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MAY 2011

**IS HEAVEN IS FOR REAL FOR REAL?**

*by T. A. McMahon*

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Seven years after publication of the controversial ground-breaking bestseller *The Seduction of Christianity* in 1985, its authors, Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, joined forces on another front. They began a ministry for the purpose of encouraging spiritual discernment among those who regarded themselves not just as "evangelicals" but as *biblical* Christians. The primary vehicle for this endeavor was through the publication of the newsletter *The Berean Call*. The ministry and newsletter name is taken from Acts 17:11, in which the writer of Acts commended those in the synagogue of the Greek city of Berea for being more fair minded than those in Thessalonica—because not only were they eager to receive the Word, the *Bereans* also checked it against what the Apostle Paul taught them in order to see if his teaching was according to the Scriptures. Through the publishing and multimedia efforts of The Berean Call (TBC) believers are exhorted to get back into the Word of God instead of being "carried about by every wind of doctrine," and are equipped with materials to help them walk in the truth. TBC's stated mission is to:

**ALERT** believers in Christ to unbiblical teachings and practices impacting the church

**EXHORT** believers to give greater heed to biblical discernment and truth regarding teachings and practices being currently promoted in the church

**SUPPLY** believers with teaching, information, and materials that will encourage the love of God's truth, and assist in the development of biblical discernment

**MOBILIZE** believers in Christ to action in obedience to the scriptural command to "earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3)

**IMPACT** the church of Jesus Christ with the necessity for trusting the Scriptures as the only rule for faith, practice, and a life pleasing to God

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# THE BEREAN CALL

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

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## **Is Heaven Is for Real for Real?: An Exercise In Discernment**

*T. A. McMahon*

There have been quite a number of books written by or about people who claim to have personally visited Heaven. Some of these authors profess to be Christians while others do not. The descriptions of their experiences vary regarding such things as entering into a dazzling white light at the end of a dark tunnel and being greeted by deceased loved ones, or being in the presence of God and seeing the shed feathers of angels dotting the grand floor of His throne room. Many of their stories contain information that would seem to be beyond their ability to know at the time—or at all.

Although these individuals supply much information, the content raises many questions. Obviously, everything they say can't be true because some of the content in one book contradicts what's written in others. How do we know who is giving us an accurate and truthful account?

A biblical Christian might say that he would compare what they say with what is presented in the Scriptures about Heaven. If it rings true to the Word of God, then it must be true. Well, yes and no. Yes, it must be true to Scripture. What is presented certainly cannot be at odds with what the Bible teaches about Heaven; nevertheless, just because it conforms to Scripture doesn't prove that the person's declaration or experience of *being* in Heaven actually took place.

I know a good deal about Heaven from my study of the Bible. If I told you that I had recently visited there and only communicated what I knew was recorded in the Bible about it, you couldn't object to what I said on the basis of my being biblically inaccurate. Accuracy, however, is not the only criterion for biblical discernment. There are many other instructions and examples that we must take into consideration. For example, the Apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 12 of a "man in Christ" (no doubt Paul himself) who was caught up to Heaven. He didn't know at the time whether it was an experience in which his spirit had left his body, or a vision while his spirit remained in his body. Nevertheless, he states that what he saw and heard in paradise was not lawful for a man to utter. Paul's experience was followed by a humbling infirmity, which he states that God allowed him to suffer "lest

any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations..." (2 Corinthians 12:6-7). That isn't always the case in Scripture. The Apostle John obviously was given permission to declare what he witnessed in Heaven in the Book of Revelation. This would seemingly apply as well to the writer of the Book of Job.

But can we be sure that the visions and personal experiences of these writers are true? Absolutely—because their words are found in the *Scriptures*. Of the Word of God, the psalmist writes, "Thy word is true from the beginning..." and Jesus said, "Thy word is truth" (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17). *That* is the ultimate verification that the experiences of those men of God indeed took place as they described. Furthermore, since the canon of Scripture was closed in the first century A.D., no one since that time can have his vision of—or his alleged visit to—Heaven validated in the same way.

Jesus gave us another insight to help our discernment when He told of Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man, who had died, was in a place where he was tormented and suffering remorse. Yet he begged Abraham to send someone to warn his brothers so that they would not end up with him in "this place of torment." Abraham's response was: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And again, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:19-31).

Armed with the above scriptural teachings for the purposes of discernment, let's apply these and other biblical admonitions and critical questions to a book that is having an impact on Christendom and the American public. *Heaven Is for Real* was published in 2010 and made the *New York Times* Best-Sellers list. It has also been the cause of controversy in some fellowships, as believers have been divided in their support of and disputation over the book's veracity.

*Heaven Is for Real* is a nonfiction account that documents the experience of a three-year-old boy who believes that he visited Heaven. The story is told by the boy's father, an evangelical pastor. He and his wife initially seem to be rather startled by their son's revelations, which he shares over a period of about three years. There is nothing *not* to like about this Christian family, and much that is quite admirable.

The little boy is a typical three- or four-year-old—hardly precocious, but simply matter of fact in relating what he seems to have experienced.

That experience took place when three-year-old Colton was undergoing emergency surgery for a ruptured appendix. Not too long afterward, he told his parents that he saw them praying for him outside the operating room. When they asked how he knew what they had been doing he said, "Cause I could see you....I went up out of my body and I was looking down and I could see the doctor working on my body. [Scripture tells us that death takes place when the spirit vacates the body. Yet there was no medical report of a clinical death during Colton's surgery.] And I saw you and Mommy. You were in a little room by yourself, praying; and Mommy was in a different room, and she was praying and talking on the phone" (pp. xx-xxi). The accuracy of Colton's disclosure rocked his parents to the core. But that was just the beginning of revelations that far and away defy natural explanations.

Colton's other revelations included: angels singing "Jesus Loves Me" to him; his sitting on Jesus' lap; meeting John the Baptist and the angel Gabriel; petting Jesus' rainbow-colored horse; his descriptions of Jesus' wounds and attire, including a crown with a pink diamond that Jesus wore; the prevalence of kids in Heaven; his description of everyone there having wings like the angels—all except Jesus, that is; his being recognized by his great grandfather, who died decades before Colton was born; and the description of God as "really, really big."

Although most of Colton's observations in Heaven are not outside the realm of possibility of what *could* take place there, they are nevertheless extra-biblical insights and information, some being more problematic than others. For example, Colton explains that "Everyone kind of looks like angels in heaven," sporting wings (the size of which are dependent on the individual's size) and a halo. Since the resurrection of believers' transformed physical bodies has yet to take place, their form now in Heaven must lack physical attributes. Hence the need for wings of whatever size makes no sense. Moreover, other than the descriptive visions of the heavenly creatures known as cherubim and seraphim and the decorative designs in the Temple and upon the Mercy Seat, angels that appear to humanity are never described as having wings.



