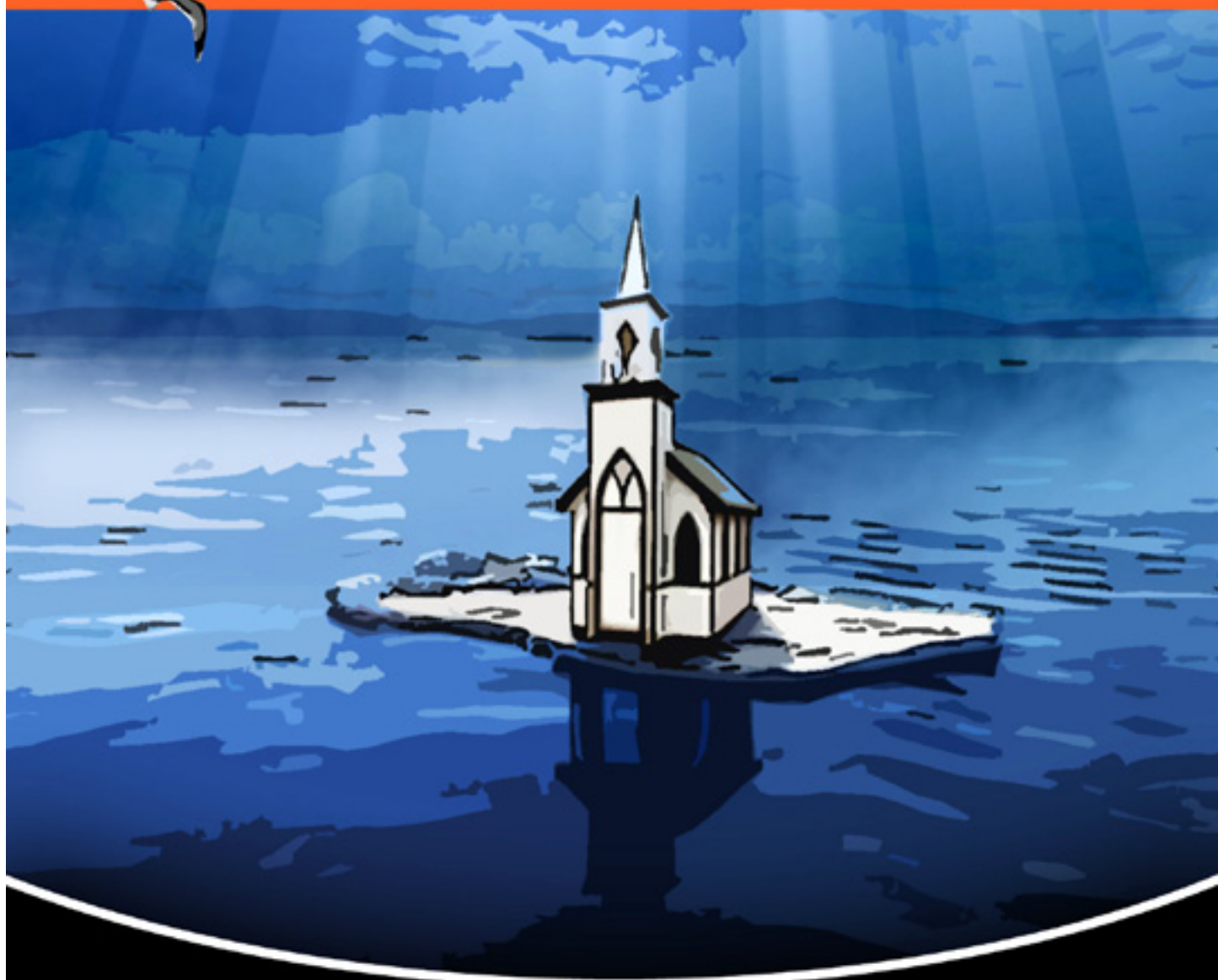


GENERATION

ADRIFT



The
Berean
Call

MARCH 2012

A GENERATION ADRIFT

by T. A. McMAHON

NEW! THREE THEMES OF A HERO

PAUL WILKINSON'S TALK FROM TBC'S 2011 CONFERENCE



Three Themes of a Hero

Wilkinson—TBC is pleased to present this inspiring—and convicting—presentation by Paul Wilkinson, featured at our 2011 Summer Bible Conference.

Wilkinson passionately recounts “The Three Themes of a Hero” as first noted by William Andrew of Glasgow in his 1912 tribute to Baptist pastor, John Harper. Harper, along with his six-year-old daughter, was a passenger on the ill-fated *Titanic*. As the call was issued for passengers to vacate their cabins, Harper wrapped his daughter in a blanket, told her that she would see him again one day, and passed her to one of the crewmen. After watching her safely board one of the lifeboats, he removed his life-jacket and gave

it to one of the other passengers. One survivor distinctly remembered hearing him shout, “Women, children, and the unsaved into the lifeboats!” Harper then ran along the decks pleading with people to turn to Christ, and, with the ship sinking, he called upon the *Titanic*’s orchestra to play, “Nearer, My God, to Thee.” Gathering people around him on deck, he then knelt down, and “with holy joy in his face,” raised his arms in prayer. As the ship began to lurch, he jumped into the icy waters and swam frantically to all he could reach, beseeching them to turn to the Lord Jesus and be saved. Finally, as hypothermia set in, John Harper sank beneath the waters and passed into the Lord’s presence. He was 39. Viewers will not want to miss hearing “the rest of the story” in this soul-stirring account. 1 Disc, 58 min.

