

AND THE

Word



WAS MADE FLESH,

AND *dwelt* AMONG US, AND WE

BEHELD HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF

THE ONLY *begotten* OF THE FATHER,

FULL OF *grace* AND TRUTH. —JOHN 1:14



The
Berean
Call

DECEMBER 2011

THE DAY CHRIST WAS BORN

by DAVE HUNT

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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, but 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:

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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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Editorial Staff

Founder: Dave Hunt
Executive Editor: T. A. McMahon
Editorial & Correspondence:
Edwin Newby
Sally Oppliger
Barbara Romine
Design & Production:
Mark Dinsmore
Philip McDaniel

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Contacting Us

tel: (541) 382-6210 • fax: (541) 385-6025
orders and donations: (800) 937-6638
general inquiries: (541) 382-6210
e-mail: customerservice@thebereancall.org
website: www.thebereancall.org



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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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The Day Christ Was Born

Dave Hunt

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED DECEMBER 2006

We are not referring to December 25. That may or may not have been when Christ was born. There are conflicting theories: 1) that December 25 was set by Christians to counter the Roman Saturnalia celebration each December 17-23, which "led to widespread drinking and debauchery, so that among Christians... 'saturnalia' came to mean 'orgy'"; 2) that early Christians set the date of December 25 by assuming that Mary visited Elizabeth immediately after her (Mary's) conception, and then calculating the time of Elizabeth's conception as six months earlier (Lk 1:23-25)—based on Jewish records and tradition concerning the schedule of priestly temple duties and Zacharias's "course of Abia" (Lk 1:5);¹ and 3) that it replaced the feast of Saturnalia, as Will Durant claims,² which is probably the most popular criticism of the date.

Regardless of the day, Christ's virgin birth into this world as a babe was an event of such stupendous proportions that Paul declared: "great is the mystery..." (1 Tm 3:16)! The Creator of all (Jn 1:3) entered into His creation as one of its creatures, knowing everything He would suffer at the hands of those rebels that He had brought into existence through Adam and Eve. The hatred, misunderstanding, false accusations, abuse, rejection, mockery, and finally, the scourging and crucifixion that He would endure from those who owed their very existence to Him had long been foretold by Hebrew prophets under His inspiration.

His mother, Mary, was not "the spouse of the Holy Spirit," as Roman Catholicism says. She was the spouse of Joseph and not a polygamist. The "Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:8) humbled Himself to live as a baby, child, man, and finally unto "the death of the cross" (Phil 2:5-8). As a child, he was subject to his "parents." When Mary or Joseph asked the boy Jesus to do some menial task, He didn't respond, "Who do you think you're ordering around? I'm God!" He quickly and humbly did their bidding.

Joseph was not His father, yet the child Jesus lived such a normal life that even Mary, who had at first pondered much in her heart (Lk 2:51), fell into the habit when speaking to Jesus of referring to Joseph as

"thy father" (Lk 2:48). Joseph was certainly the head of the household, and the child Jesus obeyed him.

The One who had made the universe out of nothing and who knew every particle—from the innermost depths of each atom to the outermost reaches of the cosmos—confined Himself to an obscure life in a small home and carpenter shop in Nazareth. There, as Joseph's bright young apprentice, He "learned" to fashion wood with crude tools and became known as "the carpenter's son" (Mt 13:55). His workmanship and creativity must have been fantastic. We are told nothing about those early days, except for His visit to the temple at the age of twelve (Lk 2:41-52), when He astonished the rabbis and reminded Mary and Joseph that His real Father had sent Him into this world for a special purpose.

It was infinite love beyond our comprehension that caused our Lord to leave the glory and power He had rightfully known for eternity as God the Son, to become a man in order to purchase a bride with His own blood. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk 19:10). When He accepted that mission from His Father ("my Father hath sent me"—Jn 3:17, 10:36, 20:21; Heb 1:6), our Lord well knew that the incarnation would not be temporary but eternal. He forever became one of us but without sin.

On David's throne in Jerusalem, as Israel's promised Messiah, He will "reign over the house of Jacob for ever" (Lk 1:33). He remains "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tm 2:5), the only mediator between God and man, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb 13:8). For all eternity He will bear the marks of Calvary, and heaven's throne will forever be "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rv 22:1).

How could anyone have known who He really was, since His glory was veiled in human flesh? Any true believer of that day who was in touch with God, knew the Word, and looked for the Messiah, would have known Him. Daniel 9 and Nehemiah 2 plainly told everyone who was willing to read and understand that it was the prophesied time for the Messiah to come. Anna the prophetess and Simeon, a devout Jew who looked for the Messiah, both recognized Him immediately, even as a baby (Lk 2:25-38).

Though there was some excuse for not knowing Him as a child, there was no

defense for not recognizing Him after He began His ministry. The miracles alone that He did were sufficient to prove that He was the Messiah. And He must have been a very special person. Even the officers sent by the Pharisees to arrest Him acknowledged, "Never man spake like this man" (Jn 7:46)!

Who could have failed to realize that here was "God... manifest in the flesh" (1 Tm 3:16)? Almost everyone! Very few recognized and admired the God-likeness of Jesus of Nazareth. Instead, their innate sinfulness despised His purity. Of the vast majority, in fulfillment of prophecy (Ps 35:19, 69:4, 119:161), Christ sadly declared, "They hated me without a cause" (Jn 15:25). It seems incredible!

John the Baptist recognized that Jesus was sinless: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Mt 3:14). Yet later, even he doubted (Lk 7:19), in spite of all of the proofs God had given him (Jn 1:33-34). The Apostle John was one of the few who recognized Him: "We beheld his glory... as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.... That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; for the life was manifested..." (Jn 1:14; 1 Jn 1:1,2).

Tragically, "though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him" (Jn 12:37). The Pharisees knew that His miracles were genuine, that He had raised Lazarus after four days in the grave; but they still justified themselves in determining to kill Him and Lazarus to preserve their positions of leadership. No wonder God declared, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer 17:9).

The devils recognized Him during His ministry, even though they may not have known who He was as a babe: "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mt 8:29; Mk 1:24). Jesus did not cast out demons in the name of the Father but by His own authority, and they obeyed Him (Mt 8:28-32; Mk 1:25; Lk 4:35).

The universe, which He as the eternal Word had spoken into existence, knew and obeyed His voice. He calmed storms with a word (Mk 4:39). Yet even then His disciples did not know who He was. They were afraid and "said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (4:41).

Jesus said, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (Jn 17:3). That does not mean that any neighbor acquainted with Him as a child when He grew up in Nazareth had eternal life. It means to know Him in spirit and in truth—the way that we must worship God (Jn 4:24). It is not enough to say the words with one’s lips (“I love you, Lord...I worship you”) but to know and love Him in one’s heart as He truly is.