Many supporters of the book claim that any and all objections pale in the face of the supernatural knowledge that Colton reveals—things that were humanly impossible for him to know. For example, he said that he had met his other sister in Heaven. When told by his mother that Cassie was his only sister, his shocking response was, “No....I have two sisters. You had a baby die in your tummy, didn’t you?” (p. 94). Colton had never been told of the “painful episode” of the miscarriage, and his parents never knew the gender of the fetus. Colton added, “In heaven, this little girl ran up to me, and she wouldn’t stop hugging me....She said she just can’t wait for you and Daddy to get to heaven” (p. 96). That revelation seemed to be the most convincing for Colton’s parents that their son had indeed visited Heaven: “We had wanted to believe that our unborn child had gone to heaven. Even though the Bible is largely silent on this point, we had accepted it on faith. But now, we had an eyewitness: a daughter we had never met was waiting eagerly for us in eternity” (p. 97).

Was Colton truly an *eyewitness* in Heaven to everything he described? Much of it is quite mindboggling, notwithstanding the fact that *all of it* is extra-biblical. Yet it provides alleged insights about Heaven; e.g., a girl dies as a fetus, grows into a little girl in heaven, and then is eagerly awaiting her parents’ arrival. What if one or both parents reject the gospel? Would there then be disappointment in a place of perfect bliss?

Consider how Colton’s father mentioned that “the Bible is largely silent” on a certain issue. It is also completely silent on the specific things that Colton has revealed. This raises the question as to why God would leave out something of value for us in His inerrant Word, which was given through His prophets “as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21)—only to reveal it later through a little boy (as well as many others who make similar claims). On the back cover of the book we read, “*Heaven Is for Real* will forever change the way you think of eternity, offering the chance to see, and believe, like a child.”

The Bible is God’s precise, absolute, and eternal communication to mankind (Luke 21:33; Hebrews 4:12). It did not come by nor was it left up to the will or imagination of *man* (2 Peter 1:20). Paul writes, “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Our faith can be childlike, but it is faith placed in God’s Word, not in anyone’s alleged “eyewitness” account, be they a child or an adult. Peter was

an eyewitness to an incredible event. He saw Jesus supernaturally transfigured before his very eyes and heard the voice of God. We can be *sure* that the personal experience he had was true because it’s reported in Scripture. Nevertheless, he tells us that his personal experience (or anyone else’s) is *not as trustworthy as the Word of God*: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed” (2 Peter 1:19).

At the time and in the years following Colton’s experience, his dad was very interested in having him describe Jesus. He wrote that “as a pastor, I wound up spending a lot of time at hospitals, in Christian bookstores, and at other churches—all places where there are lots of drawings and paintings of Christ....When we came across a picture of Jesus we’d ask Colton, ‘What about this one? Is that what Jesus looks like?’” (p. 93). Time after time, Colton would reject the dozens of misrepresentations. Then, nearly three years after Colton’s surgery, he was shown a portrait of Jesus painted by a young girl named Akiane, who also claims to have visited Heaven beginning at the age of four. Colton’s reaction was, “Dad, that one’s right.” His confirmation convinced his father: “Knowing how many pictures Colton had rejected, Sonja [his mother] and I finally felt that in Akiane’s portrait, we’d seen the face of Jesus. Or at least a startling likeness” (p. 145).

In Exodus, we find a definitive statement against anyone attempting to make an image of God (Exodus 20:4-5; Acts 17:29). That applies to images of Jesus, whether of statues or great religious paintings or on the silver screen. One of the many problems is that they inevitably lead to idolatry, which in turn breeds superstition and occultism. Another related problem is that they must *all* be false representations because they have no basis in Scripture—other than being condemned. Jesus therefore could not encourage a young girl to paint His portrait.

Those who believe that He did encourage Akiane (because she could then point people to Him through her amazing art skills and her testimony concerning Him) need to compare with Scripture what she, at age 16, says about Jesus: “Jesus shared with us: ‘I am the way, the truth and the light. No one comes to my Father, but through me.’ I feel that he invited us to participate in the divinity. Each of us is one of kind [*sic*] original path to the way of truth and light, and without our individual love and effort we cannot understand and reach God” (<http://akiane.com/blog/?tag=akiane>). Her misquote and misrepresentation rejects Jesus as being the only way for mankind to be reconciled to God. It opposes what Jesus taught in favor of Satan’s promise of divinity to Eve

(Genesis 3:5). Akiane’s paintings and words clearly reflect “another Jesus.”

What puzzles many people is how Colton, as a three-year-old at the time of his experience, could attain information, most of which was completely foreign to him at his young age. His parents don’t know for sure but believe their son received the visit to Heaven as a gift from God. Their “faith,” however sincere and biased toward their little boy, does not have the support of Scripture. How, then, was he able to describe what he did without the input gained from actually being in Heaven? No one can say for sure—not even little Colton. He was in an operating room, surrounded by attending medical personnel, and under the influence of an anesthesia-produced altered state of consciousness.

What we do know about that and other types of drug-induced conditions of mind (even dream states, meditation, and an overworked imagination) is that multitudes of people have reported experiences that seem to validate everything from clinical or near-death events to past-lives journeys to abductions on UFOs. They also reveal information for which they had no basis of knowledge prior to their experiences. It may be that an altered state of consciousness creates a condition in which the mind is like a blank screen, open to outside input. Spirit entities, whose goal it is to undermine the Word of God and deceive the world, might have that ability to program the blank screen and could therefore take advantage of anyone in such a highly susceptible condition (see Dave Hunt, *Occult Invasion*, pp. 187-90). But again, no one knows for sure how such things take place.

The critical issue for discernment is not “how it works” but “what is being communicated.” All that a Bible-believing Christian can do in ascertaining the truth of a matter is to be vigilant by “searching the Scriptures” to see if what is being presented is true to the *full counsel of God’s Word* (Acts 17:11). If we don’t do that, whether we are young believers or mature in the faith, we are just as vulnerable to false teachings as those whose circumstances have directly opened them to deceptive experiences.

A believer’s life in Christ is shaped by a great many experiences that the Lord allows for our growth in Him. It begins with one’s believing the gospel, to which sound doctrine is added. As we abide in Christ’s teachings, our discernment will increase, thus protecting us from “being carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14). Let us therefore take to heart Paul’s warning: “I have laid the foundation [of the gospel], and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (1 Corinthians 3:10). **TBC**

## Quotable .....

Oh, for a heart to praise my God,  
A heart from sin set free;  
A heart that's trusting in the blood  
So freely shed for me.

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,  
Believing, true, and clean,  
Which neither death nor life can part  
From Him that dwells within.

Charles Wesley

## Q&A .....

**QUESTION: I have heard of a number of churches that are giving copies of Rocky Fleming's *The Prayer Cottage and the Sacred Garden* to church members. Are you familiar with the book, and is there a reason to be concerned?**

**RESPONSE:** This devotional book is promoted as an invitation to those "overwhelmed by the pressures of life" to "enter the Prayer Cottage and the Sacred Garden." Those who accept this invitation will "want to read this beautiful allegory again and again, returning to the Prayer Cottage and the Sacred Garden to find the peace you seek." That's quite a promise—and rather presumptuous when compared to Scripture.

In John 14:27, Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Our peace and our rest are to be found in Christ alone. He commands us to come unto *Him* and "learn of me," and we are to seek Him with all our heart.

The question to ask, therefore, is whether or not this book leads one to a greater relationship with Christ. Does it bring us closer to Christ, who is "our peace" (Eph 2:14), or to "another Jesus" (2 Cor 11:4)?