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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. TBC was formed under the direction of Dave Hunt 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:

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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A Generation Adrift Part One

T. A. McMahon

This is an observation, an assessment, and some prayerfully considered recommendations for the upcoming generation of evangelicals. There are rough seas ahead for them, far more hazardous than what their parents have experienced. They are heading into a perfect storm of apostasy for which few of them seem to be prepared. Much of what they will face and the fact that they are ill equipped to successfully weather what's ahead is at least in part the fault of the preceding generation—my generation. That is not to say that each generation is not responsible for their own sin (Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18:20), or that they are merely victims of their environment, but nevertheless, my own generation failed specifically (although I thank the Lord for the exceptions) to do what God commanded of the Israelites:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And **these words**, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: **And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children**....Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: **but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons**; Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them **hear my words**, that they **may learn** to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, **and that they may teach their children**....**And ye shall teach them your children**, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, **and the days of your children**.... (Deuteronomy 6:4-7; 4:9-10; 11:19-21)

"Evangelical," as the term is used in this article, refers to Christians who consider the Bible to be their authority in all matters of faith and practice. In other words, they profess to go by the Scriptures to guide their

lives. Sadly, that isn't much more than lip service for most professing evangelicals, if various surveys identifying their beliefs and practices have even a modicum of accuracy. But does the same apply to the upcoming generation of "Bible-believing" Christians? There's little doubt of that, although the blame for their condition can certainly be shared with my generation.

Who among believing parents can honestly say that they heeded the instruction that God gave to the Israelites to "diligently" teach their own children the Word of God? As I think back on raising my five children, now in their 20s and 30s, my wife and I "coulda done better." Although we knew that their instruction in the Lord was to be first and foremost *our responsibility* at

ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, AND IS PROFITABLE FOR DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS: THAT THE MAN OF GOD MAY BE PERFECT, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS.

—2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

home, too often we turned them over to a Sunday school class, a church program, and/or a youth pastor (who in my view has one of the most difficult callings in ministry). Not that those experiences were all bad; some of them truly blessed our kids. The basic problem was that we lost sight at times of our personal responsibility to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," allowing the church to become our family's "spiritual babysitter."

That fault is hardly unique to my family or my generation but is widespread among evangelicals today. The outcome is of no small consequence, contributing to a generation of true and professing Christians who are *functionally biblically illiterate*. They know how to read, they have Bibles, but they rarely put the two together. That creates a serious quandary. James exhorts us in his epistle to be "doers of the Word" and not hearers only. Obviously, if they don't know God's Word, they can't do what it says. Furthermore, most have come to rely on what others tell them the Bible says. They have been conditioned by being "spoon-fed" the Scriptures, and many seem okay with that. Spoon-feeding

is reasonable for baby believers until they are ready for the meat of the Scriptures, but God's Word tells us to wean them off that process as soon as possible (Hebrews 5:12-13). It's tragic that such a condition prevails among young evangelical Christians today.

Tragic? Yes. First of all, it brings into question whether they were taught and have understood and truly believed the gospel, the good news that Jesus paid the full penalty for their sins and that He offers salvation to mankind as a free gift that must be received by grace through faith alone (Romans 5:10; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 2:17). Although the acceptance of eternal life with Jesus requires only child-like faith, living one's life in Christ is a growth process that begins with a new birth (being born again spiritually) and then develops into spiritual maturity. At least that's the biblical plan. For the majority of the next generation of believers, however, their situation seems to be a case of arrested development. The reasons for, and the dire consequences of, such a condition are numerous.

During the last three decades, many have experienced Christianity in church settings that major in entertainment rather than in teaching the Scriptures and discipling those who attend. Thus, they are the products of years of church-growth marketing schemes that have attempted to fill pews with the "unchurched" and keep them coming back by using consumer-oriented tactics. It's a "keep the customer happy," seeker-friendly approach that has critically diluted biblical content as churches compete with the world in order to interest their youth. The game rooms of some mega-churches could put to shame their cities' most popular arcades. The marketing mentality of "do whatever it takes to attract and keep the kids coming back to church" reflects a "bait and switch" scheme, and in most situations the "bait" (games, music that mimicks the world, and entertainment) overwhelms the intended "switch" (learning the Bible). That endeavor has both trivialized and marginalized the instruction of the Word of God for those who have been subjected to that worldly approach. The outcome has resulted in a shallow Christianity for millions of young professing Christians.

Biblical shallowness, however, has many contributors. Even in situations where scriptural content has made an impact on our youth, quite often it has been accepted simply because an engaging preacher or teacher

captured their imagination. Although that condition is not exclusive to the next generation of believers, it has the overall effect of stunting one's growth. If one believes a biblical doctrine only because they were persuaded by a compelling teacher, they may become dependent upon the teacher instead of being rooted in the understanding of the Scriptures. Believing something because "so-and-so said so" is faith by proxy, a faith that isn't one's own. Such an attached belief is not only wrongly applied, but it does little to strengthen one's faith. Moreover, it may be tied to the spiritual status of the person who taught the doctrine, and should the preacher/teacher go south morally or doctrinally, so may go his followers.

Akin to a faith by attachment, and just as potentially destructive, is a faith acquired by osmosis. Both are secondhand. Faith by osmosis rarely goes beyond what a person has "picked up" from his believing family members, friends, teachers, and assorted Christians throughout his life. Scripture does say that "faith comes by hearing," but for that to produce fruit, the verse goes on to say that the "hearing" has to be "by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). To this James adds that we are to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only," the latter causing one to be vulnerable to deception (James 1:22).