Even though Jesus is God, and Mary is the mother of Jesus, that does not make her the “mother of God,” as Catholicism teaches. Nor did she remain a virgin. The birth of her “firstborn son” (Mt 1:25) in Bethlehem was not the birth of Christ as God but of His human body, soul, and spirit—“a body hast thou prepared me” (Heb 10:5). She was the honored mother of the man Christ Jesus. But she was not the mother of the eternal Son of God, who created this universe, is one with the Father, and “was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14).

Christ existed as God’s Son long before the incarnation (Ps 2:12; Prv 30:4; Is 9:6; Dn 3:25, etc.). He had, from all eternity, ruled with the Father on His throne as the Son of God: “Unto the son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom” (Heb 1:8); “whose goings forth have been from...everlasting” (Mic 5:2). To call Mary “the mother of God” is the worst blasphemy possible.

Paul makes a particular point of saying, “He was...seen of angels.” They witnessed the unfolding of this mystery. We are not told the angels’ thoughts or whether they had any advance notice of the incarnation, but Christ’s birth into the world as a man must have been a mystery even to the “multitude of the heavenly host” that praised God at Christ’s birth (Lk 2:13).

Could this really be the One they had worshiped as the eternal Word, the Creator of all—and here He was a helpless baby in Mary’s arms nursing at her breast?! Could that be possible? Yes, there was the command: “When he bringeth the firstbegotten into the world...let all the angels of God worship him.” (Heb 1:6). What a mysterious occurrence that day when Jesus was born!

Paul calls this most amazing and important event in the history of the universe not only a great mystery—but *the* mystery: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1 Tm 3:16). The mystery of godliness was

unveiled in the incarnation of Jesus Christ!

Invading this rebellious planet from heaven itself came the only perfectly godly man who would ever live. All the rest of mankind are sinners. Eternally, those in heaven will be sinners—saved by grace.

Yes, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”—except for one man. It is a great mystery how anyone who is fully man, as Christ is, could live without ever sinning. Yet Scripture assures us: He “did no sin” (1 Pt 2:22); “who knew no sin” (2 Cor 5:21); and “in him is no sin” (1 Jn 3:5).

Indeed, it was not possible that Christ could sin. He faced every temptation, but He never had to struggle to keep from yielding. Sin had no attraction for Him: “The prince of this world [i.e., Satan] cometh, and hath nothing in me” (Jn 14:30). There was nothing in the “Holy One of God” (Lk 4:34) that was in the least attracted to sin.

He left us “an example, that [we] should follow His steps” (1 Pt 2:21). But how can we follow the steps that lead to the Cross? If we are to be godly, the only godly One must live in us: “I travail in birth...until Christ be formed in you” (Gal 4:19). It must be “not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal 2:20). But how can He indwell sinners? This is another part of the “mystery of godliness.”

There was only one way mankind could be redeemed from the penalty of eternal death. For a holy, righteous God to justly forgive sinners, the full penalty for sin must be paid (Rom 3:9-28). A sinless man, undeserving of death, would have to die for the rest of mankind: “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom 5:19).

Although the eternal Son of God, through the virgin birth, became fully man, He remained fully God. As sinless man, He could justly die for sinners. And only as infinite God could He pay the full penalty for the sins of all mankind. Even as a fetus in Mary’s womb, He did not cease to be the One who said, “I am the LORD, I change not” (Mal 3:6). This is the most difficult part of the mystery. We cannot understand it, but we believe it because God says it—and we realize there was no other way.

As God and man in one person, Christ took the full weight of God’s wrath upon sin for all mankind. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23). He tasted “death for every man” (Heb 2:9). That had to include “the second death,” which all who refuse to believe on Him who died for them will endure for eternity in the Lake of Fire (Rv 20:11-15).

Calvinism, however, teaches that Christ died only for an elect whom God had

predestined to heaven. It claims that God loves the entire world—but not with the same kind of “redeeming love” for all: those who are predestined to eternal torment are loved with a lesser love, but loved nevertheless, because God blesses them in this life with sunshine and rain, etc. That is why we titled the book, *What Love Is This?* It is not love of any kind to fail to rescue any who could be rescued. Calvinism claims that God could save everyone if He so desired, but doesn’t. That is not love.

The parallel Old Testament passage to “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23) is “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way...” (Is 53:6). Isaiah adds, “and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” The iniquity of all who “have gone astray” [i.e., who have sinned] was laid on Christ at the Cross.

Christ said that “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn 3:14-15). Poisonous serpents were sent by God as punishment for Israel’s sin. Those bitten were dying. The serpent is a picture both of Satan and of sin that has bitten all mankind unto the death. God’s remedy was: “Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and...[not an elect among those dying, but] *every one that is bitten*, when he looketh upon it, shall live. [It] came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Num 21:5-9—emphasis added).

Christ said that just as all who had been bitten could look in faith upon the brazen serpent and live, so all who have sinned can look in faith to the “Lamb of God [on the Cross] tak[ing] away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29), and receive eternal life as a free gift of God’s grace. That is the good news of the gospel. We need to proclaim it everywhere.

What a day it was when Christ was virgin-born in Bethlehem! And what a day it is when He comes to live eternally in the hearts of those who believe on Him! This is the victory of godliness that every Christian should be experiencing—yet many do not know all that is theirs in Christ. Let us live godly lives and proclaim the good news to all. **TBC**

Endnotes

1. Richard Ostling, Associated Press, http://www.nctimes.com/articles/2004/12/23/special_reports/religion/21_50_1412_22_04.txt.
2. Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1950), VI 75, III 657.

Quotable

I prayed for Faith, and thought that some day Faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But Faith did not seem to come.

One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Now Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had closed my Bible, and prayed for Faith. I now opened my Bible, and began to study, and Faith has been growing ever since.

D. L. Moody

God's infinite knowledge boggles the mind. Our human brains strain under the weight of the idea. It is too exalted for us to comprehend. But when we come to the frontier of our capacity to understand and can go no farther, we can still bow in worship at the immensity of the knowledge of God!

William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary, Psalm 139:6

Q&A

QUESTION: In view of Romans 1:8; Colossians 1:6,23, and Acts 17:6, it would appear that all the world has already heard the gospel and heard it within the first 50 or so years after our Lord returned to heaven. The world's inhabitants continue to increase in number, so this would seem to be an unattainable task. What am I missing?

RESPONSE: The verse reads, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." It is the disciples' "faith" that is spoken of. That is, in general terms, their faith is known and commented upon. It is clear from the context that "world" as used in Romans 1:8 (for example) doesn't mean the entire earth but is limited to the "world" of the Roman Empire. Much the same could be said of Acts 17:6, when the Thessalonians spoke of the disciples as having "turned the world upside down." They were simply saying that wherever the disciples had gone, the "world" system was impacted, as in Ephesus (Acts 19) where the idol makers' craft was "in danger" because of the preaching of the gospel (Acts 19:27).

