

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

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

Mystery, Babylon – Part One

Dave Hunt

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O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets,...how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

—LUKE 13:34

I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore...With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication.... I saw a woman...And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYON THE GREAT.... [She was] drunken with the blood of the saints, and...of the martyrs of Jesus.... [She] is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth [and is built on seven hills, i.e., Rome].

—REVELATION 17:1-9,18

JERUSALEM AND ROME! How different and yet how similar are these ancient (and current) rivals for worldwide spiritual leadership! Both figured so largely in Christ's crucifixion and the persecution of the early church. Both are destined by God also to play dominant roles in the final events prophesied in Scripture. Antichrist will rule the world from Rome's fabled throne of the Caesars, revived as the seat of the new world order. This “Wicked [one]” (2 Thessalonians 2:8) will be embraced by Israel as her Messiah (John 5:43) when he brings peace to the Middle East and allows the temple to be rebuilt. That the stage for these coming events is already set seemed apparent to the participants in [June of 1993's] videomaking tour of Israel and Rome (see—<https://bit.ly/TBCIsraelTourDVD>).

The fate of Jerusalem has been inextricably intertwined with that of Rome ever since they joined in unholy alliance to reject and crucify the Lord of glory (Acts 2:23; 1 Corinthians 2:8). That uneasy partnership was shattered with Jerusalem's destruction by Rome's legions in AD 70, foretold both by Daniel (9:26) and Jesus (Matthew 24:2). The Roman Empire must be revived, for one day its armies will belong to Daniel's “prince that shall come”—i.e., Antichrist—and will seek to destroy Jerusalem again.

The woman in Revelation 17 can only be Rome/Vatican City. No other city built on seven hills wields such authority, exchanging ambassadors with nations. Nor does any other city claim to represent Christ, and thus no other could stand accused of spiritual fornication due to unholy alliances with earth's rulers. Neither can any other city rival the blood of both Jews and Christians which pagan Rome and later the Vatican have shed. Thomas Hobbes perceptively said, “The Papacy is...the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof.”

“In the midst of the [70th] week [seven-year tribulation]” (Daniel 9:27), Antichrist will forbid further sacrifices, place his image in the temple and demand to be worshiped as God. Israel will object, bringing the armies of the entire world, under Antichrist, against her to effect a “final solution” to the “Jewish problem.”

Accompanied by the saints of all ages in their resurrected and/or glorified bodies, Christ will intervene. Destroying Antichrist and his armies, Israel's Messiah, at last recognized and accepted by her, will rule the world from David's throne in Jerusalem.

Such prophecies remain hidden from Israel. The spiritual blindness of the vast majority in that land was both apparent and incomprehensible to those on our recent tour. How true is Christ's sorrowful pronouncement: “this [rebellious (Psalm 78:8), faithless and perverse (Matthew 17:17), evil and adulterous (12:39, 16:4), etc.] generation [of vipers (12:34)] shall not pass, till all these things [i.e., all the prophesied signs] be fulfilled” (24:34). Only after all prophesied events have occurred (which must precede and foreshadow the Second Coming), and Christ comes visibly in power and glory to rescue her in the midst of Armageddon, will Israel at last believe (Zechariah 12:10). Then shall be fulfilled Christ's words: “he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 10:22); and Paul's: “all Israel [that have survived to the end] shall be saved” (Romans 11:26).

How astonishing it is that stubborn unbelief should persistently characterize the descendants of Abraham, the father of the faithful (Romans 4:11-16)! “[B]lindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles...” (Romans 11:25). More than 30 percent of Israel's Jews are atheists. Although that figure is high compared with many other countries (10 percent in the USA and Ireland, 20 percent in Italy), it is even higher among *kibbutz* dwellers. This communal lifestyle of Marxist origins breeds atheism. We were told by our host on a visit to a *kibbutz* in Galilee that out of 300 *kibbutzim* throughout Israel, only about 15 were “religious,” atheism being the faith of all of the others (including his own).

Politely but pointedly, I asked how Israel could assert any better claim to that land than the Arabs if God did not give it to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for “an everlasting possession” (Genesis 17:8; 48:4; Exodus 6:8; Joel 3:2). He had no answer. I then reminded him that Israel's children study their history from the Bible, and asked how that Book could be 100 percent accurate when it comes to ancient names, places, and events and yet be 100 percent wrong about the God who its authors claim inspired their writings. Again, no answer.

Interviews in the streets for the videos we shot revealed that most Israelis (including even some atheists) do expect the Messiah. Yet they have no biblical understanding of who He might be—or that the prophets said Messiah would be “cut off [killed]” (Isaiah 53:8; Daniel 9:26, etc.) and thereafter Jerusalem and the temple destroyed (9:26)! When asked how they would recognize the Messiah, nearly all responded, “He will bring peace.” What a setup for Antichrist, of whom it is said, “By peace shall [he] destroy many” (Daniel 8:25)! Sadly, the worst destruction in Israel's history, “the time of Jacob's trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7), lies ahead.

Evidence of the conquering Roman presence from Christ's day and from Crusader times is found everywhere. Ancient ruins, neglected and even destroyed when the Arabs were in control, are being expertly restored by the Jews. A Roman presence of another nature continues in Israel to this day: the Catholicized “holy” places where events in Jesus' life and death allegedly took place.

Rome's presence is seen and felt also in the throngs of Catholic pilgrims who come for the indulgences and special favors from God which they've been taught are attached to physical places and relics. One has the impression that this land is still theirs. After all, didn't the Crusaders conquer it for Holy Mother Church?