If deception is a potential problem for one who hears the Word of God but doesn't do what it says, what might be the situation for those who only incidentally hear the Word and have nothing more than a superficial knowledge of it? Ignorance may be bliss for some, but scripturally it makes one the "devil's delight." Since the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is the only formidable weapon against the one whom the Bible calls "devoid of truth, the father of lies, a liar and deceiver, who goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour," what then of those who can't handle the sword of the Spirit—whose Christianity has been shaped by most of the conditions mentioned above? When you add it up, they are indeed functionally biblically illiterate and therefore defenseless against God's adversary.

Young evangelicals who are involved in ministry tell me that the increasing state of easy access to information through the internet, e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and various blogs and apps has compounded the difficulty of encouraging their peers to study the Bible in depth; what's more, it reinforces their appetite for instant gratification. That's comparable to some in my generation, who were of the mentality: "Why read the book when you can read the CliffsNotes version?"—on steroids! It's also been noted that such believers are *aware* that they are seriously deficient in understanding

the Scriptures—which has led to other problems: a) they are easily intimidated by those who tell them to leave the Bible answers to the scholars and experts, and b) they tend to seek out the latest Christian books for enlightenment rather than gleaning insights from the Bible itself. Once again, all of this makes them ripe for deception.

If that real-life scenario regarding the next generation of evangelicals sounds disheartening, brace yourself for the rest of the story that they will be facing. When Jesus was asked about the last days, His first words were, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matthew 24:4). Deception was His characterization of the time prior to His second coming. In Luke 18:8, He further underscores the situation when He implies that *the faith*, the actual *living out* the truth of God's Word, will be scant among men at His return. We are given many prophecies that tell us what to look for and when that time will be drawing near. Scripture overwhelmingly declares that escalating apostasy will precede His second coming. No one other than God knows the exact time of Christ's return for His church, the Bride of Christ, to take her to heaven, but as these apostasies escalate, it makes a rapture event even more imminent. The apostasy is primarily geared to the advancement of the religion of the Antichrist. It will include seductive beliefs and practices, most of which have a form of godliness but are diametrically opposed to what the Bible teaches. They are beliefs that seem right unto men (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25), and they are taught either by those who are themselves apostate—deceived professing Christians—or by true believers, the latter unwittingly (Acts 20:28-31). This false universal religion won't just suddenly arrive; its preparation began at the fall of mankind and will culminate following the rapture of all believers prior to the beginning of the Antichrist's seven-year reign.

Has the apostasy captured the hearts and minds of our young generation of evangelicals? Certainly there are many who have not succumbed to the rampant deception, even though they may be ill equipped to maintain a steadfastness in the faith. No doubt it is their love for Jesus and the grace of God that has kept them thus far. Furthermore, among young people, there are encouraging signs that they have a desire to see biblical Christianity manifested in their lives as they pursue a closer walk with the Lord and a deeper understanding of His Word. Yet too few are truly prepared for the spiritual battle and the rough seas ahead, which will only intensify. Although the next generation may not be the generation in which the Lord returns, it will nevertheless face conditions unprecedented among the generations that preceded it.

The Lord willing, in part two we will address specifically some of the more serious issues that have already led multitudes off course from God's Word and have shipwrecked the faith of many. Those turbulent waters feature the unbiblical "self" teachings, such as self-esteem and self-love; the fear of being considered intolerant; the desire to be accepted and respected by the world. These times also exhibit gross lack of discernment by churches and individuals who allow community and relationships to overshadow biblical truth; who buy into the pseudo-sciences of evolution and psychotherapy; who appear to have an inability to recognize the heresies of the emerging church movement, the contemplative movement, and mystical and occult practices, the word-faith and healing and prosperity movement, and the inner-healing movement. There is a lack of understanding regarding Replacement Theology; the rise of anti-Semitism within the church; yoga in the church; the false gospel and anti-biblical dogmas of Roman Catholicism; and no apparent concern regarding the errors of the youth-oriented para-church organizations; the misdirected propensity to help others by means of a social gospel, eliminating social injustice, and other programs that lead to "works salvation."

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, his spiritual son in the faith and one of the pastoral leaders of the generation that would succeed his own, these sobering words of warning:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

In addition to the warning, he also gave Timothy instructions for helping to correct those things that would take place and would draw believers away from God's truth:

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season [always be ready!]; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine [hang in there with the teachings of Scripture]. (2 Timothy 4:2)

That's the simple solution to anchor a generation adrift: simple, as in "not complex." Yet neither is it easy—it demands discipline and diligence.

It is our prayer that this ministry and believers who are of my generation will, by God's grace and enablement, come alongside those of the next generation of believers, helping them in their walk with the Lord, supplying information where it is needed, and, most important, encouraging them in the diligent study of the Word of God. **TBC**

Quotable

Men will look at the life I lead,
See the side I take, and the things I love;
They judge my Lord by my every deed
Lord, set my affection on things above.

Author Unknown

Q&A

QUESTION: In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, when Paul says "All Scripture is God-breathed," is he referring to his own writings and the remainder of the New Testament? What evidence do we have that these should be considered Scripture as the Old Testament is?

RESPONSE: When Paul said all Scripture is "God breathed," the Old Testament was fully compiled, but the New Testament was in the making. The Lord may well have revealed to him the importance of his own epistles.