Beginning with an out-of-body experience that transports the author of this allegory to the "Prayer Cottage," much of what follows sounds more mystical or psychological than devotional. The emphasis is on the *experiential*. The writer states that it is the Lord who is speaking to him. The words, however, rarely sound like the words of the Lord from Scripture. Instead, these words in the mouth of the "Lord" sound like those of the Shaolin martial arts instructors in the old *Kung Fu* TV series: "Remain quiet, My child. Say nothing, right now," the Lord whispered.

Consider the biblical model: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps 46:10).

Several experiences follow, sometimes with sentient inanimate objects. For example,

when the writer enters the Prayer Cottage, he finds himself in "the Grace room." He sits down in an overstuffed chair and "immediately feels its loving acceptance" (p. 19). A chair may be comfortable, but is it really "accepting" or "loving"?

Next is the "Examination room," in which the writer tells us that in the "deep recesses" of his mind, this "room had effectively revealed something awful in my life that I had hidden from myself" (p. 27). No, it is the Lord "who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1 Cor 4:5). It is the *Word of God* that "is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb 4:12).

Between the Prayer Cottage and the Sacred Garden is a courtyard, where Fleming realizes that he is on a "vision journey." Shamans and pagans go on vision journeys, but there is no biblical precedent for believers. We are not to go on a *vision journey*—we are told to come *unto Christ*.

Next is the Sacred Garden, where "my children and I do our best communicating. In this place poetry, songs, and inspired words are written." Here is where the writer is overwhelmed by his own inadequacy but is reassured by the Lord, who tells him, "The Holy Spirit, right this minute, is speaking heavenly words to Me that are from your heart. He is translating your deep feelings for Me into heavenly words of praise" (p. 35).

What does the Lord grow in the Sacred Garden? "Many other fruits...are provided for special occasions....If special words are needed to encourage someone, I have fruit for that. Or, if a particular person requires extra understanding, I will provide that fruit for My child to give to that person" (p. 37).

The writer is taken to "Meditation Rock," which at first seems more biblical in that he is told "if you really seek understanding, you will find it in My Word." What we find, however, are the "*meanings and mysteries of Me from My Word*" (p. 45).

Jesus said plainly, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Mt 11:29). No "mysteries" here. What Jesus offers is what we need: "rest unto [our] souls."

The writer is shown a glimpse of the "Valley of Abundance," which is only reached by going through the "Shadow of Death." The path he takes is hundreds of feet high and at points is "only a little wider than a tightrope" (p. 52), sounding as surreal as a painting by Salvador Dali.

After a harrowing journey over the heights to "Restoration Pool," the Lord begins "ministering to me in a way I had never experienced before. Heavenly music filled my ears and found lodging in my

soul. A gentle humming anointed me with tranquility and calmness" (p. 61).

Finally, "the Lord" says, "As my champion, you will engage in spiritual warfare, and you will experience spiritual wounds from the enemy." "The Lord" then states that He will deal with the wounds "in the deepest possible way," explaining that many do not have a "concept of Me as a loving Father, because their own earthly fathers wounded them so deeply....I want to be their Abba, their Daddy, if they will let me....I am the Abba that their inner being is crying for" (p. 63).

That may be Freudian psychology, but it certainly isn't biblical truth. It's the same as with the writer of *The Shack* (see Aug 2008 *TBC*). God has identified Himself as the "Father" in Scripture, and He certainly must have a reason. That is where our understanding must begin. The failure of fathers (or mothers, or friends) is no excuse for looking to psychobabble.

Furthermore, Fleming's writing is blasphemous in the sense that he is ascribing to God much that is contrary to His Word, and he compounds the error by telling the reader that this is what Jesus communicated to him. Certainly Jesus can speak to a person's heart, or even audibly, if He so chooses. But that will always be subjective and personal for the one receiving the communication, which then must be held up to the light of Scripture (Is 8:20). When it becomes a published communication of the Lord's alleged words, it is nearly always received by the undiscerning as a valid word from the Lord that supplements Scripture. Regarding that serious error, we all need to be reminded: *Christ supplemented is Christ supplanted*.

The danger in Rocky Fleming's *The Prayer Cottage and the Sacred Garden* is that it alludes to Scripture, and although the experiential nature of the book may stir emotions, it provides the reader no insight or practical truth to draw closer to the Lord Jesus Christ who "loved us, and hath given himself for us..." (Eph 5:2).

**QUESTION: Mark Dinsmore went to great lengths [Mar 2011] to negate the possibility of God's intervention in happenings around the world, using adjectives such as "immature," "mystical," "false prophets," etc., toward those who would contemplate such a thing.... To say dogmatically that God did not send the earthquake to Japan, Haiti, and elsewhere, or the Katrina event, is to be a false prophet himself....Is [he] saying that God is doing nothing such as chastenings, wake-up calls [etc.] in any way in men's lives to bless or to call them to repentance?**



**RESPONSE:** We invite you to examine the March 2011 TBC Extra more carefully. You'll find that it does not mention earthquakes in Japan or Haiti, nor Hurricane Katrina; neither does the article state "dogmatically" that God does not intervene in such affairs. To say this is to misquote and misrepresent the author, who wrote, "As even the limited evidence we've presented *suggests*, this winter's extreme weather, animal deaths, and even earthquakes are not the beginnings of divine judgment... but rather these events *appear* to be the consequences of entropy, in conjunction with the wickedness of men" and Satan's power.

When responding to calamity and catastrophe, one must be very careful before automatically attributing such deadly, destructive force to "God's voice," or "God's hand." Can He individually, and collectively, gain our attention through such events? Yes, indeed—but to say that He *causes* them is an entirely different matter and is a key distinction between a false prophet, who "declares," and a Berean, who seeks to rightly divide the Word.

It isn't a sin to simply ask the question, "Why is there evil in the world?" It is wrong, however, to attribute such activity to the Lord. There is no question that the nations of the world are *deserving* of judgment. But if the Lord is indeed the One doing the "shaking," one should ask, "Why are the most wicked cities and nations of the world not being devastated first?"

You mention God's chastenings in men's lives, to either bless them or call them to repentance. It is true that the Lord chastens those whom He loves (Heb 12:6). This principle applies to God's children—those who have been made joint heirs through faith in Christ (Rom 8:17). Scripture tells us that it is not God's wrath but His *kindness* that leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4). Even in the case of wicked Sodom, the Lord was willing to spare that city if there had been as few as ten righteous individuals within its boundary.

With the professing church, it's important to note that in the New Testament we see God's judgment of unrepentant believers: "deliver[ing] such an one *unto Satan* for the destruction of the flesh" (1 Cor 5:5). This may occur in a sudden, catastrophic manner, or perhaps in a slow but obvious deterioration of health. God simply allows Satan to do what comes naturally as the thief and destroyer and sworn enemy of God's people. This method of justice seems consistent with what we see in regard to peoples and nations today.