The gospel is not convenient to the world system and cannot coexist with it. In Colossians 1:6,23, Paul is again speaking of the known world (i.e., the Roman Empire) into which the gospel has gone. In verse 6, Paul writes that the gospel "bringeth forth fruit"

wherever it has been preached. Colossians 1:23 reads, "...if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."

It is the "hope of the gospel" that has been "preached" to every creature under heaven. God has certainly left a general witness of Himself for every individual in the world.

Titus 2:11-12 tells us, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

In Psalm 19 we learn, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun" (vv. 1-4).

Paul writes in Romans, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (1:20).

Although it can be reliably stated that the gospel during the lives of the first apostles was taken as far as India and China, nevertheless, Paul still knew that there were "regions beyond" (2 Cor 10:16) where the gospel had not yet gone.

Regarding the attainability of the Great Commission, we have nothing less than the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ, who prophesied, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Mt 24:14).

QUESTION: I believe in the Pre-trib Rapture and could be considered a dispensationalist, but I remember when Israel captured the temple mount in the Six-Day War. That's getting close to 50 years ago, and the Lord hasn't returned. Besides that, in 1998 Israel celebrated her 50th anniversary as a modern nation. I'm getting so fed up with the idea that "soon and very soon" we're going to see the King.

RESPONSE: Let's see if we can figure out what's behind your being "fed up." If you are a born-again Christian, then previous to that you were dead in your trespasses and

sins, a condition of separation from God forever; you were His enemy, subjected to His wrath, headed for the everlasting torment of the Lake of Fire. In order to save you from that condition, Jesus, who is God, became a Man and loved you so much that He went to the Cross, where He paid the penalty for every one of your sins—past, present, and future. You can't comprehend, let alone imagine, what He suffered for you (and me, and every one of His human creatures). After He rose from the dead, He said that He was going to the Father to prepare a place for you and that He would return for you in the same way that a groom returns for his bride. In the meantime, He expects you to grow in your personal relationship with Him, desiring to be with Him more and more, day after day.

Prior to His physical return for you, He gave you His Word so that you might know Him more intimately by following His instructions. He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (Jn 14:23), and in another place He admonished those who dismissed His instructions: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Lk 6:46). Are you following His instructions? Paul's letter to Timothy tells us what Jesus desires in us as we wait for Him: "But thou, O man of God, flee [sinful] things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God...that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tm 6:11-14). You appear to be like the bride who is more focused on herself than on her husband-to-be. That will kill a relationship and end any hope of true joy. The Apostle Peter, however, gives us the antidote for being "fed up": "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Pt 1:6-9).

QUESTION: A while back, my daughter and I visited a local church and [they] gave an altar call for people who had some special need. My daughter, who had been looking for work nearer to home, went

up and asked for prayer. The pastor's wife laid hands on her, and during her prayer asked "the many-breasted god" to clear the path for her. [My daughter] was shocked, and as we left told me about the incident and asked where in the Bible God was referred to in such a way. I told her frankly that the only reference to a many-breasted "god" came from pagan sources. A short time later, we went to hear an evangelist speak, and during the music and praise time, there it was again! He praised the many names of God and then added the phrase "the many-breasted god," which greatly saddened us. My question is, have you ever heard of this particular thing?

RESPONSE: To focus on the literal meaning of the Hebrew word *shad* ("breast") as the root for the name *El Shaddai* is a shallow interpretation at best. Our concept of God cannot be limited by one attribute lest we miss the fullness of meaning. "Shad" literally means "breast," which speaks of "sustenance." But "Shaddai" should not be limited to this one meaning. The attributes of God are complementary, so the compound name "El-Shaddai" presents much more meaning than the feminine allusion that political correctness would demand.

"El Shaddai" is often translated as "the Almighty God." This title speaks of strength, and while some would explain El Shaddai to mean "the many-breasted God," it is very correct in context to translate it "the mighty-breasted God." Again, this speaks of the *strength* of God, a very masculine image. Other linguists have noted that the Akkadian (ancient Semitic language) word *šadu* means "mountain," which suggests strength and power and contributes to the overall meaning.

Recent efforts to "feminize" God have influenced writers, including the author of the heretical book, *The Shack* (See *TBC*, 8/09). We are created in the image of God (Gn 1:26), but too many try to create God in the image of man. If it is wrong to portray the Father as an old man with a long, white beard, it is just as wrong to portray Him as a red or yellow, black or white man, woman, or child. None of these images sufficiently brings us closer to a fuller understanding of the Godhead.

Consider how often the Scriptures present metaphorical images, such as the agrarian references to God as a mother hen brooding over a nest or gathering her chicks. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a

hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Mt 23:37), or Psalm 91:3-4, indicating that God shall cover us with His feathers. No one would reasonably consider God to be a mother hen, but we can understand the image of a mother hen caring for her chicks.

In John 13:23, we see John "leaning on Jesus' bosom." This is hardly a feminine image or limited to the nursing image some would promote. God has consistently identified Himself as the "Father" in Scripture, and that is where our understanding must begin.

QUESTION: Doug Batchelor, the Seventh day Adventist teacher with the Amazing Facts prophecy seminars, has tried to say that the word "everlasting" (Matthew 25:46), as in the "everlasting" punishment of hell, doesn't necessarily mean "forever." He says the only thing everlasting is the finality of the Lord's judgment. Is he correct?

RESPONSE: The "everlasting punishment" of the wicked and the "life eternal" of the righteous parallel each other. Both involve duration (i.e. "everlasting"), but with a vast difference in experience. Further, "eternal" and "everlasting" are both translated from the word *aión*. Batchelor is arbitrarily assigning meaning to Scripture based upon his preconceived ideas.

The same argument that Batchelor uses to discredit the idea of an everlasting hell can also be used to argue against an everlasting heaven. In contrast, Revelation 20:10 clearly tells us, "The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Literally, their torment is everlasting. The phrase "day and night" denotes a passage of time and certainly does not refer to a one-time annihilation.

Concerning the saints, those taken alive into heaven at the Rapture will "...ever be with the Lord" (1 Thes 4:17). Those saved who die before the Rapture, "...know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor 5:1).

Hell and heaven are both everlasting.

QUESTION: I was always taught from Isaiah 14 that Satan was a fallen angel originally named Lucifer. Recently I've been taught that isn't so, for the one being spoken of in Isaiah 14 is obviously "the king of Babylon" (v. 4). Then was Satan created by God as he is now, the most evil of creatures?

RESPONSE: Satan was not created by God as he is now. God does not create evil beings. Satan was originally as the Bible describes him in Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, and elsewhere. He is a fallen cherub with great power and cunning. (The cherubims appear to be the highest order of angels closest to God, overshadowing His very dwelling place—and Satan was originally the chief cherub [2 Kgs 19:15; 1 Chr 13:6; Heb 9:5, etc.]. Psalm 99:1 says of God, "He sitteth between the cherubims.")