Second Timothy 3:16 is often rightly cited as evidence for *sola scriptura*. Immediately preceding 2 Timothy 3:16-17 is verse 15, which states that "...from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Paul is speaking of Timothy's familiarity with the Old Testament, as he did not have the New Testament in its entirety.

Nevertheless, Timothy had the two epistles written to him. He may have had copies of other epistles as well. Furthermore, this verse tells us that "from a child" he had known the Holy Scriptures, undoubtedly taught to him by a godly mother. The Apostle Paul is declaring that the scriptures available were sufficient to lead one to a saving knowledge in Jesus Christ and were "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tm 3:16-17).

Further, the Apostle Paul quoted Luke 10:7 as scripture in 1 Timothy 5:18, linking it to Deuteronomy 25:4: "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." Paul places the same emphasis upon the Lord's words in Luke as those in Deuteronomy.

Peter wrote of Paul's epistles in 2 Peter 3:16: "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Consequently, the New Testament Scriptures themselves witness to the conclusions the apostles had reached under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION: I disagree with your article on "The Gospel in the Stars" (TBC 5/89). I just think of Genesis 1:1, 14-19, Job 38:31-32, and Psalm 19:1-14. I think about the fall of man, the tower of Babel, the Flood, and before the Abrahamic Covenant. God didn't just leave mankind alone. He had to leave them some text or scrolls to know of His redemption plan. And I do believe that the first scroll was in the sky, showing the times and seasons, a plan of salvation and redemption.

I have read Bullinger, Seiss, Martin, and read Enoch, Jubilees, Jasher, and I find it very plausible and acceptable to understand that in the age of innocence and conscience, early man had to have some information and knowledge of Truth, and how he would come back to God and fill that void in his heart. "The heavens declare the glory of God...." I stand on the Bible. I have no faith in man, and man's opinions; I trust in God, and I pray for the truth about things I want to know about.

RESPONSE: If we trust the Lord and stand on the Bible, we shouldn't say that Bullinger, Seiss, Martin, and apocryphal books such as Enoch, etc., are "plausible." They can't be plausible if they contain teachings contrary to the Word of God. We can't say that we have "no faith in man" and yet find human reasoning "acceptable."

Let's begin with Psalm 19:1. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." They "declare" His glory. They demonstrate in every speech and language that there is a Creator who called into being this amazing, ordered universe. But they do not give any details about the gospel that saves man.

In the beginning, the Lord created the heavens and the earth. We are specifically told that "God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years" (Gn 1:14). The heavens both declare the glory of God and serve to mark time. But they cannot be our spiritual focus. Indeed, Jeremiah warned Israel: "Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them" (Jer 10:2). Being separated from their Creator, they began worshipping the creation more than the One who made them. Though the stars witnessed eloquently of the Lord's greatness and glory, they were not the medium used of God to communicate the gospel of salvation.

Paul asks rhetorically, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how

shall they hear without a preacher?" The stars are glorious, but the stars are mute. They are not a "preacher."

Too many who are teaching the Gospel in the Stars theory are really just trying to "Christianize" astrology. They incorporate ancient structures such as the pyramids into this unbiblical goulash. Even the late D. James Kennedy tells his readers that the key to understanding this way of salvation is the sphinx: "I know it will surprise you, but the sphinx actually unlocks the mystery of the zodiac" (Kennedy, D. James, *The Real Meaning of the Zodiac*, Coral Ridge Ministries, 1989).

This creates other problems. The signs of the zodiac are not visible above the Arctic Circle. There are no "signs" for any Aleuts, Eskimos, Siberians, Greenlanders, and Scandinavian people living above 66 degrees of latitude. In other words, for many people, the "first scroll" is blank.

Finally, to see the Gospel in the Stars as plausible is to give credence to the theories of man and place our belief in the Babylonian-based system of astrology. May the Lord deliver us from this.

QUESTION: I have read your article exposing the mind science used by those teaching The Secret. That's the way I've always felt about The Secret, but when I express those opinions to others, they retaliate with Proverbs 23:7. How would you handle that?

RESPONSE: Proverbs 23:7 reads, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."

Those who use this verse to support their preconceived ideas are not reading the verse in context or in its entirety. It's like using an 8-foot board to bridge a 50-foot chasm—it just won't stretch that far.

These verses are an admonition to discernment, for verse 6, right before this one, reads, "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats." Thus it is the man who "hath an evil eye" of whom it is said, "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...."

As a man "thinketh in his heart"—this tells us that the key to his true character is in his *thoughts*, unseen. The verse goes on to read, "Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee." What is "in his heart" differs from what comes out of his mouth.

The followers of mind science, who use Proverbs 23:7 as evidence, are "wresting" (twisting) the Scripture to suit their own purpose and agenda. Of these individuals, Peter warned, "They that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pt 3:16).



IN DEFENSE *of the* FAITH

BIBLICAL ANSWERS *to* CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

A Leap in the Dark

QUESTION: I have always understood that there is a difference between belief and faith—that belief is based upon fact and that faith, since it is related to religion, must be divorced from evidence and reason. That seems reasonable, but lately I’ve been wondering whether, and why, this should be true. Can you help me?

RESPONSE: You are struggling with a serious misunderstanding that has brought multitudes throughout history into religious bondage. The Bible puts belief and faith on an equal footing, with no difference between them. Common sense itself and a little reflection will tell you that faith must have as sure a factual foundation as belief. Faith is not a leap in the dark. Furthermore, faith in God and His Word, because it involves eternal matters, is far more important than belief about things of this life.