Each holy place is marked (and marred) by the inevitable church constructed upon it. In these shrines, candles (purchase price depending upon size) burn continuously. Robed priests appear periodically at altars to repeat incantations unknown to Christ and the apostles. Reverently, the faithful cross themselves and join in ceremonies believed to convey special grace because they are performed at a sacred site. Israel needs the money the pilgrims bring. Yet one senses an uneasy truce between Jews, who disown their own who believe in Him, and Catholics, who come to see where Jesus was crucified by Jews, forgetting the Vatican's long persecution and slaughter of Jesus's Jewish brethren.

The Christian church, after being granted recognition and freedom by Constantine, soon became the persecutor of all those who did not submit to its doctrines. Like Islam a few centuries later, Christianity was imposed upon the entire populace of Europe under the threat of torture and death. Christ told His disciples that whosoever would be the greatest must be the servant of all. Instead, the popes aspired to be masters of the world. Church and state joined in adulterous partnership to expand the "Holy Roman Empire" by enforcing conversion with the sword.

Persecution of Jews commenced in earnest after the popes, taking advantage of the power vacuum left when the empire fell to the barbarians, began to rule not just as ecclesiastical leaders of the church but as secular kings. Papal armies fought to expand "the Kingdom of God." The Jews' plight—in the name of Jesus *the Jew*—soon became far more grievous under the alleged Christian church than it had ever been at the hands of pagan rulers. In *Vicars of Christ*, Jesuit historian Peter de Rosa writes of those early days:

[Catholicism] will become the most persecuting faith the world has ever seen. They will persecute the race from which Peter—and Jesus—sprang...[and] order in Christ's name all those who disagree with them to be tortured, and sometimes crucified over fire. They will make an alliance between throne and altar; they will insist that...the throne (the state) impose the Christian [Roman Catholic] religion on all its subjects.

A major target of conquest became "the Holy Land," which had already been claimed by "Saint" Helena. Constantine was the father of the new Church and Helena was honored as its mother. Even before it was conferred upon Mary, the title "Mother of God" was given to Helena as the Emperor's mother. (Every Roman emperor was worshiped as God.) This "mother of the church" journeyed to the Holy Land to buy relics and to build churches upon alleged sites of key events involving our Lord.

The Roman Catholic Church began to believe it had replaced Israel as God's chosen people. That land, promised by God to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, now belonged, for new and holier reasons, to "Christian" Rome, the new Zion. The pagan empire had become the Holy Roman Empire, the "Kingdom of God" on earth. The hope of its revival was the dream of all Europe during the Middle Ages—a goal which will be accomplished at last by Antichrist. The revived Roman Empire over which he will rule, with enthusiastic Vatican support as in the

past, will encompass the entire world.

Without rancor we must face the facts concerning the Holy Roman Empire to understand what its revival will mean. Pagans had blamed every disaster upon Christians. Now the Church blamed all on the Jews. Accused of causing the Black Death, Jews were rounded up and hanged, burned, and drowned by the thousands in revenge. Although now and then a pope sought to ameliorate their condition, there was no place for "Christ crucifiers" in God's Holy Kingdom. More than 100 antisemitic documents were published by the Roman Catholic Church between the sixth and twentieth centuries. *Antisemitism had become official Church doctrine.* To this day, the Vatican has never conceded Israel's right to exist and wants Jerusalem to be, not in Jewish hands, but under international control.

To raise an army for the First Crusade, Pope Urban II promised instant entrance into heaven without purgatory for all who fell in that great cause. The knights and knaves who responded with enthusiasm to that deceitful promise left a trail of plunder, mayhem, and murder on their way to Jerusalem, where they slaughtered all Arabs and Jews. One of their first acts after their triumphal entry into Jerusalem was to herd the Jews into the synagogue and set it ablaze. On their way to the Holy Land, the Crusaders gave the Jews the choice of baptism or death. De Rosa recounts:

In the year 1096, half of the Jews of Worms were slaughtered as the Crusaders passed through the town. The rest fled to the bishop's residence for protection. He agreed to save them, on condition that they asked to be baptized. The Jews retired to consider their decision. When the doors of the audience chamber

were opened, all 800 Jews inside were dead. Some were decapitated; fathers had killed their babes before turning their knives on their wives and themselves; a groom had slain his bride. The first century tragedy of Masada was repeated everywhere in Germany and, later, throughout France.

Sincere followers of Christ, too, were slain by the hundreds of thousands for attempting to follow the Bible instead of Rome. What these victims suffered from Holy Mother Church is a story sad beyond belief for both persecuted and persecutors. The Inquisitors were caught in a web from which there was no escape, for the papacy did indeed "reign over the kings of the earth." No doubt many of the zealots who carried out papal decrees were sincere. The civil authorities, moreover, feared excommunication should they fail to fulfill the Inquisitors' demands. The facts speak volumes.

Heretics (those who felt bound by conscience to follow God's Word) were committed to the flames because the popes believed that the Bible forbade Christians to shed blood. Victims of the Inquisition exceeded by hundreds of thousands the number of Christians (and Jews) who had been martyred under pagan Roman emperors. Catholic apologists try in vain to absolve their Church of responsibility, arguing that the sentence of death was carried out by civil authorities. Yet this transference to the "secular arm" was required by the Church's canon law, and at the tribunal where heretics were condemned the Inquisitor's throne was higher than that of the magistrate. The prisoner was allowed to know neither the charge against him nor the identity of his accusers. No one was ever acquitted. Torture often made the pitiful victims willing to confess to anything. Will Durant reminds us of Pope Clement V's rebuke of King Edward II's leniency:

YEA, THE TIME COMETH,
THAT WHOSOEVER KILLETH
YOU WILL THINK THAT HE
DOETH GOD SERVICE.

AND THESE THINGS
WILL THEY DO UNTO YOU,
BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT
KNOWN THE FATHER, NOR
ME.

—JOHN 16:2-3

We hear that you forbid torture as contrary to the laws of your land. But no state law can override [the Church's] canon law, our law. Therefore I command you at once to submit those men to torture.