Satan still has access before the throne of God (Job 1:6; 2:1) as the "accuser of our brethren" (Rv 12:10). The day is yet future when "that old serpent...the Devil" will be cast out of heaven (Rv 12:9). Until then, he continues to accuse the believers "before our God day and night" (Rv 12:10).

Yes, the king of Babylon is being addressed in Isaiah 14. However, much of what is said could not apply to him at all, but only to Satan. For example, when did the king of Babylon have a position in heaven from which he fell? At times the Bible addresses Satan through ungodly earthly rulers to show that he is the real power behind them just as he will be the power behind Antichrist, of whom it is said, "the dragon [Satan] gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rv 13:2). In fact, all these despotic and evil rulers are types of Antichrist.

That Satan is being addressed through such kings is clearer in Ezekiel 28:2-19. Here the "prince of Tyrus" is being addressed: "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering....Thou art the anointed cherub [highest order of angel closest to God]; and I have set thee so:...Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (vv. 13-15). Obviously, none of this was true of the literal "prince of Tyrus," but only of Satan, who inspired and directed him in his ungodly activity.

Note the many similarities in Ezekiel 28 to what is said of "the king of Babylon" in Isaiah 14: "I am a God, I sit in the seat of God..." (v. 2); "thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God" (v. 6), etc. Clearly Satan is being addressed as the power behind both the king of Babylon and the prince of Tyrus.

Satan is "the god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4). Christ did not dispute his claim to ownership of the world system when, in the temptation in the wilderness, Satan offered to give the kingdoms of the world to Christ if He would bow down and worship him (Mt 4:8-9). Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 carry the same message.

Speaking Schedule

Dec 4 **Candlelight Christian Fwship**
(TA) Coeur d'Alene, ID
(208) 772-7755
www.candlelightfellowship.org

**Feb 12-
Mar 5** **CWM Fellowship**
(TA) Australia and New Zealand
www.cwm.org.au
www.cwmfellowship.org

**Mar 31-
Apr 1** **Calgary Prophecy Conference**
(TA) Calgary, AB
(403) 345-5183
www.cibpc.ca

Apr 19-21 **Conf. on Biblical Discernment**
(TA) St. Louis, MO
(314) 921-9800
www.pfo.org/2012-cbd.htm

Letters

Dear Mr. T. A. McMahon,

Sir! Your article in the September 2011 *Berean Call* entitled "Temporal Delusion" ["The Less Than Truthful 'Truth Project'"] should be chiseled in granite. Perhaps it was just my time to hear it, but thank God I heard it.... Thank you for rightly dividing the Word of God in this most contentious area. This article goes way beyond *The Truth Project* and Calvinists and Preterists and dozens of related off-course movements. You have set me free of trying to fix this world's system or anybody in it. My focus now is to call people out of this world's system and into the light of Jesus Christ.... Today is the day. The great Apostasy appears to be happening. Catch whoever you can. Thanks for the clarity. FS (CA)

Hello Dave,

I just read *To Russia with Love*. What a powerful story! I don't usually read many Christian books...because I oftentimes get nothing out of them and...consider it a waste of my time. More often than not they twist Bible doctrines and lead people astray—for example, *The Shack*. But your book can be used as a witnessing tool and to strengthen the faith of believers....Thank you for being obedient to Jesus. When I was saved in 2006, the Lord brought your program [*Search the Scriptures Daily*] to my attention and it has been a tremendous blessing to my family ever since. MD (email)

T. A. McMahon,

Your constant statements that those who are not premillennial dispensationalists are "preparing the world for the anti-christ" or must belong to some aberrant group or teaching, such as Manifest Sons of God or

Roman Catholics or Reconstructionists, etc., is a classic example of the definition of "non-sequitur"—you present false choices! Then in the same newsletter you [cite] people like John Wesley (who claimed it was *satanic* to believe in some future millennium on earth), Jonathan Edwards and Whitefield (both Calvinists, who I'm sure would reject your end-time prophecies if they were alive today) as the very people who brought about great revival. I rejected dispensationalism for amillennialism after 40 years of personal study—all the scriptures you quote have been answered in hundreds of books and commentaries! TA (CA)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

I am reading your book *A Woman Rides the Beast*, and am positively impressed with your scholarship. I am making a close read of it, underlining and making my own notes. I am a Texas prisoner and was stunned with the Catholic dogma I encountered here (no one is saved; Mary saves you after death). They refer so often to historical references I am unfamiliar with, and your book is nicely filling in some cracks. Oddly, they deny that Roman Catholicism is a works doctrine (when it is abundantly clear that it is works-dependent). There is a note [in the back of the book] about a newsletter, and if it is without fee, I sure would like to be placed on your mailing list. JP (TX, prisoner)

Dear T. A.,

I thoroughly enjoy every word of the monthly *The Berean Call*. I get from you what preachers refuse to preach. T. A., I especially was blessed by August's "From Oprah to Oz—and Beyond" and your pointing out that the Bible does not indicate that anything can be done to "stem the tide." That is certainly how I perceive it! I pray that God will continue to bless you and the staff. SG (email)

Dear Berean Call,

Please continue your good work....There are no gray areas in knowing and obeying God. I lived in that gray area as a Christian for years—until Dave Hunt's article in the August 2002 *Berean Call* issue titled "Biblical Redemption/Atonement Part 1." My eyes were opened—the doubts I had experienced prior were gone—truly the Holy Spirit was living in me at last! I have not forgotten that day or the person that helped me get there. Now both my brother and sister receive [and enjoy] *The Berean Call*.... All the best to all of you that put this magazine out to the rest of the world! CS (OR)

Dearest brother in the LORD,

Many years ago you wrote *The Seduction of Christianity*, and I purchased it as soon as it was published. I wept over almost every page because I saw how easily deceived

we are. Since then I have never ceased to be grateful for the help you were to me and many others to whom I have ministered over the years, all because of the eye-opener that book was to me. It has enabled me to discern better and to encourage others also to trust God's Word more than the words of men no matter how popular or famous they may be.