Faith, therefore, ought to have an even more solid basis than mere belief. One may be willing to allow some uncertainty in earthly matters, but only a fool would be comfortable with even the smallest degree of doubt in things that affect him eternally. No wonder the great Apostle Paul wrote, “*Prove* all things; hold fast to that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Luke tells us that during the 40 days Jesus spent with His disciples after His resurrection, He “showed himself alive . . . by many *infallible proofs*” (Acts 1:3). Clearly, Christ did not consider it enough merely to show Himself to His disciples without providing irrefutable evidence of His resurrection. He considered it both legitimate and essential to *prove* that He was the very same One who had been crucified and that He had risen from the dead in the same body (but now in a new and glorious form) that had been placed lifeless in the grave.

“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself,” Christ told the shocked disciples the first time He came to them after His resurrection. “Handle me and see, for a spirit [ghost] hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Luke 24:39). They had thought they were seeing a ghost, but He proved otherwise to them. To doubting Thomas, who had not been present on this first occasion, Christ declared later: “Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side . . .” (John 20:27). Here was irrefutable, tangible evidence.

It is only common sense that strict proof should be demanded before making a commitment or an investment in this life. How much more important, then, to be absolutely certain, based upon solid proof, before accepting by faith those things which affect one’s eternal destiny. True “faith,” as we shall see, can only be founded upon fact—not upon feelings, intuition, or emotion. Much less does faith arise out of blind submission to some religious authority.

— *An excerpt from IN DEFENSE OF THE FAITH (pg. 13-14) by DAVE HUNT*

TBC NewsWatch

LAWSUIT CLAIMS "UNLAWFUL DISTRIBUTION"

CHRISTIAN POST, 2/10/12: LAWSUIT CLAIMS UNLAWFUL DISTRIBUTION OF "CHARITABLE ASSETS" BY TBN DIRECTORS [EXCERPTS]—A lawsuit recently filed by the former head of finance for the Trinity Broadcasting Network claims that the directors of the widely viewed Christian television network have illegally taken advantage of more than \$50 million in "charitable assets" for their own good.

Brittany B. Koper, granddaughter to TBN founders Paul and Jan Crouch, previously served as the chief financial officer, director of finance, corporate treasurer and director of human resources for Trinity Christian Center of Santa Ana, which conducts business as TBN.

"Observers have often wondered how the Crouches can afford multiple mansions on both coasts, a \$50 million jet and chauffeurs," [Tymothy MacLeod, Koper's attorney,] said, according to *The Orange County Register*. "And finally, with the CFO coming forward, we have answers to those questions."

Koper is not suing TBN, however. [The lawsuit is] against her former attorneys...Davert & Loe—Douglass S. Davert, David C. Loe and Benjamin N. Flint III. She is accusing these attorneys, who also do some work for TBN, of breach of duties, inflicting emotional distress and professional negligence.

After Koper took charge of TBN's finance department, she allegedly discovered illegal financial practices on the part of the company's directors, but was told to protect the information.

"Following her appointment, Ms. Koper was specifically instructed to falsify public financial disclosures, to falsify government records, and to otherwise cover up conduct of the TBN Companies and their directors that Ms. Koper reasonably believed to be unlawful," the suit claims.

When she approached the defendant attorneys about the situation, they allegedly advised and encouraged her to do as she was told, and said she "really [had] no choice in the matter."

The suit says Koper was pressured by TBN's directors and senior executives, who told her she could be arrested if she tried to report any illegal financial practices. When she sought the help of the attorneys regarding what she had been told, they allegedly agreed and said she would be considered an "accomplice" and discouraged her from sharing any information.

She eventually reported the issues and was fired from TBN, the suit claims. It also says her husband, Michael Koper, who served as the corporate secretary and vice president of media services for TBN, was fired as a result.

Koper allegedly caved in to threats of jail time within six weeks of losing her job, after which she and her husband turned over their home, car, life insurance, jewelry and even home furnishings to her former employer. The Kopers moved to New York to live with Michael's father in early October 2011.

CAIR'S FIGHT AGAINST PENNSYLVANIA LAW

FRONT PAGE MAG ONLINE, 2/13/12: CAIR'S FIGHT AGAINST PENNSYLVANIA FOREIGN LAW BILL [EXCERPTS]—Resistance to a new bill aimed at limiting foreign law in Pennsylvania courts serves as a case study of how Islamists and their allies operate: peddling falsehoods about Shari'a, painting Muslims as victims, and denying that anyone seeks to institutionalize aspects of Islamic law.

At issue in Pennsylvania is House Bill (HB) 2029, which stipulates that "a tribunal shall not consider a foreign legal code or system which does not grant... the same fundamental liberties, rights and privileges" as guaranteed by the federal and state constitutions. Introduced in November, it follows the American Laws for American Courts (ALAC) model and makes no mention of Shari'a.

Concerns about Shari'a are warranted due to its many provisions that conflict with the standards of American jurisprudence. For example, it disadvantages women in terms of inheritance, divorce, child custody, and other areas of family law. Shari'a already has shaped numerous cases nationwide, including in Pennsylvania, where one state court decided how assets should be distributed according to Islam.

Pushback against HB 2029 has been led by the Philadelphia office of the Hamas-linked Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-PA) and was punctuated by an interfaith press conference at CAIR-PA headquarters on December 14. The overall campaign reflects CAIR's usual recipe of distortion, victimology, and contradiction between words and deeds.