The medieval Inquisition had flourished for centuries when, in 1542, Pope Paul III gave it permanent status as the first of Rome's Sacred Congregations, the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Inquisition. Known more recently as the Holy Office, its name was changed in 1967 to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—quite appropriate, inasmuch as public burnings were known as *autos-da-fé*, or acts of faith. The Office operates today from the Palace of the Inquisition adjacent to St. Peter's. The Grand Inquisitor is Cardinal Ratzinger, who reports to Pope John Paul II.

Before he became Pope Paul IV in 1555, Inquisitor-General John Peter Carafa had converted a house at his own expense into a fully equipped torture chamber for eliciting confessions from the accused. He denounced any who tolerated heretics and declared, "If my own father were a heretic, I would personally gather the wood to burn him." During his brief pontificate the population of Rome was decimated almost by half, with Jews the main victims. Under Paul IV, marriage between a Christian and a Jew was punishable by death. Hitler claimed only to be carrying out what the popes and Church councils had already decreed.

Paul IV forced Jews to sell their properties, confined them to

ghettos, treated them as slaves and reduced them to the status of ragpickers. Pope Gregory XIII declared that the guilt of Jews in rejecting and crucifying Christ "only grows deeper with successive generations, entailing perpetual slavery." Later popes, such as Benedict XIV, Pius VII, Leo XII, Pius VIII, Gregory XVI, Pius IX, et al., continued the persecution of Jews. Pope Pius XII knew very well that the Nazis were systematically exterminating Jews. Yet he never spoke a public word against the Holocaust, because to do so would have condemned his own Church. This silence, historians agree, encouraged Hitler and added to the unspeakable genocide.

Jerusalem has its Yad Vashem (Holocaust Museum) to keep ever before the world's conscience the 6 million Jews killed by Hitler. By contrast, there is no memorial to the untold multitudes of both Jews and Christians murdered by Holy Mother Church and now forgotten. De Rosa reminds us that Pope John Paul II "knows the church was responsible for persecuting Jews, for the Inquisition, for slaughtering heretics by the thousands, for reintroducing torture into Europe as part of the judicial process. But he has to be careful [not to apologize]. *The doctrines responsible for those terrible things still underpin his position*" (Emphasis added). The Vatican has never repented of these crimes against humanity and God. Of these indisputable facts many of today's evangelical leaders seem willingly ignorant.

TBC

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Submit your own questions to: PO Box 7019 • Bend, OR 97708 • Or e-mail: editorial@thebereanall.org

QUESTION: What can you tell me about the Noahide Laws? I have been confronted with this issue and need more information in order to understand what it is and if it should be a concern of ours.

RESPONSE: The Noahide Laws teaching in Judaism is commonly defined as "seven ancient basic laws that determine a moral and civilized society." The name is given as the "Noahide" laws because they are considered to be God's word to Noah after the flood.

This group of laws, which are to be given to humanity (who are all the sons [and daughters] of Noah by descent) comes from the Talmud. As other commentators have pointed out, the idea of the Noahide Laws given to all humanity (that is, all the descendants of Noah) is from the Talmud and consequently extra-biblical. Further, according to Judaism, a Gentile does not have to follow the Mosaic Law; nevertheless, all Gentiles have an obligation to follow the Noahide Laws.

The 7 Noahide Laws are that

1. Idolatry is forbidden,
2. Blasphemy is forbidden,
3. Murder is forbidden,
4. Theft is forbidden,
5. Sexual immorality is forbidden,
6. Eating the flesh of living animals is forbidden, and
7. Justice laws must be established.

During the administration of the first President George Bush in 1991, the United States Congress passed the Education Day Bill and recognized the Noahide Laws, saying: "Whereas Congress recognizes the historical tradition of ethical values and principles which are the basis of civilized society and upon which our great

Nation was founded; Whereas these ethical values and principles have been the bedrock of society from the dawn of civilization, when they were known as the Seven Noahide Laws."

Since the Noahide Laws are not found in the Bible, the question is asked: Are they the same as biblical teaching? They do seem to follow Old Testament principles contained in the Law. But there are complications. The Talmud, which is "the Link Between Scripture and Jewish Practice," does call for capital punishment of Gentiles who violate the Noahide Laws, and this has prompted concerns as to whether or not Christians (who recognize Jesus Christ as God) are guilty of violating the first Noahide law and should therefore be put to death.

The Noahide laws are basic and provide a framework for civilized living. But they are not the foundation for a person's salvation. There are good works when individuals strive to make the world a better place, are employed in a good and worthy profession, give to charity, volunteer for worthy causes, raise a family with good values, and offer help and wise counsel, among other things. But works do not save.

Indeed, a society adhering to these laws would be a better place to live, but of no comfort to those who haven't believed in the finished work of Christ. Some Messianic believers have warned that inevitably there will be a return to the full Law. We need to go no further than the Epistle to the Galatians to see the warning Paul gave under the prompting of the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 3, Paul warned,

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:24-26).

LETTERS

To connect with TBC, write: PO Box 7019 • Bend, OR 97708
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Dear TBC,

Thank you for explaining the simple truth! Proverbs 30:5-6: "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Instead of accepting the straightforward words of God, man has many motivations such as pride and love of money for imagining false systems of worship. The world today is as the world before the flood. Genesis 6:5: "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Anon. (email)

Dear TBC,

I thank God for this ministry. Keep it up, Bereans. You are eye openers and the Lord will not "forget your labour of love shown towards His name." God will justly judge all who are blaspheming and insulting Him and His holy Word to perfect judgement. They think they are wise and smart but they are fools. ID (email)

Dear TBC,

The biblical Jesus, His real purpose, was to save guilty sinners from their sins and the wrath of God. The movie *Jesus* says, "To heal the broken, to guide the lost—that is my purpose." More visual idolatry and false doctrine being spread against the truth of the Bible. This is ANOTHER Jesus. AG (email)