I continue to receive the newsletter and read your books besides attending the conferences and buying the tapes. When I have a question I go to the website and find answers that are biblical. Thank you so much and a big thanks to your precious wife also and T. A. McMahon plus the other writers and staff at *The Berean Call*. I am old now and I look forward to seeing you again someday, perhaps soon. JD (Canada)

Dear Brother Hunt,

I appreciate all the help you have provided in *The Berean Call*. We went to one of your meetings about 22 years ago in a little town outside of Rochester, NY. My husband went to be with the Lord two years ago—we were married 60 years. We always went through *The Berean Call* as soon as it came in the mail. You couldn't know how many things you wrote about that opened up areas for us. Thank you for being so faithful. EK (VA)

Dear David and Tom and All,

I'm trying to find the words to express my love and joy for you all. I've been saved about 30 years and because of the blessing I receive each day from your books, CDs, and DVDs, I'm reading [and] seeking GOD right now....Dear Dave, I can't tell you how much you've taught me to think and not to just follow blindly. The love [of] our GOD, who calls all freely to His table, has changed my whole understanding of His love and who He really is. Thank you, Dave, for taking a stand and daring to call us a bunch of dopes that need to think and read His word each day. KO (email)

TBC Notes

Dear Friends

Dave sends his warmest thanks for the 85th birthday wishes. All the messages have been compiled into a book, and I am reading them to Dave day-by-day.

As many of you already know, over the past year Dave has experienced an increasing loss of mobility. He is now residing in a local care facility where I am able to spend every day with him.

Thank you for your continued prayers and great love for Dave.

— Ruth Hunt

THE CURRENT END-TIME APOSTASY OF THE CHURCH

PART 3 (EXCERPTS—CONTINUED FROM NOVEMBER 2011) · DAVE HUNT (PRE-TRIB STUDY GROUP CONFERENCE '05)

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith [apostatize], giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron. (1 Tm 4:1-2)

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men [shall be] ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres [two of the magicians in Pharaoh's court] withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. (2 Tm 3:1,4,8)

Paul thus declared that the major opposition to the truth in the last days would be from false prophets who would counterfeit miracles by the power of Satan just as Jannes and Jambres did in opposition to Moses. Although only God can do genuine miracles, what Pharaoh's sorcerers did in mimicking the first two plagues was so impressive that Moses declared, "And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments."¹ But when it came to the third, "the magicians could not."²

Surely we are seeing this prophesied opposition to the truth today. There is an entire "signs and wonders" movement among charismatics led by false prophets who pretend to do miracles in Christ's name.... There is no clearer sign of "last-days apostasy."

Yet the great success of *The Purpose-Driven Life* and the growth of megachurches such as Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church in Houston (30,000 each weekend) have sparked a new optimism among evangelicals that even embraces the false "signs and wonders" movement. In his book *Megashift*, James Rutz writes:

We are now winning the world at an astonishing pace, swept along by a vast array of miracles. [God] has apparently decreed that plain folks like you and me are now a central part of an accelerated plan for a total transformation of the world.... We are in the early stages of total transformation of our planet. The family of Jesus Christ is growing so fast that if our growth simply continues at today's pace, most of us living today may see the fulfillment of Revelation 11:15: "Now are the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah! And he shall reign for ever and ever."³

This is a delusion that harks back to the Manifest Sons of God heresy but is now gaining acceptance among evangelicals: there is no Rapture and no Great Tribulation. We are already in the Millennium, with the church taking over under the leadership of "miracle-working prophets." These people expect to meet Christ with their feet planted on planet Earth, rather than being caught up to meet Him in the air and taken to heaven, as His Word promises. It is one more form of apostasy that is preparing a false church to welcome Antichrist.... Among the dozens of false prophets we might name who claim to be part not of apostasy but of a great "last-days revival" are Oral and Richard Roberts, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Reinhard Bonnke, the Kenneth Hagins, Rick Joyner, Kim Clement, and many others often seen and heard on TBN and elsewhere. The major one, of course, is Benny Hinn. Hinn has been praised by evangelical leaders (including Jerry Falwell) and is the darling of the largest Christian TV network, Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), upon which are regularly displayed false prophets to deceive the church and world.

[Another example is Pastor John Hinkle.] According to a "Voice," which spoke "so loud and clear" to Hinkle "[and] sounded like a great bell" being rung in his ear, all evil would be "ripped from the earth" on June 9, 1994. Paul Crouch and the studio audience were overjoyed by this "wonderful revelation."⁴ Crouch backed this obviously false prophecy to the hilt in at least three newsletters⁵ and on several TV shows.⁶ Pat Robertson was [also] enthusiastic about it.⁷

Yet anyone with common sense and a minimal knowledge of the Bible knows that "evil" is not a "thing" to be ripped from Earth but resides in human hearts. Evil will certainly be rampant under Antichrist in the Great

Tribulation yet to come; and even at the end of the Millennial reign of Christ when Satan will be loosed, evil will manifest itself as never before in an attack against Jerusalem and Christ by millions of Earth's inhabitants. Yet on June 9, 1994, Crouch claimed that Hinkle's prophecy had been fulfilled!

Of course, false prophecies too numerous to mention are standard fare on TBN, from the assurance that the appearing of Christ⁸ will take place onstage at a Benny Hinn revival—to the confident declaration that soon the dead will be resurrected by placing them in front of a TV screen on which a TBN program is being aired. Benny Hinn's false prophecies are too many to recite. For example, on December 31, 1989, claiming that he was in the very throne room of God, Hinn declared: "The Lord also tells me about '94 or '95, no later than that, God will destroy the homosexual community of America by fire."⁹ Amazingly, as Hinn's false prophecies increase, so does his audience, growing to at least one million on several occasions. Surely this growing delusion is another sign of last-days apostasy.

Hinn can't even get his "testimony" straight. In the *PTL Family Devotional*, he says, "I got saved in Israel in 1968."¹⁰ But in a 1983 message in St. Louis he said, "It was in Canada that I was born again right after '68."¹¹ Yet in *Good Morning, Holy Spirit*, he says he was converted in 1972, during his senior year in high school.¹² But he dropped out before his senior year. When was he saved?!

"People of God!" shouts Benny, "We must never speak such faith-destroying words as 'If it be thy will, Lord.' I am Him [Jesus]! The Word has become flesh in *Meee!*.... You are a little god on earth." Hinn and Crouch have declared this lie numerous times together on TBN, and Crouch stated in a newsletter that if we are not little gods, he would apologize in front of 10,000 times 10,000 before the "glassy sea."¹³ If he is a "little god," he won't be there.

Not to be outdone, Morris Cerullo declares, "From the beginning of time, the whole purpose of God was to reproduce Himself. And when we stand up here, brother, you're not looking at Morris Cerullo; you're looking at God. You're looking at *Jesus!*"¹⁴ And in fulfillment of Christ's Word, false prophets keep coming in His name claiming to be Christ.

Paul's warning (1 Tm 4:1-2) has come true with a vengeance. A major "doctrine of devils" is the occult technique of visualizing persons or events to bring them into the present for one's private use. This is how shamans (witchdoctors) contact their "spirit guides." This occult method is widely practiced in today's church. Norman Vincent Peale taught it,¹⁵ as does Yonggi Cho, Robert Schuller, Richard Foster, Calvin Miller, Karen Mains, John and Paula Sandford, and others who practice "inner healing," and so do many Christian psychologists.

