that no one has seen before—Cahn has discovered it for the very first time—just as he has discovered this inspired message in the ancient rabbinic writings. The second is that Tom Daschle was inspired by God to proclaim America's defiance and thus set up the nation for judgment—even though he didn't know what he was doing—just as is true of the ancient rabbis.

As Cahn continues his exposition of the Zohar, the mystical nature of his thinking becomes even more clear. And once again he notes that perhaps no one has ever said the words he has just uttered:

In the gulgatah—Golgotha—sit thousands of myriads of worlds. And from the gulgatah—Golgotha—drips dew and fills . . . the dew fills the world and the dead will awaken in the world to come as the dew comes forth. The dew is the light of the ancient one. The light of the ancient one comes from Golgotha and as it touches—the dead ones come to life. From Golgotha is the light of God bringing life from the dead. Golgotha—the radiance of God which brings life. Whoa! That's amazing stuff. And that may be the first time it's ever been said. 'Cause you have to be a believer and you have to be in that stuff.

What stuff? *Ancient mystical writings*. Even more telling, Cahn confidently elevates the rabbis to the level of Moses and Daniel:

The death of Messiah—all pinpointed in time and space. Moses zeroed in on the day. Passover. He dies on the day that the lamb is killed. The prophets—Daniel zeroes in on the time period, mathematically, before 70 A.D. Daniel—those seventy sevens. The rabbis in the book of Moed, unwittingly, and another thing we shared this [sic], zeroed in on the year by saying that the cosmic change all took place in the year 30 A.D. . . . . And now the very hill, the very place, here in, of all

places, the rabbinical writings, the Zohar. . . . you want mercy, you go there. Listen to the rabbis on this point. . . .

How can a pastor instruct his congregation to "listen to the rabbis" who produced the Zohar and tell them these rabbis were inspired by God? The Zohar is not simply an innocuous source of information—it is an extrabiblical guide to "higher spirituality." It is mystical. It is occultic.

The Zohar cannot be understood and felt directly, but requires preconception of spirituality, before one approaches the book. The greatest Kabbalist of our time—Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam)—wrote introductions to The Zohar precisely to guide one's approach to this profound book....

Such articles cultivate one's spiritual qualities to perceive the Higher reality. Additionally, these texts provide knowledge of how to approach certain terms, phrases, and concepts in The Zohar, to maximize its use as a guide for spiritual attainment, avoiding being lost in materialized depictions that the human mind is prone to form.

Cahn [has since] tried to justify his practice by noting that the Apostle Paul also referred to the teaching of pagan philosophers in his address to the Athenians (Acts 17:22-31). He went on to suggest that Paul would have been "crucified" by discernment ministries for using a hymn to Zeus, and because of his associations.

That is a red herring.... Paul's approach is *nothing* like Cahn's. Cahn refers to the mystical rabbinical writings *positively*, saying that because God had inspired them his church should "listen to the rabbis." He presents the Zohar as something that can be studied and its depths plumbed for hidden mysteries like he has just revealed.

In stark contrast, Paul immediately tells his audience that what they have been taught by their poets about the unknown god...is completely *wrong*. He does not suggest that their sayings contain hidden mysteries that were inspired by God.... Paul never implies that the Athenians should listen to these men. Rather he refers to a single point of agreement (we all come from God) to *denounce* their idols. From Romans we understand that the knowledge of that truth is *not* a hidden mystery, but has rather been made *plain* to everyone through both the conscience and the Creation (Romans 1:18-2:16).

Unfortunately, this treatment of the rabbinic material is consistent with Cahn's frequent practice of "discovering and revealing" hidden mysteries—be it in the Bible or in extrabiblical Jewish writings like the Talmud or even in kabbalistic writings like the Zohar.

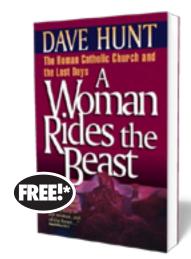
Have untold numbers of Christians unwittingly accepted mystical Jewish thought? And after having done so, how may pastors, teachers, and other ministry leaders have preached messages connected to the claims of *The Harbinger* and have publicly endorsed, promoted, and defended the book and Jonathan Cahn? How many have shared this book and the documentary with unbelieving family and friends? How many *millions* of dollars have gone into keeping *The Harbinger* on so many best-seller lists?

Something seems to be very wrong....

[See page 16 to order *The Harbinger: Fact or Fiction?*]

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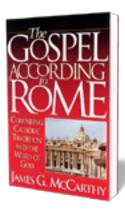
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everything from 9/11 to the collapse of the global economy." However, as David James, co-founder and executive director of The Alliance for Biblical Integrity, exhaustively documents in *The Harbinger: Fact or Fiction?* there are serious flaws throughout The Harbinger, with significant exegetical and theological pitfalls that have potentially disastrous consequences. Tragically, even historically sound leaders are unwittingly being led astray, attributing Cahn's nine mystical "seals" or "signs" as new revelation from God. This exclusive new book from The Berean Call, encourages and enables—readers to separate fact from fiction. The Berean Call, 223 pp.

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