Dear TBC,

You know, even at a young age a person is able to want to seek and know the Truth. I remember pondering on truth when I was five years old already. God knows the heart. No amount of religion can for long sway seekers from the ultimate Truth who is Christ. KC (email)

Dear TBC,

You can never know what your posts mean to me. Years ago, I learned of you via another ministry. May the Lord bless and keep you in these perilous times. Love you in Christ. LDP (South Africa email)

Dear TBC,

I was brought up Irish Catholic, as I got older I wasn't interested. I have been saved for 25 years—praise God for His graciousness and love, Amen. RM (email)

Dear TBC,

Thank you. [Regarding an online video featuring Greg Durel] Greg was my mentor and friend. He made a huge impact on me when I lived in New Orleans. Listened to his show daily in my work truck driving around the city cleaning swimming pools and he answered many questions I had on the Bible. Ordered my first study Bible through him. My daughter was dedicated at his church. BI (email)

Dear TBC,

Personally, I don't rely on any movie or show to interpret the Bible for me. In fact I believe every one of us is responsible to know God's Word for themselves directly from the source, the Holy Bible. However, I will say, shows like this [*The Promised Land*] and *The Chosen* did help me not only to pick up my Bible more, but to actually learn it so that I may have discernment on false doctrines. God can always use anything for the good.

I actually used to find Leviticus kind of a boring book, all

the rules for atonement and such. But after watching this show, I've gone back to read it with more understanding of the Israelite community, the tents of each tribe, the kind of relatable problems they had to deal with, the way they lined up to speak to Moses, etc. It just helped to humanize the people I was reading about and it honestly made Leviticus easier to read. None of the mainstream movies or popular shows are ever 100 percent biblically accurate. Like, *The Prince of Egypt* had so many errors. I just pray over everyone watching that God may bless them with the gift of discernment and that He uses everything for His will, let His will be done, in Jesus' name. UO (email)

Dear TBC,

There are more Evangelicals today who treat Roman Catholics as brothers and sisters than ever, and believe their religion as just another denomination. We need to witness to "Christians" the gospel of salvation (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; John 3:16-19). WA (email)

Dear TBC,

God bless you, Berean Call, for your ministry and your service to humanity with the truth of the Word of God; the message that saves [from] error, and gives eternal life!!! The Lord Jesus bless you and protect His Church from such evil men. Keep [up] the good work; the crown of life awaits you!! RM (email)

Hello,

I wanted to drop a line to you all to say thank you. I remember the days getting *The Berean Call* back in the 1990s in printed form. My buddy and I used to get together and watch Dave Hunt videos for hours. That friend has gone to be with the Lord three years ago. I have a precious email from him before he died commenting about watching Dave Hunt.

Thank you for your faithfulness and contending for the Faith, you're still encouraging me in my walk with the Lord Jesus. Maranatha. JR (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.

QUOTABLE.....

Often I have heard people say, "How good God is. We prayed that it would not rain for our church picnic, and look at this lovely weather!"

Yes, God is good when He sends weather. But God was also good when He allowed my sister Betsie to starve to death before my eyes in the German concentration camp.

I remember on one occasion when I was very discouraged there. Everything around us was dark, and there was darkness in my heart. I remember telling Betsie that I thought God had forgotten us.

"No, Corrie," said Betsie, "He has not forgotten us. Remember His Word: 'For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him.'"

There is an ocean of God's love available—there is plenty for everyone. May God grant you never to doubt that victorious love—whatever the circumstances.

—CORRIE TEN BOOM

(EXCERPT FROM *CLIPPINGS FROM MY NOTEBOOK*)

NEWSWATCH

News stories are selected for reader awareness and as an exercise
in discerning the times from a biblical perspective.

THE WAY OF THE LEADERS OF HAMAS AND HIZBULLAH...IS VERY FAR FROM ALLAH

MEMRI.ORG, 3/20/25, "PALESTINIAN JOURNALIST: THE WAY OF THE LEADERS OF HAMAS, HIZBULLAH AND THE ENTIRE RESISTANCE AXIS IS VERY FAR FROM ALLAH AND LEADS ONLY TO DEATH" [EXCERPTS]: In a February 26, 2025 article on the Elaph website, Palestinian journalist Majdi Al-Wahhab slammed the leaders of Hamas, Hizbullah and the entire resistance axis, stating that only getting rid of them will save the Arab nation from the situation it has reached. These leaders, he says, purport to raise the banner of resistance and liberation, but actually lead only to destruction and death. They also pretend to champion Islam, but are actually far removed from the righteousness and the compassion that characterize this religion.

Focusing on Hizbullah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah and Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, both of whom were killed by Israel in the course of the war, Al-Wahhab points to the discrepancy between their names and their deeds: The name Nasrallah means "Allah's victory," but Nasrallah and his organization are "very far from Allah, from His Names and from His attributes," and the name Yahya means "he will live," but the path of Hamas and the resistance axis leads only to death.

These leaders, says Al-Wahhab, should be stripped of their names, for they are not worthy of them. He calls on the successors of Nasrallah and Sinwar to learn from the ways of the donkeys, who know how to overcome obstacles and difficulties, and exhorts them to lead their people to "a safe haven, far from wars and destruction."

(<https://bit.ly/43tl0pO>)

PRO-ISRAEL AND QUESTIONING TRANSGENDERISM

THECOLLEGEFIX.COM, 3/19/25, "CONSERVATIVE STUDENT UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR PRO-ISRAEL PAMPHLETS, QUESTIONING TRANSGENDERISM" [EXCERPTS]: The president of Davidson College's chapter of Young Americans for Freedom (YAF)—who has received death threats from peers for criticizing abortion—was recently told she likely violated the school's Code of Responsibility for distributing pro-Israel materials.