Visualization is widely taught in the church as a means of creating the answer to one's prayers and even calling Christ from His throne in heaven to appear in one's presence. Of course, Christ will not oblige, but there are demons that are only too happy to appear, pretending to be "Christ" in order to further their deception.

Yonggi Cho tells his readers, "You create the presence of Jesus with your mouth. He is bound by your words. Remember that *Christ is depending upon you and your spoken word* to release His presence."¹⁶ Likewise, Richard Foster (co-founder of the Renovaré movement and editor of the *Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible*) assures us that visualization in the imagination of what one desires is not mere fantasy but reality created in the mind.¹⁷ He writes:

Take a single event [from Scripture]. Seek to live the experience, remembering the encouragement of Ignatius of Loyola [founder of the Jesuits, fanatical defenders of the pope and Rome's heresies]...as an active participant. And since Jesus lives in the eternal "now" you can actually encounter the living Christ in the event, be addressed by His voice, touched by His healing power. Jesus Christ will actually come to you. In your imagination, allow your spiritual body, shining with light, to rise out of your physical body. Look back so that you can see yourself and reassure your body that

you will return. Go deeper and deeper into outer space until there is nothing except the warm presence of the eternal Creator. Rest in his presence. Listen quietly [to] any instruction given.¹⁸

This is *occult contact* with “seducing spirits [bringing] doctrines of demons” through the imagination and is the major technique used by shamans to contact their spirit guides. Yet in full agreement, popular evangelical author Calvin Miller writes:

One door opens to the world of the Spirit: imagination. We cannot commune with a Savior whose form and shape elude us...in my conversation with Christ, I see him white robed...I drink the glory of his hazel eyes, thrill to the golden sunlight dancing on his auburn hair. Do you disagree? His hair is black? Eyes brown? Then have it your way. His image must be real to you as to me, even if our images differ. The key to vitality, however, is the image...block by imaginary block we define him and we adore him. The Bible writers did the same.¹⁹

Instead of being inspired of God, the “Bible writers” wrote from their *imagination*?! This is not only blasphemy but “Christianized idolatry.” Every pagan image is first formed in the *mind* before it is fashioned out of wood or stone. [This] is another growing movement among evangelicals. Icons are displayed with candles to light in “prayer stations,” and church members in evangelical churches “pray through the image” to reach God, joining in the practice of Eastern Orthodox and Catholics.

Like Miller, Foster, and Cho, Robert L. Wise, pastor of a large Presbyterian church, endorses visualizing “Jesus” based upon his experience during a “Healing of the Memories” session:

I began to visualize myself as a boy of eight...startled to see myself carrying a large bundle on my back [of] needs and worries. “Now see if you can imagine Jesus appearing,” [I was] instructed. “Let him walk toward you.” Much to my amazement, I—an ordained Reformed clergyman with a doctorate in psychology—found Jesus mov[ing] slowly toward me extend[ing] His hands toward me in a loving, accepting manner. I no longer was creating the scene. Christ reached over and lifted the bundle from my back with such forcefulness that I literally sprang from the pew.²⁰

Wise was sure that it was not his imagination—and we *know* that it was not Jesus. So it could only have been a demon impersonating Christ that came alive in this occult experience!

Yonggi Cho and Rick Warren recently had breakfast together....Cho [told Warren], “As a minister, you should know that prayer is the foundation of church growth and revival. [Y]ou should have visions and dreams because [these] are the vessels through which God works.”²¹ He failed to tell Rick that his occult practice of visualization has been the key to his success. Cho has some good teachings, but that only commends his heretical and occult teachings and makes them all the more appealing....Yet the Bible declares: “This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart”;²² “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,”²³ etc.

Robert Schuller...declares, “That’s what sets me apart from fundamentalists, who are trying to convert everybody to believe how they believe. We know the things the major faiths can agree on. We try to focus on those without offending those with different viewpoints, or without compromising the integrity of my own Christian commitment.” Of course, the major faiths do not agree on...who God is, who Jesus Christ is, the way of salvation, and all other biblical fundamentals. One can only wonder what “Christian commitment” it is that Schuller isn’t compromising....

Pat Robertson, responding to those asking why he had signed ECT, declared: “People of faith [in which he includes Catholics, Mormons, Moonies, Jews, et al.] are under attack as never before by forces which wish to destroy all religious values, all worship, and all freedoms for Christians like you and me [so] we must lay aside certain Protestant differences to join hands to support those things upon which we all agree.”²⁴

Peter reinforces the warnings by Christ and Paul: “There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even

denying the Lord that bought them and many shall follow their pernicious ways and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.”²⁵ The language is remarkably prophetic. It is covetousness on the part both of the false prophets and those who believe their lies that allows the former to “make merchandise” of the latter. We see this in the “seed faith” teaching invented by Oral Roberts and followed by most of the other false prophets: “Send in your ‘seed faith’ offering to get the miracles started....” It would take minimal common sense to recognize Roberts’s unconscionable lie (has he no fear of God?), but it is the covetousness of *recipients* that blinds them to the truth in their desire to get “miracles from God” by feeding the covetousness of the “miracle worker.”

The gospel is “to the Jew first,”²⁶ and Paul always preached it in the synagogue before going to the Gentiles. Yet some Christian leaders have claimed that there is a different gospel for Jews. John Hagee has said, “...I believe that every Jewish person who lives in the light of the Torah will come to redemption.”²⁷ In 1987, Pat Robertson was...asked, “Do Jews go to heaven?” Pat replied, “The Jews go to heaven if they keep all the commandments of the Jewish Law.”²⁸ Isn’t it part of the apostasy to deny to Jews the gospel that saves?

When Robertson failed to get the Republican nomination for president, he was asked, “If God called you to run, then why did you fail to get the Republican presidential nomination?” Pat responded, “I suppose we could ask the same question of Jesus: why did He fail the first time around and get crucified?”²⁹

One of the most shocking evidences of apostasy is the acclaim given to Sir John Marks Templeton by evangelical leaders. Templeton’s books blatantly proclaim a false god and false gospel. Yet one of his major works, *Discovering the Laws of Life*, declares: “The basic principles for leading a ‘sublime life’ may be derived from any religious tradition. Astronauts traveled into outer space [and] did not bring back any evidence of heaven. And whereas drills had penetrated the earth, they’d found oil, not hell... spiritual theorists are inclined to conceive of [heaven and hell] as states of mind...we create our own heaven or hell right here on earth. Our innate goodness is an essential fact of our existence. The God within us—the godhood within you—is in a state of becoming perfect....”

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever; Christianity is not a religion, and it does not “progress” toward a better form. No Christian could possibly accept the Templeton Award as the person who had contributed the most during the year toward the Antichrist religion that Templeton is promoting. Yet Billy Graham did (1982), as did Chuck Colson (1993), and Bill Bright (1996)....