Of course, God is sovereign in all the affairs of men and His creation—and nothing occurs that doesn't first pass by his "desk" for approval. That God is able to

use disastrous events to draw men, women, and children to Himself is also without question. And we should, indeed, pray that when calamity strikes, not only will men's hearts be turned toward God but that also believers are prepared to minister to those in need, both with the gospel and with material aid. After all, "God sent not his Son... to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (Jn 3:17).

There is no scriptural or physical evidence to suggest that our Creator is presently doing the "thundering" or "shaking" that results in catastrophic death and devastation. Instead of a biblical view of love, grace, and mercy, this paints the Lord as a spiteful, vengeful being, who indiscriminately hurls lightning and waves upon the continents. Such a picture is largely indistinguishable from that of a mythological or pagan perspective.

In the book of Job, the Lord gave Satan permission to destroy all of Job's material wealth and family, in part by using the forces of nature—including fire "from heaven" (Job 1:16) and "a great wind from the wilderness" (1:19). Some believers today attempt to interpret earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, and tornados as signs of God's judgment upon mankind. But is not this faulty reasoning identical to the flawed "logic" of Job's friends, whom God soundly rebuked? Clearly, Job's calamity was not the result of his sin—God's Word declares that Job was "perfect and upright" (Job 1:1). Although Job's suffering was *allowed* by God, it was clearly not *executed* by Him.

There is absolutely no doubt that the professing church today is *deserving* of God's cleansing fire. In fact, considering the Laodicean nature of the American church, which is filled with biblically illiterate milk-drinkers—and observing the abysmal behavior and antichrist attitudes of those who reject sound doctrine altogether—we should *expect* it to come (1 Pet 4:12). While noting that the context here primarily applies to *spiritual* persecution, it is also true that God allows *physical* trials, personal loss, political unrest, and even environmental upheaval, which can—and should—cause us to draw near to him (Jas 1:2-4, Rom 8:28). However, this season's catastrophic events are hardly *selective* and so are clearly not signs of divine "justice." Rather, God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt 5:45)—not for judgment, but for *blessing*. Indeed, what a strange way for God to demonstrate His love if the Scriptures said, "For he maketh his *fury* to fall on the evil and on the good, and sendeth *earthquakes and floods, tornados and wildfires* upon the just and on the unjust."

Again, is the world—and the church—*deserving* of God's judgment? Absolutely!

But it is of the Lord's *mercies* that we are not consumed, because his *compassions* fail not" (Lam 3:22). Meanwhile, our mission is to redeem the time (Eph 5:16)—warning both the world *and* the church that "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise [of his future earthly return and fiery judgment]" (2 Pt 3:9).

**QUESTION:** Evangelist James Robison has openly declared [that] God is using Glenn Beck. How many have addressed the issues that Beck has addressed this past three years? Yes, he's mixed up on theology, but so was Balaam's ass! Matthew 3:9 states that if God's children do not do their part in assuming their responsibilities, "God will raise up children through these stones." John the Baptist got executed for doing that. Paul got thrown into prison for shutting down an idol-manufacturing business in Ephesus. If evangelical pastors want to straighten out Beck, they should adopt his courage in their own ministries, with the addition of correct Biblical theology.

**RESPONSE:** God may be using Glenn Beck, but if that's the case then it is certainly not as an oracle of truth. He may seem to be a champion of conservative politics, for which we would laud him were it not for the fact that he has mixed his erroneous theological beliefs with his misunderstanding of American history. For example, he declared at last year's Liberty University commencement ceremony that it was "God's finger that wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. This is God's country. These are God's rights." Try to find the "*pursuit* of happiness" as an unalienable right in Scripture. You should also be aware that Latter-Day Saints' prophets declared that the U.S. Constitution would come under attack and be severely weakened, yet it will be restored by true followers of the Mormon faith.

You wrongly imply that the biblical examples you cite are acts of social and political activism. Not even close—although you are reflecting ideas that are greatly influencing evangelicals today. Pastors who love Jesus yet have addressed the political issues that Beck has "addressed in the past three years" have very likely been diverted from the exhortation that Jesus gave Peter to feed His sheep the Word of God.

The main problem as we see it is not "straighten[ing] out Beck with correct biblical theology," although we do pray for his salvation. Our primary concern is regarding those who profess to follow Christ yet are abandoning "correct biblical theology," which is the only basis for a fruitful life in Christ—temporally and eternally.

## TBC NewsWatch

### MOTHER EARTH GIVEN "HUMAN RIGHTS"

**CANADA.COM, 4/11/2011: UN DOCUMENT WOULD GIVE 'MOTHER EARTH' SAME RIGHTS AS HUMANS [EXCERPTS]**—Bolivia will this month table a draft United Nations treaty giving "Mother Earth" the same rights as humans — having just passed a domestic law that does the same for bugs, trees and all other natural things in the South American country.

The bid aims to have the UN recognize the Earth as a living entity that humans have sought to "dominate and exploit" — to the point that the "well-being and existence of many beings" is now threatened.

The wording may yet evolve, but the general structure is meant to mirror Bolivia's Law of the Rights of Mother Earth, which Bolivian President Evo Morales enacted in January.

That document speaks of the country's natural resources as "blessings," and grants the Earth a series of specific rights that include rights to life, water and clean air; the right to repair livelihoods affected by human activities; and the right to be free from pollution.

It also establishes a Ministry of Mother Earth, and provides the planet with an ombudsman whose job is to hear nature's complaints as voiced by activist and other groups, including the state....

In a 2008 pamphlet his entourage distributed at the UN as he attended a summit there, 10 "commandments" are set out as Bolivia's plan to "save the planet" — beginning with the need "to end capitalism."

Reflecting indigenous traditional beliefs, the proposed global treaty says humans have caused "severe destruction . . . that is offensive to the many faiths, wisdom traditions and indigenous cultures for whom Mother Earth is sacred." It also says that "Mother Earth has the right to exist, to persist and to continue the vital cycles, structures, functions and processes that sustain all human beings."

In indigenous Andean culture, the Earth deity known as Pachamama is the centre of all life, and humans are considered equal to all other entities.

### RUSSIA AIDING SWORN ENEMIES OF ISRAEL

**AP, 4/8/2011: RUSSIA RESUMES FUEL LOADING AT IRAN'S BUSHEHR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT [EXCERPTS]**—The Russian company that built Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant... has started reloading fuel into the reactor, more than a month after the fuel was ordered removed because of contamination concerns.

The Atomstroyexport company said in a statement that the reactor will be reassembled "shortly," but did not give further details.... Fuel rod insertion began in October [2010], at which time Iran said that the 1,000-megawatt light-water reactor would begin transmitting electricity to Iranian cities by December.

But in late February, Russia ordered that fuel be removed because of concerns that metal particles might be contaminating fuel assemblies....

The United States and some of its allies believe the Bushehr plant is part of a civil energy program that Iran is using as cover for a covert program to develop a nuclear weapons capability....

The Bushehr project dates back to 1974, when Iran's U.S.-backed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi contracted with the German company Siemens to build the reactor. The company withdrew from the project after the 1979 Islamic Revolution toppled the shah and brought hard-line clerics to power.

In 1992, Iran signed a \$1 billion deal with Russia to complete the project and work began in 1995. Under the contract, Bushehr was originally scheduled to come on stream in July 1999.