Mak Tompkins, Davidson's director of student rights and responsibilities, wrote in the disciplinary letter that the

accusations were examples of misconduct because they allegedly include "misinformation" and could foster Islamophobia and transphobia.

(<https://bit.ly/4k4CDIq>)

ARACHNID ORIGIN—WGD (WHAT GOD DID)

ICR.ORG, 3/10/25, "ARACHNID ORIGIN—WGD (WHAT GOD DID)" [EXCERPTS]: Where did spiders (arachnids) come from? What was their origin? Clearly, the fossil record shows spiders have always been spiders, along with other chelicerates (a subphylum of the arthropods).

The alleged evolution of the chelicerates (i.e., Arachnida) has recently become complex and problematic. According to [an article] in the *Annual Review of Entomology*, the "longstanding hypotheses and textbook scenarios of chelicerate evolution, such as the monophyly [creatures sharing a single common ancestry rather than being a polyphyletic group] of Arachnida and a single colonization of land by the common ancestor of arachnids, have come into contention." Agreed. The first problem is the common ancestor of arachnids has never been discovered. Creationists predict such a creature never will be found.

Dr. Gavish-Regev stated, "The idea that all arachnids share a single terrestrial ancestor has been widely accepted for decades, but the latest molecular evidence and a different interposition of some homologies points to a more complex scenario."

[Another writer] Dr. Gajbhiye reported on Earth.com that whole-genome duplication (WGD or polyploidization) might have played a role in arachnid evolution.

However, a new study presents a different picture, suggesting that this transition [of arachnids moving from water to land] happened multiple times rather than once. The research also highlights the role of whole-genome duplication in shaping key traits in spiders and scorpions, particularly silk production and venom synthesis.

There are serious scientific problems with the alleged "ancient" duplication of the entire genome of an organism (WGD). Such an event in most animals would lead to genomic instability, disruptions in cellular metabolism and harmful effects on the organism's overall viability.

(<https://bit.ly/44ncy18>)

THE BEREAN CALL

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FACING *the* FACTS

EXCERPTED FROM *SEEKING AND FINDING GOD* • PP 75-98 • BY DAVE HUNT

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

—PSALM 14:1; 53:1

WITHOUT TAKING TIME to explain the many disagreements, it is undeniable that there are such great basic differences between the world's religions that it seems irrational to suggest that they are essentially in agreement and all lead to the same place. Nevertheless, in spite of these differences, there is evidence that those who follow world religions will indeed all end up in the same place—but not where they promise to take their followers. Interestingly, we find in the world's various religious systems the same teachings that are woven throughout the communications (doctrines of devils) to which we have earlier referred as coming from the spirit world.

All religions have in common a universal opposition to the God of the Bible and His gospel concerning salvation by grace and faith alone through Christ Jesus and His sacrifice on the Cross. This commonality places them all on one side—and Christianity on the other.

Christianity vs. All Religions

Indeed, so wide is the chasm between Christianity and all the world's religions that it seems equally clear that Christians will definitely arrive at a different eternal destiny from everyone else. Yes, the various religions differ in the details relevant to the appeasement of their particular god or gods and the methods of attaining to *nirvana*, *moksha*, or whatever paradise they may offer. However, they all have in common the belief that their religious goals can somehow be achieved through their own good efforts and/or faithful participation in rituals and sacraments. Whether by yoga or paying off bad karma for the Hindu, or by good deeds for the Muslim (or dying in *jihad* [holy war] or on the *hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca), or through appeasing the spirits in African tribal religions and Shintoism, or by meditation techniques to escape desire and return to the void for the Buddhist, or by the sacraments of a supposed Christian church—it is all a matter of self-effort, which the God of the Bible firmly tells us He will not accept as even partial payment for having broken His laws.

The Bible clearly states: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5). Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17). Paul emphasized that point: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). The world's religions, along with the false Christianity that trusts in works and sacramentalism, attempt to make a person righteous enough for heaven. In contrast, the Bible says that everyone by very nature sins, must confess it, and must believe the gospel to receive forgiveness of sins and thereby be admitted eternally into the true God's presence.

Biblical salvation is by faith, and faith necessarily involves that which is unseen. It is not faith to believe in that which is present in visible form. Faith reaches out to the unseen world of the spirit and the eternal. And right here we encounter a major problem with ritual and sacraments: they attempt a moral rescue of the unseen and nonphysical spirit and soul of man with physical and visible ceremony. That won't work.

Sacraments and Rituals Cannot Pay for Sin

This grave error of sacramentalism persists even among a majority of those who call themselves Christians. They imagine that through participation in the visible, and thus temporal, sacrament, they receive invisible and eternal spiritual benefits. Clearly, this is impossible. The Bible declares, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Salvation, because it necessarily involves the eternal and invisible, not that which is seen and is therefore temporal, must be by faith, not by physical works or ritual.

Furthermore, ritual and sacraments have nothing to do with either justice or punishment and therefore cannot possibly pay for sin. One might as well imagine that some ritual could satisfy a court of law in paying the penalty prescribed for a major crime as imagine that God would accept sacraments in payment of the infinite penalty He has prescribed for breaking His law.

The Bible gives two sacraments for the Christian: baptism and communion (also called the Lord's supper). Both are symbolic reminders of a spiritual and eternal transaction that has already taken place: Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and our identification with Him by faith in His full payment of the penalty for our sins.

Neither baptism nor communion is efficacious. To imagine that they are—and therefore to rely upon either or both of them to effect, even partially, one's salvation—is to reject the salvation God offers in grace to those who believe His promise.

In none of the world's religions is there any concept of God's perfect justice having to be satisfied for the sinner to be forgiven. Instead, works and rituals and mystical experiences are offered to appease God and/or to earn one's salvation. The Bible, however, finds all the world guilty of rebellion against God and insists that human guilt can be forgiven only on a righteous basis. The penalty that God decreed must be paid in full.