Just as God’s people Israel, to whom He sent His prophets to warn them of their apostasy and its dire consequences, would not listen, so it is today with many professing Christians. Glad to follow any pied piper who plays an enticing tune, and unwilling (and one day unable) to hear the Lord (“who is my strength and my song” - Exodus 15:2), they dance merrily on to judgment.

Time on this earth is quickly drawing to a close. Let us determine once again to remain true to and earnestly contend for “the faith once delivered unto the saints.” And in that perseverance, may our example give renewed courage and conviction to many others—and may we rescue many before it is forever too late.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Ex 7:22; 8:7.

2. Ex. 8:18.

3. James Rutz, *Megashift* (Colorado Springs: Empowerment Press), 2005, 1-2, 27, 41.

4. *Praise the Lord*, TBN, January 25, 1993; March 14, 1993.

5. *TBN Newsletter*, August 1993.

6. TBN, March 14, 1993.

7. www.cuttingedge.org/news/n1194.cfm.

8. 2 Tm 4:8; 1 Jn 3:2.

9. G. Richard Fisher and M. Kurt Goedelman, *The Confusing World of Benny Hinn* (St. Louis, MO: Personal Freedom Outreach, 2002), 199-200.

10. *Ibid.*, 34.

11. *Ibid.*, 33.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Praise the Lord Newsletter*, March 1993.

14. Morris Cerullo World Evangelism, “The End Time Manifestation of the Sons of God,” tape 1.

15. Norman Vincent Peale, *Positive Imaging* (Fleming H. Revell, 1982), etc.

16. Yonggi Cho, *The Fourth Dimension* (Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1979), Vol I, 83.

17. Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (Harper & Row, 1978), 26.

18. *Ibid.*, 26-27.

19. Calvin Miller, *The Table of Inwardness* (InterVarsity Press, 1984), 93-94.

20. Robert L. Wise, “Healing the Memories: A Prayer Therapy for You?,” *Christian Life Magazine*,

July 1984, 63-64.

21. <http://pastors.com/articles/Cholnterview.asp>.

22. Jer 13:10.

23. Gn 6:5.

24. Pat Robertson in form letter on The Christian Broadcasting Network, Inc., Letterhead, 4/19/94.

25. 2 Pt 2:1-3.

26. Rom 1:16.

27. Julia Dunn, *Houston Chronicle*, April 30, 1988, Religion, 1.

28. *Donahue*, NBC Television, June 1987.

29. Bob Slosser, “The Election According to Pat Robertson,” *Charisma & Christian Life*, October 1988, 56.

TBC NewsWatch

"SYBIL" ADMITS MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

NPR ONLINE, LYNN NEARY, 10/20/2011: REAL "SYBIL" ADMITS MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES WERE FAKE [EXCERPTS]—When *Sybil* first came out in 1973, not only did it shoot to the top of the best-seller lists—it manufactured a psychiatric phenomenon. The book was billed as the true story of a woman who suffered from multiple personality disorder. Within a few years of its publication, reported cases of multiple personality disorder—now known as dissociative identity disorder—leapt from fewer than 100 to thousands. But in a new book, *Sybil Exposed*, writer Debbie Nathan argues that most of the story is based on a lie.

Shirley Mason, the real Sybil, grew up in the Midwest in a strict Seventh-day Adventist family. As a young woman she was emotionally unstable, and she decided to seek psychiatric help. Mason became unusually attached to her psychiatrist, Dr. Connie Wilbur, and she knew that Wilbur had a special interest in multiple personality disorder.

"Shirley feels after a short time, that she is not really getting the attention she needs from Dr. Wilbur," Nathan explains. "One day, she walks into Dr. Wilbur's office and she says, 'I'm not Shirley. I'm Peggy.' ...And she says this in a childish voice....Shirley started acting like she had a lot of people inside her."

Wilbur believed that she had stumbled on a remarkable case. She began seeing Mason frequently and eventually teamed up with the writer Flora Rheta Schreiber to work on a book about her patient....Mason became increasingly dependent on Wilbur for emotional and even financial support. She was eager to give her psychiatrist what she wanted.

"Once she got this diagnosis she started generating more and more personalities," Nathan says....Wilbur began injecting Mason regularly with sodium pentothal, which was then being used to help people remember traumatic events that they had repressed. Under the influence of drugs and hypnosis, the very suggestible Mason uncovered her many personalities.

Reading through Schreiber's papers, Nathan says it becomes obvious that the writer knew that Mason's story was not entirely true. Memories of a traumatic tonsillectomy, for instance, morphed into a lurid story of abuse. And Schreiber seemed eager to pump up or even create

drama where none existed. But if Schreiber had doubts, she suppressed them.

"She already had a contract and she already had a deadline," Nathan says. "She was in the middle of writing the book. So she had the dilemma all journalists have nightmares about—what if my thesis turns out to be wrong as I do my research but it's too late?"

At one point, Mason tried to set things straight. She wrote a letter to Wilbur admitting that she had been lying: "I do not really have any multiple personalities," she wrote. "I do not even have a 'double.' ...I am all of them. I have been lying in my pretense of them." Wilbur dismissed the letter as Mason's attempt to avoid going deeper in her therapy.

In 1973, Flora Rheta Schreiber published *Sybil: The True Story of a Woman Possessed by 16 Separate Personalities*. The book sold 6 million copies and, in 1976, was made into a TV movie.

As for Mason, she quickly got the message that if she raised questions about the veracity of her multiple personalities, she'd quickly lose her support network.

"She got the very, very strong impression when she went in and brought this letter of recantation to Dr. Wilbur that if she didn't go with the program she was not going to have Dr. Wilbur anymore," Nathan says. "Dr. Wilbur was giving her 14 to 18 hours of therapy a week. Dr. Wilbur was coming to her house and eating with her, giving her clothes, paying her rent...so, how could you give up Dr. Wilbur?"

SENATORS RECOGNIZE HINDU HOLIDAYS

NORTH AMERICAN INTERFAITH NETWORK (NAIN), 10/14/2011: SENATORS RECOGNIZE HINDU HOLIDAY [EXCERPTS]—The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) applauded U.S. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) for introducing S. Res 291, "recogniz[ing] the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali" for Hindu, Jain, and Sikh Americans. The two co-chairs of the Senate India Caucus, John Cornyn (R-TX) and Mark Warner (D-VA), cosponsored the legislation along with Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), and Joe Lieberman (I-CT).

"Senator Menendez will continue to increase awareness in this country of a festival so important to millions of Hindu Americans with this resolution," said Jay Kansara, HAF's Associate Director based in Washington, D.C. "We urge other members of the Senate to demonstrate their

support for the community by cosponsoring the resolution."