Foreign intelligence reports have said the control systems at Bushehr were penetrated [and operations delayed] by Stuxnet, a malicious software designed to infiltrate [selected] computer systems.

### "BELIEVERS" BATTLE FOR VOTES BEGINS

**Ministry Today, 4/19/2011: 2012 CANDIDATES TALK FAITH [EXCERPTS]**—Recognizing the power of Christian voters, 2012 presidential hopefuls are already beginning to stake out their territory in the religious landscape.

In March, likely Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich, who converted to Catholicism two years ago, spoke at Cornerstone Church, a San Antonio megachurch pastored by John Hagee. The thrice-married former house speaker told his audience that he was concerned his grandchildren could eventually find themselves "in a secular atheist country" that is potentially dominated by "radical Islamists."

More recently, billionaire Donald Trump appeared on CBN News to express his religious convictions and confirm his newly-embraced pro-life credentials. "I believe in God. I am Christian. I think the Bible is certainly, it is the book, it is the thing," he said.... Trump, who noted that he always goes to church on Easter and Christmas, also weighed in on Islam, describing the "negative vibe" he receives from the Qu'ran....

Other potential candidates who have been open about their Christian faith include Sarah Palin, Mike Huckabee and Michelle Bachmann.

Former Massachusetts governor, Mitt Romney (a Mormon), is expected to throw his hat in the ring for the 2012 race, but faces the liability of his Mormon faith—considered by many evangelicals to be a cult....

### WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS

**CBN.COM, 4/5/11, AMID NEW THREATS, ISRAEL PREPS FOR MULTI-FRONT WAR**—A new Israel Defense Forces report reveals that since 2006, Israel's neighborhood has grown a lot more dangerous.

According to the March 31 report, Hezbollah has been busy in southern Lebanon for the past five years. The terror group has built more than 500 bunkers armed with various weapons, 300 underground facilities, and 100 storage units for rockets, missiles, and other weapons.

Many of these facilities are located near hospitals, homes, and schools.

Uzi Rubin, Israel's foremost missile and rocket expert, told CBN News the threat to the Jewish state was "severe."

"Those bunkers are not in population centers just by mistake," Uzi Rubin noted.

"The idea here is to attack Israeli population centers from Hezbollah population centers, to attack our population centers in order to terrorize and discourage us to fire from their population centers in order to use their own population as a human shield," he explained.

Rubin said Hezbollah's arsenal has quadrupled since 2006 to more than 40,000 rockets and missiles. He explained that for Israel, there is a bigger concern than the number of weapons.

"I think the most significant thing is that some of the rockets are accurate," he said. "They actually are guided rockets. They added guidance systems and control systems."

"Now, instead of spreading it around kilometers away from the target, they can put them within 500 meters of a target," Rubin explained. "Now they are becoming not just a terror threat, they are becoming a military threat."

This means Israel's national infrastructure, including power plants or Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, could become targets.

With Hezbollah's rockets now capable of reaching central Israel, the northern border isn't the only danger zone. Add the rockets from Hamas in the south and all of Israel is in range of its Islamic enemies.

These recent developments prompted Israel's new Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Benny Gantz to hold military drills last week. The IDF simulated a war with Hezbollah and Syria on its northern border, Hamas on its southern border, and the involvement of Iran.

An Israeli general explained the exercise was meant to prepare the IDF for a future war in light of the recent changes in the Middle East.



## Speaking Schedule

Aug 12-13 TBC Conference

Bend, OR  
(800) 937-6638

### Brothers Dave and Tom (and staff, of course!),

Your ministry has been a blessing to me—more than I can express in words. If we never meet here on Earth, I look forward to one day meeting you in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ! It is a great day to be an American, even with all of our ills and evils, but to be a citizen in heaven, that is something I can live for daily! *We serve a risen Savior; He's in the world today. I know that He is with me, no matter what man may say!*

[My wife] was in the hospital the whole month of April [2010] and it was a real time of growth for all of us, especially me. [We] took the opportunity to witness to the entire staff on the floor that she was [on] in the hospital [and] gave out tracts [at] every opportunity...one nurse thanked us for being a good testimony. The Lord Jesus gets all the credit. He is the One who redeemed my wicked soul at Calvary! Psalms 39-41 is what the Lord really used to help me to grow during that time. Praise Him for His wonderful works to the children of men! WS (WI)

### Dave and Tom,

There are 1,000 do-gooder organizations lined up at my door and none of them are speaking the Name of my Lord and Savior. You two send me information all the time that I consider more valuable than anything else that is being offered and you never have your hand out. May God continue to bless your ministry.... BL (Canada)

### TBC,

Thanksgiving and praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to you all who are ministering at The Berean Call. Besides Brothers Dave and T. A., I have been especially blessed by Mrs. Ruth Hunt and the lesson she gave to the ladies concerning Matthew 11:28-30. I have shared that with my sisters and my 81-year-old mother. How refreshing and encouraging to us. The *How to Study Your Bible* DVD by Bro. William MacDonald has also been very encouraging. Of course there is much more. I have not been disappointed in the lessons. My only regret is that I did not begin sooner with you all. YB (LA)

### Dear Friends at Berean Call,

What a wonderful blessing and answer to prayer! Yes, Lord, we thank You for this ministry to Your servants behind bars! [Receiving the book *The God Makers*] is no coincidence, since I got the books today, and an hour later was transferred to another yard, where I am bunked with a Mormon....I will be out next year, Lord willing, so that's all I'll ask, except for your prayers and continued newsletters.... JG (CA, prisoner)

### Dear Berean Call,

We were sitting in Sunday school when our pastor earnestly encouraged us to read *The Hole in Our Gospel* by Richard Stearns. [My wife] whispered to me that this was the book she just read about in *The Berean Call*. Wow! [She] had not read TBC for years but had made it a point this time.... (We now see the Holy Spirit at work!) Last week we humbly gave our pastor a copy of your critique plus information showing the affiliation of George Soros (Global Fund, etc.) with World Vision. You have made it clear that Humanitarian Aid is being used as a weapon of Satan to further World Government. We are wary of any organization that feeds people without first feeding them the true Bread of Life, Jesus Christ. J&SL (TX)

### Dear Dave,

I have been reading your newsletter for some time now and although I agree with you on most of your topics I must tell you that the piece you did on Richard Stearns's book *The Hole in Our Gospel* was an atrocity. I know that Richard Stearns is a believer and he is all about doing the work of Christ. In his book he explains why he is doing the work he does, and the reason every believer should do the same. Christ is about love, and we are told to help the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan. If more believers were doing these things in Christ's name instead of putting the people down who do what we are called to do there might be a chance to spread the Gospel to the whole world instead of people around the world hating the people of God. Yes we need to be careful of whom we align ourselves with for we do not want to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. There are so-called churches out there that do not teach or preach the truth and are a part of the emerging church even in my area, which is way out in the country. I just left a church because of this very fact....I thank you for taking the time to read this. I am going to ask at this time to please take my name off your mailing list for the *Berean Call* newsletter. Thank you very much. MJ (email)