Attacks on bills like HB 2029 begin by sowing confusion about Shari'a. Because Islamic law encompasses virtually every facet of life—governing personal activities such as eating and worship, but also forming an oppressive social and legal structure—suit-and-tie Islamists work to

emphasize its unthreatening pieces whenever possible. CAIR-PA executive director Moein Khawaja's suggestion that Shari'a should worry Pennsylvanians "no more than halal gyros" is a fine example of this technique.

PAULA WHITE APOLOGIZES TO FLORIDA RABBI

FLORIDA COURIER, 2/9/12: WHITE APOLOGIZES TO FLORIDA RABBI, FLORIDA COURIER PUBLISHER AFTER "SCROLL-WRAPPING" VIDEO SURFACES [EXCERPTS]—Florida-based televangelist Paula White submitted a written apology to Orlando-area Rabbi Ira Michaelson and to *Florida Courier* publisher Charles W. Cherry after a video surfaced that showed White participating in "scroll-wrapping," considered "repulsive and inappropriate" by some Jewish religious scholars.

The video surfaced just hours after White's attorney, Daniel Beirute, categorically and unconditionally denied White's involvement in any such act.

White's "wrapping"—allegedly symbolic of being "wrapped in the Word of God," according to erstwhile "rabbi" Ralph Messer on the video—is almost identical to Messer's wrapping of New Birth Missionary Baptist Church's Rev. Eddie Long during a controversial, widely ridiculed ceremony that went viral on YouTube.

Host Don Miller of *The Don Miller Show* harshly criticized both Long and Messer. One of the featured guests on the show was Rabbi Michaelson of the Beth Tefillah congregation in Clermont, just outside of Orlando.

Daniel Beirute, Paula White's attorney, unconditionally denied that White would be "coronated" as was Long.

[Attorney] Beirute wrote in an e-mail to Cherry, "I don't know where Rabbi Michaelson gets his information, but my client categorically and unequivocally denies that that ever happened."

Rabbi Michaelson, concerned that White's denial damaged his reputation, e-mailed a video to Cherry that corroborated his statement about White.

[In] an undated broadcast that seems to be recorded from White's TV show "Paula," White agrees to allow Messer and another unidentified man to wrap White in what appears to be a Torah scroll.

Michaelson e-mailed White's lawyer. "I have consulted my own attorney who is well-versed in copyright law. It is quite clear that by your statements...you are questioning the veracity of my comments." The video Cherry saw was removed from YouTube... "due to a copyright claim made by Paula White Ministries."

T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

Mar 2	Finnish Pentecostal Church Mt. Gravatt, Qld (07) 3849 6331
Mar 3-4	Christian Witness Ministries Eight Mile Plains, Qld (07) 3137 1031 www.cwm.org.au www.cwmfellowship.org
Apr 19-21	St. Louis Conf. on Biblical Discernmt St. Charles, MO (314) 921-9800 www.pfo.org/2012-cbd.htm
Apr 22	Calvary Chapel St. Louis County Maryland Heights, MO (314) 344-8581
Aug 10-11	TBC Conference Bend, OR (800) 937-6638

Letters

Dear TBC,

Thanks so much for making this information available. Your monthly newsletter is always an exhortation, encouragement, and edification to us, and we rejoice every time we see it arrive in the mail. JC (MO)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

I would just like to thank you for listening to the voice of God and [sharing] the gospel undiluted. My wife and I have learned a great deal...from your books, DVDs and teachings and we are searching the Scriptures in everything....May our Lord and Saviour bless you for sacrificing your life for the gospel. JV (email)

Dear Berean Call Ministry,

I am writing...to offer my utmost thanks for your December 2011 publication. To be honest, I didn't even know about your ministry until this last month. One of the articles..."False Teachers Among You" by Paul Van Noy, really spoke to me in a profound way.

I am an inmate in one of California's prisons. I am a born-again Christian and serve in the leadership of the chapel here. I was moved to confront a false teacher that had risen up in the leadership. Subsequently, I've been targeted...as the antagonist, not this false teacher. Granted, there are several that see the truth and are confronting this false prophet as well, but others had been deceived. I had a particularly rough day and my friend brought me the copy of this article. It clarified my heart and purpose exactly. All my confusion,

doubts, and uncertainty [were relieved by] the word Pastor Van Noy brought forth. I have, in turn, been able to encourage others through it. Thank you so much for your publication because without it I wouldn't have received the much-needed encouragement exactly when I needed it. Thank you for encouraging others to follow the Berean's example of studying the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11)....May God bless your ministry. JH (CA, prisoner)

TBC,

Let me preface this with stating up front that I am not a psychologist, nor have I studied psychology, but [have] only been introduced to some of the theories in some college classes actually on criminal justice. I have recently watched yet another YouTube video (6 part, this one) by the Berean Call on how psychology is detrimental and undermines the church, is all new age, and in essence, the work of the devil....All psychologists and psychology are condemned, and the answer is to turn to your pastor for counseling....

Granted, there are certain ideologies brought forth by Jung, Freud, Skinner, and others that make a reasoning person ponder their "mental health" but, at least, like most pioneers in any form, they saw something, identified a pattern, and looked further into it by presenting a thesis and theories to examine; right or wrong....

Why then, is the entire practice of psychology condemned by the Berean Call?... Daniel interpreted dreams, and was of God, yet [you say that] anyone else who "interprets dreams" is a hack. How are you so certain the source of the interpretation always originates from Satan?

Certainly in the early days of psychology, pastors were presented with the idea that perhaps since they were not educated in counseling they should defer to a trained professional. This, your video indicated, was a ploy to undermine the confidence of the clergy to defer to trained professionals.