God's Justice Must Be Satisfied

No one can pay for his own sins, either by sacrifice (even of himself in death) or by good works. Only Christ, who is God and man in one person and who lived without any sin, could pay for the sins of the world. Nor can we merit, earn, or purchase from God—who is perfectly holy and just—the benefit of Christ's sacrifice in forgiveness of our sins. If we are to receive the pardon that Christ has earned, we must receive it by faith as those unworthy of it—the gift of God's grace.

The purpose of the Ten Commandments was not to offer salvation to those who could keep them (no one has ever done so except Christ), but to show us our guilt so that we would accept Christ's payment that satisfied God's justice on our behalf (Galatians 3:24; Romans 3:19-20; 11:32; 6:23).

The attempt to offer works or rituals in payment for salvation is true even of some groups who claim to be Christian but who set up their own rules for gaining heaven in opposition to the biblical gospel of salvation by faith and grace alone *without works*. The Bible clearly says, "...that whosoever believeth in him [Christ] should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16); "For by grace are ye saved through faith...Not of works, lest any man should boast"

(Ephesians 2:8-9); and “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7). Any attempt to make even a partial payment for God’s gift by His grace is a rejection of that gift.

That good deeds cannot pay for sins is not only biblical but logical. Even a traffic ticket cannot be paid on that basis. It will not avail to ask the judge to dismiss the charge for speeding because the guilty party has driven more often within the speed limit than he has exceeding it. Nor would the judge waive the payment of any crime in response to the defendant’s promise never, ever to break the law again. The judge would simply say, “If you never break the law again you are only doing what the law requires. You receive no *extra* credit by which to pay for having broken the law in the past. That penalty is a separate issue and must be paid as prescribed.”

The Bible further asserts that God’s justice is infinite and that man, being finite, could never pay the infinite penalty it demands. We would be separated from God forever if we tried to work off the debt owed to His justice. God, being infinite, could pay that infinite penalty, but it wouldn’t be just, because He is not one of us. Therefore, God became a man through the virgin birth in order to take upon Himself, in our place, the judgment we deserve. And it is *only* on the basis of that penalty having been paid in full that God can justly offer forgiveness.

Why Faith Is Essential

How amazing that religions that rely upon good works and rituals are considered to be “faiths.” Faith can only engage the unseen and eternal and, therefore, does not mix with works and ritual. In search of a valid faith, it is folly to look at that which is visible. Even to look to a visible cross or crucifix is of no merit. What occurred on the cross for our salvation was invisible and must be accepted by faith.

The visible torture men inflicted upon Christ, the scourging, mocking, and nailing to the cross, is not the basis of our salvation—though that was the message of the popular film *The Passion of the Christ*. There is no virtue in making the “sign of the cross” or waving a cross or crucifix to ward off Satan or evil. It was the judgment Christ endured at the hands of God in payment of the penalty for our sins that makes it possible for God to offer salvation. That suffering, endured by Christ, was totally invisible to man and must ever be. It is by faith alone that we believe Christ paid the penalty and by which we receive the eternal salvation He offers.

The Bible speaks of “*the faith* which was once [for all time] delivered unto the saints” and declares that we must “earnestly contend” for this unchangeable truth because there are false teachers even inside the church who will seek through subterfuge to oppose it (Jude 3-4). Jude is not referring to faith in the sense of believing that a prayer will be answered or an event will occur. “The faith” is the body of truth that must be believed for one to be a Christian.

The Bible allows for no compromise, no discussion, no dialogue with the world’s religions (remember, Christianity is not a religion but distinct from all of them) in search for common ground. There is no common ground as far as God, Jesus Christ, and salvation are concerned. The very suggestion that dialogue may be appropriate denies that “the faith” has unique doctrinal content as a definitive body of truth for which we must earnestly contend, and opens the door to compromise in the interest of public relations.

Jesus didn’t say, “Go into all the world and dialogue about faith.” He said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel...” (Mark 16:15). Paul didn’t dialogue with the rabbis and philosophers

and pagan priests. He “*disputed* in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily...” (Acts 17:17). Was it because he was angry and argumentative? No, because the eternal destiny of his hearers depended upon whether they believed or rejected the gospel.

A reasonable and genuine faith must take very seriously what Jesus said—not what somebody says about what Jesus said, but His very words as recorded in the Bible. And we must face this truth for ourselves, not look to someone else to interpret it for us, no matter what credentials that person or church or institution might claim qualifies them to think for us. We must arrive at this serious faith personally, for true faith is between each individual and God.

Prophetic Proof

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.

Most Prophecy Has Already Been Fulfilled

Some biblical prophecy awaits future fulfillment: the Rapture (the catching up by Christ of all true believers to heaven), the revealing of Antichrist and the establishment of his world government, the Great Tribulation, Armageddon, and the Second Coming of Christ to rescue Israel. Most Bible prophecies, however, have *already* been fulfilled, and these constitute irrefutable proof that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Repeatedly, the God of the Bible reminds us that He alone declares what will happen in advance and proves that He is the only true God by specific fulfillment of prophecy. For example:

Behold, the former things [I foretold through my prophets] are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them. (Isaiah 42:9; 46:9-10; 48:5)

There are two major topics of prophecy in the Bible: Israel and the Messiah who comes to Israel and through Israel to the world. There are hundreds of prophecies concerning Israel (God’s chosen people) that have been fulfilled, and many more are in the process

of fulfillment, as we are witnessing in our day. The fulfillment of prophecies concerning Israel is found throughout vital parts of his story acknowledged by the entire world. Here is a brief outline.