### Dear T. A.,

I'm glad to see the new format and more to read. I love it. More NewsWatch and Letters and Q & A, etc. Your article "Apostasy and Its Antidote" was terrific, right on! Your exposure of the Purpose-driven apostasy was excellent—and about time. It needs to be exposed for what it is....Purpose-driven, seeker-sensitive, and emergent false leaders now have their churches full of unrepentant people who are undiscerning, being deceived into a false gospel that has the curse of the Law on it. Just like Jesus told the Pharisees and Sadducees who were the religious leaders of that day, "You are of the synagogue of Satan...you are of your father, the devil." Jesus didn't sit down and say, "Well, now, boys, let's just take the good out and work together." He saw the curse on it and told them so and rejected it all....We are being led by deceived leaders back under a curse. Thank you for presenting the truth and being faithful. JM (MN)

### The Berean Call:

As many times as I have listened to Glenn Beck, I have never heard him try to convert anyone to Mormonism. I have heard him refer to Jesus as "my Lord and Saviour." He has done more than anyone to explain in detail many of the things that are going on in our country. He backs everything up by proof with videos. I thank God for Glenn Beck. He encourages everyone to come back to God. He is the type of person that investigates all things thoroughly. So don't be too quick to judge. He spends time in prayer every day. Many times he quotes Scripture that fits right in with what he's trying to bring across. The Scriptures say, "Draw near unto God and He will draw near unto you." The Holy Spirit will reveal truth to Glenn Beck....I am asking you at this time to take my name OFF your mailing list. AH (PA)

### Dear Tom,

I am a pastor, and I was at the graduation last year at Liberty where Mr. Beck spoke. I was finishing my degree and was sitting amongst the kids. I continued to ask the kids around me if they knew what he was saying when they clapped and shouted. No one was able to tell me. All I [could do] was pray. It ruined my graduation. You see, I know what Beck taught; I planted my first church in St George, UT. I am one standing up against the heretical teaching around us, and I am paying dearly—my church just continues to shrink. I just wanted you to know that there are some men still holding to the true gospel of Jesus Christ and are paying for doing it. EH (email)



**Dear Mr. McMahon,**

Thank you so very much for your article on Glenn Beck. While we listen to his radio program and watch his TV show, we have been very concerned about his particular brand of "Christianity" and the influence it is having on the church at large. He has been very informative about the movements within our country to destroy our freedoms and bring us under a one world government but we know his answers are not biblical answers. Keep up the good work. *The Berean Call* has been a Godsend for us over the years. SE (SD)

**TBC,**

Your March 2011 newsletter arrived today and I eagerly broke its seals. I read and re-read the articles and Q&A letters throughout the month. I was alarmed by the printed message on the outside cover stating "this could be your last newsletter." Yes, we do want to continue receiving a print copy of TBC's monthly newsletter! Unlike the publications produced by some other groups, your newsletter is something that we as homeschool parents are happy to leave in places where our children can find and read. The content is clear, Biblical, and well written—and you don't resort to titillating, upsetting, or fear-mongering headlines or content that would be inappropriate for minors to see. God bless you and your ministry! D&DG (IL)

**Dear T. A.,**

On Friday, February 25, professing Christians, Dave Roever, James Robison, and David Barton were guests on the *Glenn Beck Show*, along with Rabbi Daniel Lapin. I don't question these men's walk with the Lord (Roever, Robison, and Barton). But I do question their participation on this show. One of Beck's themes has long been turning back to God as the thing that will save this country, à la "If my people..." from Scripture. But Beck has made it well known that he is a Mormon; the god he worships certainly isn't the God of the Bible. I don't know if the Rabbi is converted to Christianity or not, but if not, he denies the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins.

During the approximately half hour [that] I watched, I saw a lot of "back patting" and agreeing with Glenn on needing to get back to God. The only "strong" Christian witness I heard was from Roever, saying all the right words about Jesus paying for our sins with His shed blood. But absolutely no rebuke of the Mormon god that Beck worships, from anyone. And taken in the context of the show, Roever's comments rang hollow, at best, and at worst could make one feel that the Mormon god and the True God are

one and the same. Are Christians really this duped? Do they not see what they are doing? When will Christian leaders stand up and say, "Glenn, we may agree with the conservative principles, you espouse, but you are in gross error in your belief about God"? When will the idea that conservatism and Christianity are one and the same be exposed for the lie it is?

I am a staunch Reagan Conservative. But my conservatism and my Christianity are not one and the same thing. I am a Conservative because it fits more in line with my Christian beliefs. I fear we are experiencing the rise of a new cult of "Christoservatism," where folks think that being conservative is what will save them. DM (PA)

**Dear Dave and Tom,**

So many times through the years I have wanted to write to you and tell you how much I appreciate your ministry. I guess laziness kept me from doing it, but today I'll do it... Yours is a hard job, but I'm so glad the Lord put it on your hearts to do it. I am amazed at the number of Christians who are unaware of the false teachings that abound. And it is so very disappointing to see the numbers who seemingly don't want to know! There seems to be such a lack of desire to feed upon the Word of God!

I have a few of your books and have found them very helpful. I just picked *Whatever Happened to Heaven?* off my shelf a couple of weeks ago and devoured it for the fourth time! (Yes, my memory is that bad!) Now I'm re-reading *The Seduction of Christianity. What Love Is This?* is priceless! How I ache for my loved ones who truly love Jesus but are "caught up" in Reformation views in regard to allegory, Israel, and prophecy! I hope you'll be able to continue your ministry for years to come. JB (GA)

**Dear Dave,**

I'm re-reading Renald Showers' book *What on Earth is God Doing? Satan's Conflict with God*, the early section on the church's apostasy, and my heart became full of joy for you, your faithfulness, and your sound biblical teaching. My heart is physically sick and causing me much discomfort today, and yet I am full of God's joy. Such a delight! Thank you for being used by YHWH to counter many of the adversary's attacks on the true church and God's Holy Word. JM (IL)

**Dear Brother Dave,**

I admire and appreciate how... you have stuck to the truth of the gospel no matter what waves of opposition may have come. ...I am sure you have prevented many

from accidentally walking down mistaken paths. I would like to say also, that your thorough research, documentation, and straightforward exposition and critiquing of the now-popular social gospel message has been of particular value. I think it is perhaps even more of a danger than other aberrations of the truth because it "looks" so Christian.... You are right on, and I think... that immersing oneself in the social gospel can actually anesthetize believers [from] speaking the gospel at all, being convinced that [if they are] "living it" they... need not say anything, and are effectively silenced [since] those to whom they minister "feel good" and so do they.... MS (email)

**To Whom It May Concern,**

To all you who make my newsletter without fail and for all the work you do at The Berean Call, I am writing to say thank you. I learn a lot every time I receive my newsletter. I appreciate the work that it takes to keep the ministry going. May the Good Lord continue to bless all you do for Him. CC (VA)

## TBC Notes

### *Please Pray for Us*

We don't want to do anything that isn't covered (even smothered!) in prayer. In Acts 12:5, the church prayed "without ceasing" for Peter's circumstance and ministry. Paul prayed without ceasing and exhorted all believers to do likewise (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Every blessing that takes place at TBC, from the wonderfully encouraging letters and the necessary financial support to the grace for persevering through the trials, is an answer to your bringing Dave, me, the staff, and our families before the Lord.