In addition to the spiritual significance the day holds for Hindus, Sikhs celebrate the release of the Sixth Guru, Hargobind, from captivity by the Mughal Emperor, Jehangir, and Jains commemorate Diwali as the day Lord Mahavira, the last of the Tirthankaras, attained Nirvana, or liberation, after his death in 527 B.C.E.

"While Diwali is widely celebrated within the Hindu American community, many of our neighbors, teachers, and friends don't know much about it," said Pooja Deopura, HAF Executive Council Member. "The National Teach Diwali in School Day is a way for our members to engage their children's teachers and classmates with a fun Diwali-theme presentation using the Diwali Toolkit complete with coloring pages, arts and crafts ideas, and classroom activities."

FACES OF TERROR

FRONTPAGEMAG.COM, 10/19/2011: FACES OF TERROR [EXCERPTS]—"The people want a new Gilad!" So went the menacing cry in Gaza this week, as tens of thousands of Palestinians celebrated the swap deal that will return Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit home in exchange for the release of over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners and terrorists.

If for many Israelis the Shalit deal inspired sober reflection about the painful price the country will pay for the life of just one Israeli....[a] closer look at those released in the deal...provides a full measure of Israel's sacrifice.

Among them are men like Abdel Aziz Salha. In 2000, Salha helped kill two Israeli soldiers who had made a wrong turn in the West Bank village of Ramallah.

Also freed was Wafa al-Bass. In 2005, al-Bass was caught while attempting to carry out a suicide bombing in a crowded Israeli hospital. Al-Bass was being treated at the hospital, free of charge.

Still another prisoner freed this week is Awana Jawad Mona. Posing as an American love interest, Mona seduced sixteen-year-old Israeli teenager Ofir Rahum via an online chat room and then drove him to Ramallah, where he was gunned down execution style by Palestinian terrorists.

Ahlam Tamimi is another freed prisoner who remains proud to have contributed to the killing of Israelis. In prison for planning the 2001 attack on Sbarro's pizzeria in Jerusalem, in which 15 Israelis were killed and 107 wounded, he now walks free to kill others.

False Teachers Among You

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you... And many will follow their destructive ways... They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you... they speak great swelling words of emptiness.... (2 Pt 2:1-2, 13,18)

TO THE WORLD it might appear that all is well in the Christian realm. Much-beloved speakers hold forth from the pulpits of some of the largest churches in the world. Believers and nonbelievers alike buy their books, avail themselves of their programs, and utilize their methodologies. One might come to the conclusion that Peter must not have been referring to the church in our day regarding false teachers. *Tolerance* is the word of the day. We hear admonitions on a regular basis to “just get along” with those of opposing faiths. “Love” reigns supreme.

But what is this “love” of which they speak? What about those who identify a false gospel or a false teacher among some of the popular speakers these days? Does this “love” still apply to those who expose the ones who are actually deceivers among the flock? We find that those who point out error and apostasy in the church are, in fact, considered divisive and judgmental. Some are told that their criticism will bring harm to the Christian church. They are perceived as arrogant and “negative.” It is clear that the trend among evangelicals to embrace the “politically correct” thinking of the day will have egregious effects on the Body of Christ.

This “state of the church” forces me to ask a few simple questions. If Peter said that there would be false teachers in the church, where are they? How can we identify them? Who will warn others? It stands to reason that if the Word of God warns us that false teachers will be present in the church, doesn’t it follow that we are expected to expose them? How will we recognize them, and what are we to do about them?

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves” (Acts 20:30). So we see that these false teachers will bring in things that are corrupt, contrary—opposed to *biblical* doctrine (teaching). Their purpose is to gather disciples to their own folds, separating them from the true Body of Christ. Paul’s concern was not only that this would occur—but that the church would *tolerate* it: “For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!” (2 Cor 11:4).

The very thing that Paul warned about has come to pass! Most Christians not only tolerate those who speak “perverse things,” but they ostracize believers who won’t accept them. Do we think that we are wiser than Paul? Are we more mature than Jude? Are we really called to leave the evils of error alone and allow the church to be polluted by the lies? Not according to the Scriptures!

Some may say, “But there are good men and women out there whose ministries have been damaged when others pointed out errors in their teachings.” Couldn’t the same have been said about Paul when he called Peter to account for his error and “withstood him to his face” (Gal 2:11–14)? Paul didn’t intend to bring condemnation upon Peter but rather to move him to repent of his actions. Paul saw the need to keep the message of the gospel pure so that both Peter and those who heard him teach would know the truth—the truth that makes men free!

In the early church, it was the elders of the church who were responsible to give correction and instruction through the Word of God. Today

we are fortunate to have greater individual access to the Scriptures, which are every believer’s authority. We know that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tm 3:16–17).

Every epistle in the New Testament was written to correct error in the church. Did Paul, Peter, James, John, and Jude not understand that to correct those who were in error was in truth a failure to love them? Did they believe that it was none of their business to bring correction to the false teaching? Do we consider them divisive for confronting error and holding fast to the truth? No! They boldly addressed the error and at times even named the offenders.

Paul instructed Titus (an elder) regarding the standards by which other elders should be appointed—and function. He said, “For a bishop must... [hold] fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not.... Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth... and [are] disqualified for every good work” (Ti 1:7–16). It is those in leadership who are called to the task of identifying error. Sadly, these are primarily the very ones who are promoting the error from the pulpits and publishing houses.

Jude wrote, “Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Paul told the Romans, “*Note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them*” (Rom 16:17). This is what the Bible says, but the trend today is to “avoid those” who are pointing out the ones who are spreading error!

Every God-called pastor is told, “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). Peter said, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers...” (1 Pt 5:2a). Along with the calling of God comes gifting and passion. One of the gifts given to every godly pastor is love for the church. If we truly love people, we don’t want to see them fall into error. Error causes harm, and “love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (Rom 13:10).

Peter declared, “There were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you...” (2 Pt 2:1-2). Paul said, “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly...” (1 Thes 5:14a). We must by all means “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3). However, we must always remember that, as servants to the Lord and to the Body of Christ, we are called to “comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all” (1 Thes 5:14b). And always keep in mind that: “A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth” (2 Tm 2:24-25).

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted” (Gal 6:1).

—PAUL VAN NOY,
Pastor of Candlelight Christian Fellowship,
Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

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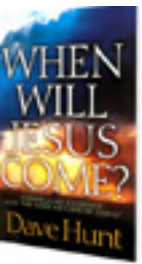


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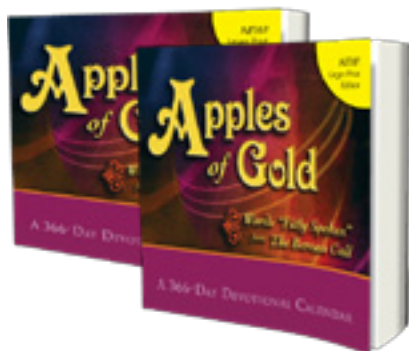
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