False Claims By “Palestinians”

According to the Bible, God gave the land of Israel exclusively to His chosen people, the Jews. It was specifically promised to the descendants of “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 15:7, 18-21; 17:7-8, 19, 21; 26:3-5; 28:13; Exodus 6:4,8; 1 Chronicles 16:16-18, etc.). Israel was the new name given by God to Jacob, and it is from this name that the Promised Land derives its proper title to this day. The importance of these people can be seen in the fact that God tells Moses, “I am...the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations” (Exodus 3:6,15). The Bible identifies God in this way 12 times, the number of the tribes of Israel. Another 203 times He is called “the God of Israel.”

Certain Arabs, who only within the last forty years began to call themselves “Palestinians,” claim the land of Israel as the surviving descendants of its original inhabitants. That clearly fraudulent assertion is the basis for their intended displacement of Israel and causes the conflict in the Middle East.

These Arabs claim that they are descended from Ishmael, Abraham’s first son, and that therefore the Promised Land belongs to them. But Ishmael—even had there been a Palestinian people—was not a Palestinian. His mother was Hagar, the Egyptian maid (Genesis 16:1) of Abraham’s wife, Sarah, while Ishmael’s father was Abraham, who was from Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 11:31)—neither of them were Palestinians! When Abraham brought his wife, servants, and flocks into the Promised Land that God gave to him and to his heirs by an everlasting covenant (Genesis 13:15; 17:7, etc.), it was called Canaan and was inhabited by Canaanites (Genesis 12:5-6; 13:7,12, etc.). Arabs who make the impossible claim of descent both from Ishmael and from the original inhabitants of that land are simply lying.

The land of Canaan, to which God brought Abraham, became Israel, a great kingdom of the Jewish people for more than 1,500 years. There was no such place as “Palestine” and no such people as “Palestinians” until the Romans, in anger, in AD 135, renamed Israel *Provincia Syria-Palestina* after her chief enemies the Philistines. Thereafter, its inhabitants were called “Palestinians,” an appellation which the Arabs steadfastly refused, insisting that the Jews were the “Palestinians.” It was not until the early 1960s that certain Arabs began to claim that they were indeed “Palestinians” and that the Jews were occupying the land they had inherited from ancient ancestors.

On the contrary, God told Abraham specifically that Isaac (his son by Sarah) and his descendants would inherit the Promised Land (Genesis 17:15-21). The earliest verses in the Qur’an support the writings of Moses as true. To escape the honest consequences of that embarrassing fact, Islam claims that the Bible was subsequently corrupted—a claim for which no evidence can be offered. In fact, we have Torah manuscripts both before and after Muhammad, and they are identical. The Qur’an itself declares repeatedly that Allah brought the Jews out of slavery in Egypt, destroyed Pharaoh’s pursuing army, gave Israel the Promised Land, and brought them into it (Surah 5:70; 10:91,94; 17:103-104; 44:30-32; 45:16; 95:20-21, etc.).

Further Proof Supporting Israel’s Legitimacy

Furthermore, God told Abraham that the heirs to the Promised Land would be slaves in a foreign land for 400 years before

they took possession of the land He had given to them (Genesis 15:13-16). This happened to the Jews exactly as foretold—not to the Arabs. The Jews became an identifiable ethnic group from isolation as slaves in Egypt for four centuries and were then brought into Canaan. In contrast, the Arabs are not of pure descent from Ishmael but are a mixed race. They settled not in the Promised Land but in the Arabian Peninsula, where they became an identifiable people group. Arabs never came to “Palestine” in any numbers until they invaded it in the seventh century AD.

Today, only the Jews, and no other people on earth, can legitimately trace their ancestry back to slavery in Egypt, their miraculous deliverance therefrom, their entrance as a unique people group into the Promised Land, and their existence there for centuries as a nation.

As proof that they are the ex-slaves and chosen people, they alone keep the feast of the Passover as a memorial of this event, as God commanded (Exodus 12:14-28)—and have done so each year ever since.

The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, known as “the children of Israel,” were led to the Promised Land by Moses nearly 3,500 years ago. At that time, God warned His people through Moses that they would rebel against Him, and because of that, He would scatter them to every part of this world, where they would be hated, persecuted, and slaughtered like no other people (Deuteronomy 4:27; 28:37, 63-64; 2 Chronicles 7:20; Nehemiah 1:8; Jeremiah 15:4; 29:18; 44:8; Amos 9:9; Zechariah 7:14, etc.). And so it happened. Numerous prophets foretold in detail what we now identify as Antisemitism—that the Jews would be maligned, mistreated, killed, and discriminated against by all other nationalities. At the same time, God promised to preserve the Jews as an identifiable ethnic people and to bring them, in the last days, back into their own land of Israel (Jeremiah 30:7-11; 31:8-12, 27-40; 36, etc.). No non-Jews, whether Arabs or any other nationality, have any claim upon that land, which God has promised to defend.

Through the prophet Zechariah (12:1-3), God declared that in the last days preceding Christ’s Second Coming, when the Jews had been restored to the Promised Land, Jerusalem would be like a millstone around the necks of the nations. Today, it is the world’s major problem; a nuclear war could break out at any time over that Holy City. In remarkable fulfillment of prophecy, the United Nations Security Council has devoted nearly one-third of its deliberations and resolutions to Israel, a country with less than one-thousandth of the earth’s population. That would not be the case were it not for the fulfillment of another amazing prophecy: that tiny Israel would be so powerful militarily that she would defeat the surrounding nations that would attack her (Zechariah 12:6-9).

Israel’s history is the undeniable unfolding of prophecy fulfilled, exactly as foretold in the Bible—and more is to come. Yet to be fulfilled in the near future are prophecies declaring that Israel will be deceived into making a false peace that will set her up for an attack by all the nations of the world under the leadership of Antichrist. Current events seem to be heading in that direction. That horrible war, which will take the lives of two-thirds of all Jews on earth (Zechariah 13:8-9), will bring the intervention of Jesus Christ from heaven to rescue Israel and to destroy Antichrist and his world government. All indications today are that we are indeed heading toward a world government and Armageddon.