As we look forward to carrying out the various projects that the Lord has graciously given us to do this year, pray that first and foremost we concern ourselves with pleasing Him, not only in what we do but especially in how we go about it.

*T. A. McMAHON*  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# FINDING RAPTURE HERE ON EARTH?

A review of Brenda Peterson's book: *I Want to Be Left Behind*

**WHO DOESN'T WANT TO BE TAKEN IN THE RAPTURE?** Many people, apparently (see *TBC* 4/11). The author of *I Want to Be Left Behind* (DaCapo Press, 2010) shares her insights and personal feelings about this subject that is becoming more and more controversial.

I have to admit that Brenda Peterson is a very engaging writer. I was drawn in from the first page, and even though the book reads like a blow-by-blow description of practically every moment in her life, Peterson manages to hold her audience's attention and keep them in a bit of suspense as to just where she will finally end up.

This book feels almost like fiction, with lots of dialogue, beautiful word pictures of the scenery around her, and some very poignant accounts of conversations during family gatherings.

The theme of the book is Peterson's search for the truth about God, the Rapture, the church, life, the afterlife—all worthwhile undertakings. Raised in what she calls a “fundamentalist” Southern Baptist family, Peterson remembers that their beliefs majored on the authority of Scripture, the evidence for and anticipation of a Rapture in which Jesus Christ would appear in the air and believers would rise to meet Him, and the importance of “gathering together” with other believers.

I found myself rooting for her in her quest for truth—up to a point. Against all odds, I continued to hope that she would come to the conviction that the Bible is true and is therefore to be trusted (even though the very title of the book and the endorsements on the back cover let me know that my hopes wouldn't be realized).

What was interesting was the fact that despite her yearnings for all things “natural” and “woodsy,” Brenda Peterson has never actually been able to shake off her Christian roots and the very real, loving ties to her Christian family. It often seems as though she hopes to be able to merge her love for the elemental things of life with the God whom her parents believed had created the universe. Alas, she eventually does just that.

One quote near the beginning of the book reveals her cynical wit and pragmatic view of “spiritual” things, which may make this book so popular—and dangerous: “It struck me that being ‘raptured’ out of this world trumps the insecurity of living and the surrender of dying. No bodily indignity. No suffering. One will simply be whisked off with the fellowship of the believers, the Rapture gang, to a heavenly and just reward. In the twinkling of an eye, they say, the righteous will ascend, dropping golden dental work, nightgowns, and perhaps some spouses. Unless you count losing the earth and billions of unfortunate sinners who cling to it, getting raptured is a blast” (pp. 3-4).

Peterson herself is one of those who clings to the earth, and using humor to make her point, she draws her audience in deeper: “I had seen a new bumper sticker: IN CASE OF RAPTURE, THIS CAR WILL BE UNMANNED. I wanted to tell him that I was going to get a new bumper sticker too: IN CASE OF RAPTURE, CAN I HAVE YOUR CAR?”

Early in her life, Peterson realized that she “felt no connection with the continual Southern Baptist story line of sin, suffering, and separatism.” She continues, “When the congregation sang, *This world is not my home, I'm just passing through / If heaven's not my home, then, Lord, what will I do?* I bowed my head in consternation. How could they happily jettison the entire world for an afterlife that seemed thinly conceived and lonely for all I most loved? Another thing: if God so loved this world, why didn't Christians take better care of it?”

Her obvious misinterpretation of John 3:16 that God loved the *earth* finds its fulfillment (for her) when she reads an article by N. T. (Tom) Wright, the Anglican bishop of Durham in the United Kingdom, called “Christians Wrong About Heaven.” She paraphrases his writing: “Paradise is not a final resurrection or rapture away from this world. It is an intermediate stage before Christ's return to join the ‘new heavens and the new Earth together.’” She cites Wright's explanation of Revelation: “God wants you to be a renewed human being helping him to renew his creation . . . you won't be going up there to him, he'll be coming down here.” Peterson herself then goes on to explain her own justification for the “no Rapture” theory: “That is why it is so important to care for this earth, God's creation....So why not help out in creating the new heavens and earth?...If the earth is joined with heaven, if eternity with the divine is already here in this world, then we cannot leave the earth behind—ever” (p. 253). This is not unlike what many of today's churches are teaching!

She is disappointed that Christians seem to believe that animals will not be included in the Rapture because she loves animals of all kinds and has a particular fascination for snakes. She mentions that one of her favorite books is *The Gnostic Gospels* by Elaine Pagels, which seeks to show how Christianity might have developed if Gnostic texts had been accepted as part of the Christian Canon. Peters describes her fascination with the Gnostic serpent coiled around the earth and the “symbolic twining of the serpent with Christ the Messiah” (p. 175).

Drawing from Hinduism, Taoism, Hopi Indian shamanism, Buddhism, along with Christianity and environmentalism, her philosophy jumps from one idea to another. The difficulty in reading this book is to see her come close to the truth and then back away into another blend of all that she has taken in. None of her philosophies satisfies her by itself. Even environmentalism, for which she claims to have a strong affinity, when broken down into its parts, has, according to Peterson, too much in common with fundamentalist Christianity! So she considers herself a “backslidden environmentalist” who still clings to the earth and the things of it.

The saddest moment in the book is the following excerpt:

“Well, honey, the Bible says we will be swept up to meet Christ in midair,” my mother jumped in. She is always exhilarated by the good fight. “We truly hope you'll be lifted up to heaven with us.”

“I was about to protest, but suddenly I was distracted by the thought: what if I was wrong and my family was right all along about the Rapture? What if while floating on this little cruise ship of a world, the tropical heavens suddenly parted wide and I saw my whole family ascending on chariots of fire? Wouldn't I want to be with them? I pictured myself on an upside-down, tilting *Titanic*, like in the movie with all the passengers clawing their way to higher decks. Wouldn't I take a lifeboat or a chariot of fire if it were offered, especially if my whole family was onboard, reaching out their loving arms to me?”

“Then the sad but somehow bracing thought struck me: no, I would want to stay onboard and go down with the ship....I realized that I would want to sing along with those *Titanic* musicians who serenaded everyone as they sank” (p. 217-18).

When the author was addressed directly by a family member as to exactly what belief she adhered, her reply was, “I do believe in a divine presence in this and all worlds. And I believe that every faith is sacred.”

Not so different from what we are hearing these days from all quarters, including “Christianity.”

—BARBARA ROMINE







# TBC SUMMER CONFERENCE **AUGUST 12-13, 2011**

**IT'S TIME TO BEGIN** *planning for another exciting Berean Call conference in beautiful Bend, Oregon! We're pleased to announce that there is no cost to attend the meetings (though pre-registration is required).*

This event will once again be at The Riverhouse Conference Center. If you've never had the pleasure of experiencing the beauty of sunny Central Oregon and its stunning view of the Cascade Range, this year would be a wonderful time to vacation and fellowship with Berean-minded believers! If you've been with us before, you already know some of the blessings in store—both inside the meetings as well as outside. Either way, we hope that you will join us for this time of edification and recreation.