If, according to the Berean Call, every problem we have today can be corrected by going to your pastor for counseling, why is it then, that [according to the Leadership Survey of 2001] the most learned group of people on the subject of the Bible, theology and God's word, have one of the highest percentage of pornography addiction and compulsion of any other single profession? Can you explain that?

Where then, does a member of the clergy turn to for help? According to the Berean Call, all psychologists and all psychotherapy destroys the church and are condemned across the board. How apt is the

pastor to admit to their addiction to another pastor, a family member, a member of their congregation, or anyone that they, according to the Berean Call, are to turn to? If not them, and if, according to the Berean Call, they are certainly not to go to a counselor/psychologist for help, where do they turn?

And if the clergy has no place to turn without the "rent a friend" concept of psychotherapy that the Berean Call condescendingly referred to, where are individuals outside the church to go for someone non-judgmental to talk with and work through their issues? I've just gotten fed up with the 100 percent condemnation of an entire field of study. It's getting really, really, really old! DW (email)

Dear Dave and Tom,

Thank you so much for obeying the call of God in fulfilling your ministry. We have been so blessed by all the works you have produced—as a church and in our immediate family.

My husband pastors our church here in [the] UK and our three children are all totally committed to the Lord's work here too. [Y]ou have had a huge impact on [our children's] lives and been a great encouragement spiritually to all of us. I want you to know that you are so appreciated this side of "the pond," and we really need people like you to help us with our work for the Lord. May God richly bless you both.... MF (United Kingdom)

Dear Dave, Tom, and Staff,

In the recent issues of *The Berean Call* it seems that the "theme of the month" is deception, of false witness either within the church body, or that of those making entrance. Jesus warned of deception in the end times, even for the elect, the mature believer. Thank you again for your faithfulness in presenting the "wiles of the devil," so that your readers can be aware. May many take heed. PL (WA)

Dear Tom,

I first became acquainted with Dave Hunt and *The Berean Call* through his book *Global Peace* somewhere around 1990. I still remember the Bible bookstore saleslady's warning about the book being controversial and extreme. But having attended several different churches, and going through some very difficult and trying situations I was looking for answers to what in this crazy world is going on?

So, when my eyes lighted upon a similar phrase at the top of the back cover of Dave's book, I wondered if [it] might possibly be an answer to my prayer for information. After looking through the book, I

was convinced that God was truly leading me, so much so that when the saleslady made her comment, I remember saying that I believed that the book was right on track. Since then I have read most of what you and Dave have published, have all your newsletters on disk, and have been downloading the PDF versions since you first began publishing them in color.

Recently reread your book *Temporal Delusion* and believe that this is one of the most urgent messages that professing Christendom needs to hear and understand. RA (CA)

Dear Friends...Dave, Tom, and all,

Please accept my thanks and gratitude for *The Berean Call* and your continued faithfulness and integrity as you address various issues. What a thrill to read the "Letters"—especially from prisoners whose lives are being changed. You are a blessing to me and so many, many others. LP (WA)

Dear Dave, T. A. & Staff,

What a blessing you dear servants have been [and are] to my wife and me these many years. Your many warnings and teaching the truth have added so much to our blessed assurance. May God restore you and bless you in good health. GC (OK)

Dear Tom and Staff,

Thank you for continuing the work of this great ministry. We were fortunate to happen upon *The Seduction of Christianity* when it was first released, and were greatly encouraged to know we had discerned correctly the perils, then and now, to the church of Jesus Christ. Well-intentioned people are now as they were then all too willing to forsake the "truth" part of worshipping "in Spirit and in Truth." AM (PA)

Dear Berean Folks,

Thank you for all you have blessed me with: the constant flow of in-depth knowledge of what's going on in our "religious" realm! I've attended just about every church in our fair city since coming out of the Catholic faith (35 years of that).

I've been a Christian for 35 years....It's just so sad that I've only just now found a very small Baptist church where the pastor preaches the full gospel (he gets your newsletter)....We've been listening to four of y'all's CDs about the different things going on in the churches! What eye-openers! Praise God for the truth of the Word! Now let us walk our talk! AH (TX)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

[I] praise you for challenging Keith Fournier [in the Catholic Debate series.]

As a former Catholic, I can tell you that you were so right in all that you spoke. I cringed to hear Mr. Fournier use "tradition" and "history" in spite of the fact that it is *only* the *Word* that has the promise of inerrancy—not any other "man" or situation.

It was very *painful* to get through this, and I could detect Mr. Fournier's sarcasm and anger, albeit the anger was cloaked, but by the same token, I sensed your speaking the truth in love....I was raised in the Catholic Church in the Philippines, where animism was also brought in or allowed, and I studied at a convent school from kindergarten through high school, so I was steeped in Catholicism. Many American Catholics do not know what I learned (and have no idea what they know, really, or on what it is based)—*and you were right on!* There was *no* encouragement to study the Scriptures, priests are not taught "Bible Study" in any deep sense, and this is only the proverbial tip of the iceberg....*Keep speaking the truth!* Hopefully, the Holy Spirit will convict hearts in the Catholic Church as He did mine! Thank you. GM (email)

Dear TBC,

[I came] out of the "Armstrong" cult, [and since then] Dave and all at The Berean Call have been my mentors and have blessed me greatly with godly, inspired teaching! So I thank God for the wonderful way He has used Dave in exegeting the Word of God. Though I cannot thank Dave in person now, it will be a joy to do so in heaven! NW (CO)

Dear Dave,

Once again we feel compelled to thank you for being a great inspiration to those of us who are working feverishly to get the gospel to non-Christians and to confront all of the many heresies and corruptions in our local churches, and to a broader audience through our blog. This keeps us occupied as we look continually for "the blessed hope," but of more importance is the support and sustenance we draw from you.