Antichrist and Christ

The Bible declares that Antichrist will control all banking and commerce in the entire world with a number (Revelation 13:16-18), a remarkable prophecy anticipating modern computer technology.

Furthermore, Christ declared that if He did not stop Armageddon, no one would be left alive on earth (Matthew 24:22)—another astonishing prophecy that anticipated today's weapons of mass destruction, unknown to past generations.

There are thousands of verses in the Bible dealing with Israel. Prophecies pertaining to Israel are a major part of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. Yet nothing about the great events foretold in the Bible concerning Israel is found in the writings of any of the world's religions. Nor do they contain any prophecies concerning Israel's Messiah—nor even for any of their founders. There are no verifiable and clear prophecies foretelling the coming of Buddha, Confucius, Muhammad, Zoroaster, the Bab, Baha'ullah, and others in any scriptures.

But for the Jewish Messiah there are literally hundreds of specific prophecies, all of which were undeniably fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The Bible prophesied where Christ would be born (Micah 5:2), that He would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, which would be thrown down in the temple (Zechariah 11:12-13), and that He would be rejected by His own people (Isaiah 53:2-3). The Bible prophesied the calendar date of the *very day* the Messiah would ride into Jerusalem (Daniel 9:25; Nehemiah 2:1-8), that He would be hailed as the Messiah, although humbly riding into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9), then crucified four days later (Exodus 12:6; Psalm 22:14-18; Zechariah 12:10—all recorded centuries before crucifixion was practiced on earth), and that He would rise from the dead the third day (Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:8-12; Jonah 1:17). Many other details were also prophesied.

No one can be an honest atheist or agnostic. Prophecy proves the existence of the true God and that the Bible is His Word. The fulfillment of numerous prophecies in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth cannot be explained by coincidence and proves beyond dispute that He is the only Savior of mankind, exactly as He claimed to be. If Jesus did not fulfill, without exception, what the Hebrew prophets declared in the Scriptures concerning the coming of the promised Messiah, then no matter how appealing we may find His teaching and personality, He would have to be rejected.

The Conversion of Gentiles Foretold

Furthermore, that millions of non-Jews all over the world would become believers in the God of Israel, and that this would happen through their faith in the very Messiah whom the Jews would reject, was prophesied repeatedly by Hebrew prophets throughout the Old Testament (Genesis 12:3; Psalm 22:27; Isaiah 52:10; Malachi 1:11, etc.). The rabbis and even Christ's disciples did not recognize these prophecies, not because the language was unclear, but because they were blinded by unbelief. That the conversion of hundreds of millions of Gentiles has happened in spite of the unbelief of the Jewish nation in their Messiah is one of the most remarkable developments in history. Today, there are about two billion people who, though they are not all true Christians according to the standards Jesus set, claim to believe in Him and, through Him, to believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Paul was not the inventor of Christianity, as some have claimed, nor even was Jesus. Christianity is the fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies. Not only that there would be multitudes of Gentile believers, but also the specifics of the doctrines of salvation were laid out clearly in the Old Testament. Christ himself pointed to these prophecies, and Paul made them the basis of the gospel he preached (1 Corinthians 15:1-4, etc.). This is absolutely unique. There is no comparable verification for any of the doctrines of any of the world's religions.

Prophetic Proof of the Bible

Paul declared that "the gospel of God" that he preached was backed up by the Old Testament. He begins his epistle to the Romans with these words: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)" (Romans 1:1-2). In every city Paul entered on his missionary journeys, he went first of all into the synagogue and proved to the Jewish congregants that what their own prophets had foretold concerning the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ had fulfilled, including His death on the cross and His resurrection: "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them [in the synagogue], and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the [Hebrew] scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17:2-3).

Christ did exactly the same. He scolded the two disheartened disciples, who knew the tomb was empty but didn't believe that Christ had risen from the dead, as they were walking to Emmaus from Jerusalem three days after His crucifixion. He said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things [i.e., rejection by Israel and crucifixion], and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-27). He told His disciples repeatedly that "all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44).

It would be folly to step into eternity trusting (in rejection of God's Word) one's own ideas or the ideas of some church or religious leader. All who would know their eternal destiny for certain must rely upon what the Bible itself proves to be true about salvation and living the Christian life. Because of the irrefutable proof that it is God's Word, the Bible must be our authority.

We commend the Bible to each reader. Do not take our word, but search God's Word for yourself. Why is this personal study necessary? Because to whatever extent one relies upon some third party (pastor, priest, preacher, author, church, etc.) to interpret the Bible, to that extent one has lost contact with God and His Word. God wants to speak to each individual through His Word and through Jesus Christ, not through some intermediary.

The Bible itself says, "Faith cometh by hearing...the word of God" (Romans 10:17). In our earnest desire to know the one true God, we must turn to the Scriptures alone. It is up to each one to check it all out from there, the only infallible authority and, having examined the proofs, to believe the Word of God. Such is the basis of true faith—the only faith that saves for eternity.



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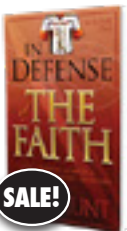


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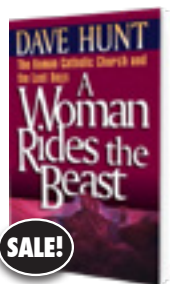
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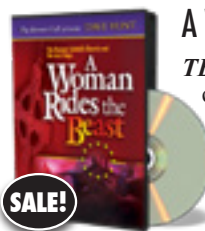
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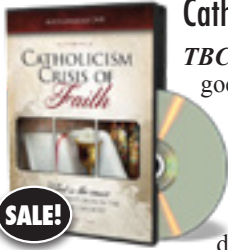
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