We have an exciting lineup of speakers who, in addition to teaching, will be ready to answer your questions during a special Q&A session. You will also be treated to a never-before-released video featuring Dave Hunt!

Our hope and prayer is that the conference will glorify the Lord and be an encouragement to all who are able to attend. Remember, there is no registration fee, but because we will be meeting downstairs in the Exhibit Hall, space is limited—so please give us a call to reserve your seat! You are responsible for making your own transportation, lodging, and dining arrangements. We hope that you can join us for this special time of teaching and fellowship!

## **OPTIONAL DINNER TICKET:**

*We're planning on having a dinner at the end of the Conference, 7pm Saturday, August 13. Food will be served at (and by) Country Catering. Dinner tickets are limited so reserve yours now!*

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## **CONFERENCE SPEAKERS:**



**CARL KERBY:** Carl's passion is to proclaim the authority and accuracy of the Bible and to engage the minds and hearts of believers and unbelievers so that they may experience the realities of the Word of God in today's culture. Formerly a founding board member of Answers in Genesis, Carl is currently President and Founder of Reasons for Hope, Inc., a ministry that teaches creationism, evangelism, and discernment regarding the influence of the popular media.



**PAUL WILKINSON:** Paul's writings feature church history and particularly how developments such as replacement theology have adversely influenced Christians regarding the restoration of Israel and Christ's imminent return. Paul is the Assistant Pastor of Hazel Grove Full Gospel Church in Cheshire, England, and studied at the International School of Holocaust Studies in Jerusalem. He is the author of *For Zion's Sake*, which addresses Christian Zionism, Christian Palestinianism, and the role of John Nelson Darby.



**DR. FRANK BOLLES:** Frank is a medical doctor and international Bible teacher who has led many tours to the Holy Land where he has family members residing. Frank will present an insider's view of Israel and her current state of affairs.



**T.A. McMAHON:** Tom started The Berean Call with Dave Hunt and is TBC's executive director and editor-in-chief. Together, Dave and Tom wrote the bestseller *The Seduction of Christianity*. Tom will give an update of the latest trends that are leading Christendom into Last Days apostasy.

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# AN EXCERPT FROM: JUDGMENT DAY! ISLAM, ISRAEL, AND THE NATIONS FALSE PEACE, THEN DESTRUCTION

MANY PROPHECIES in the Old Testament have two applications. There was a fulfillment near at hand and one that was deferred to the last days. Here are the words of two different Hebrew prophets who never knew one another. They each referred to a destruction that came in their day; but their separate prophecies also agreed concerning a destruction from the Lord that would be worldwide and that was not fulfilled in the past but could come to pass only in the last days:

Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. (Isaiah 13:6-13)

Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. (Joel 1:15)

Two of the most electrifying prophecies in the Bible are found in Ezekiel chapters 38–39. They concern a people who are attacked by the armies of the world and rescued by God's intervention. Their identity and the delusion that has overtaken them are clear. They "dwell safely...without walls...bars nor gates...[a] people that are gathered out of the nations..." (Ezekiel 38:11-12).

This can only be Israel, a people that have been scattered among the nations and have come back to their own land as they have been doing today. They will mistakenly feel secure from any possible enemies, having believed Antichrist's promise and guarantee of their safety.

We can thus say on the authority of God's Word that Israel will enthusiastically remove the wall and fence she is erecting to protect her from terrorists. Israel will have been deceived by Antichrist with a false peace that is intended to destroy her, but he himself will be destroyed by Christ. Of this one, who pretends to be the true Messiah, we are told: "He shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes [Christ]; but he shall be broken without hand" (Daniel 8:25).

Israel has shown a naïve eagerness to believe any promise of "peace" and has often been deceived. Arafat deceived Israel times without number, and now Israel seems willing to be deceived

by Mahmoud Abbas, Arafat's successor as Palestinian Authority Chairman via the January 9, 2005, election. Israel's Labor Party leader, Shimon Peres, enthusiastically described Abbas as "A moderate man....Let's give him a chance." Presumably, it is his "moderation" that causes him to deny the Holocaust and to call Israel (in his campaign speeches) "the Zionist enemy."

The Israeli withdrawal from the settlements has caused a particular T-shirt to be the most popular in Gaza. It displays the "Palestinian" flag emblazoned with the "peace" slogan: "Today Gaza, tomorrow the West Bank and Jerusalem." Mahmoud Abbas, supposedly Israel's new partner in peace, has taken up the chant in public.

In contrast to Arafat, with whom he would not negotiate nor receive into the White House, President Bush...opened his arms to Abbas and welcomed him to Washington. Yet everything that Bush found objectionable in Arafat is echoed in Abbas. He was Arafat's partner in terrorism even before 1965, when he and Arafat co-founded Fatah, the PLO's largest terrorist arm, with the blood of thousands of victims on its hands. Within Fatah is the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, one of the most vicious terrorist organizations. As though to welcome their co-founder's elevation to head the PLO and Palestinian Authority and to show that nothing had changed with the death of Arafat, four days after the "election" of Abbas, a group of terrorists from the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade of Fatah stormed an Israeli base at the "Karni" Gaza crossing, killing five Israelis. During his campaign speeches, Abbas had the flag of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade slung around his neck, showing his sympathy and identity with them.

Abbas campaigned in Jenin with members of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. Before the elections, Abbas met in Damascus "with some of the region's most implacable terror groups, including Hamas [and] Islamic Jihad....Abbas' 'foreign minister,' Nabil Sha'ath, declared that between the Palestinian Authority and the other groups, 'there are no differences over the objectives [i.e., destruction of Israel].'" Obviously, then, the fact that Hamas won the election on January 26, 2006, and is now in charge of "Palestinian" territories has changed little except to bring the determination to destroy Israel more fully into the open. That victory was a huge boost to Arab morale. The funds cut off by the U.S. and Israel will be more than made up by Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The Islamic worldwide revolution is gathering momentum. Hizballah has transferred its operational headquarters from Beirut to Gaza, and Al Qaeda has moved in there also. Hamas chief Khaled Masha'al boasts, "Muhammad is gaining victory in Palestine....[The] Islamic nation is rising....Tomorrow we will lead the world." Gaza's Hamas leader exults, "We are part of the great world...Islamic movement."

Israel is desperate for peace. After sixty years of war, she would agree to almost anything. The Antichrist will not only "guarantee" peace but will command the rebuilding of the Temple. It will be an offer that Israel, in her unbelief and continued rebellion against "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," will not be able to resist.

— BY DAVE HUNT (2006)



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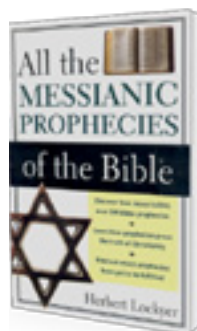
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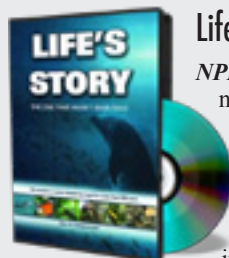
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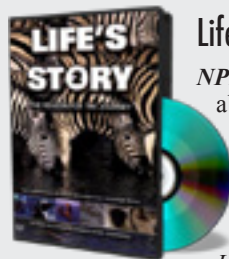


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