You have long been our favorite writer. *The Berean Call* newsletter is the best one of all (wish it was 10 times as large!), and we are very grateful to be able to post an article or two from it each month. We advertise *The Berean Call* and both of you, Dave and T. A., and send people to your website. The Lord will bless you both richly for your commitment to the eternal truths. You are in our prayers. D&CR (email)

Dear Staff,

A million thanks for your excellent publication and for your timely articles which

are of eternal value. May we be about and doing our Father's business with godly fear because our God is a consuming fire.

My wife and I live in a continuing care facility in separate buildings due to physical and mental issues, but we have daily devotions and are praying for you and other ministries. DM (CA)

TBC Notes

Veni, Vidi, Video

It's a fact of life that the upcoming generation (ages 20 to mid-30s in particular) disdains reading (text messages excluded) in favor of visual presentations. That is potentially a huge problem, especially when it comes to encouraging young adults to read the Bible.

Those who have made Bible reading a practice throughout their lives know its fruitfulness and what a continual joy it is. For those who haven't had that experience, the task seems to be somewhere between intimidating and overwhelming. One of our goals at TBC is to help the latter get a taste of what the former experiences, and hopefully, encourage them to get into God's Word.

Along the line of fighting fire with fire, we plan to produce a host of very short videos that introduce all kinds of biblical content. Each two- to five-minute video will teach some aspect related to the Scriptures and all will be designed to motivate the viewers to search (read!) the Bible for themselves. Our hope and prayer is that we can use the visual medium to generate excitement about the written Word.

We are preparing a video-only website that will feature the short videos we plan to produce, as well as teaching clips from the longer videos that we offer. The Lord willing, the site, both in its sound scriptural content and encouragement, will be a "youtube-like" citadel of God's truth that will help develop individuals within the next generation to be like the Bereans.

T. A. McMAHON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A PASSOVER PLOT?

Excerpts from A Woman Rides the Beast by Dave Hunt



The prophecies concerning the second major theme of the Bible, the coming of the Messiah, are even more numerous and detailed than those pertaining to Israel. These prophecies have also been dealt with at some length in my previous books, so we will only summarize a few of them briefly here. Even the most anti-Christian critics who deny categorically that Jesus of Nazareth is the Savior of the world admit that many specific messianic prophecies were fulfilled in His life and crucifixion. In the attempt to explain away the significance of that fact, some bizarre theories have been invented. Typical of such attempts was a book and movie (neither very successful) some years back entitled *The Passover Plot*. Its thesis was that Jesus, knowing some of the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, conspired with Judas to fulfill them in order to make it appear that He was the promised Messiah.

IRRECONCILABLE CONTRADICTION?

Obviously, it would have been ludicrous for Jesus to get Himself crucified in order to convince a small band of uneducated, inept followers that He was the Christ. In fact, neither His disciples nor any other Jew, including even John the Baptist, could believe (though the prophecies were clear, as Christ explained often) that the Messiah was to be crucified. His death rather seemed proof that he was not the Messiah, so fulfilling the prophecies concerning His crucifixion to the letter, as He did, would not have been the way to gather a following. In fact, Christ's death in fulfillment of Scripture was in order to pay the penalty for our sins.

The prophecies concerning His death (Psalm 22:16; Isaiah 53:5,8-10,12; Zechariah 12:10, etc.) were avoided by the Jews as impenetrable mysteries because they seemed totally at odds with other prophecies declaring plainly that the Messiah would ascend David's throne and rule over a magnificent kingdom. How could the Messiah establish a kingdom and a peace that would never end (Isaiah 9:7) and yet be rejected and crucified by His own people? It seemed impossible for both to be true, so the Jewish interpreters simply ignored what didn't seem to make sense to them.

That the Jews were able to crucify Jesus was the final triumphant proof to the rabbis, and it served as the disappointing but undeniable evidence to the Jewish masses and His most devoted disciples that Jesus of Nazareth couldn't possibly have been the Messiah. The prophesied messianic kingdom had not been established, nor had He brought peace to Israel by delivering her from her enemies, so at best He could only have been a well-meaning impostor, and at worst a deliberate fraud. Such remains the argument of most Jews today.

There was, however, one way to reconcile the apparent contradiction: The Messiah had to come twice, the first time to die for man's sins, the second time to reign on the Davidic throne. But even when Jesus explained that fact ahead of time, no one could understand it. It would take His resurrection to open blind eyes.

BEYOND A MERE MAN

Yes, there were a few prophecies that Jesus of Nazareth could have conspired with Judas or others to fulfill. Most prophecies,

however, were beyond the control of any mere man. For example, being born in Bethlehem and of the seed of David were major requirements for the Messiah. The timing of the Messiah's birth, too, as foretold, was obviously beyond the influence of any ordinary mortal. His birth had to occur before the scepter departed from Judah (Genesis 49:10), while the temple was standing (Malachi 3:1), while the genealogical records were available to prove His lineage (2 Samuel 7:12; Psalm 89, etc.), and shortly before the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed (Daniel 9:26).

There was a narrow window of time during which the Messiah had to come—and He did. As the Apostle Paul, a former rabbi, so eloquently put it, "But when the *fullness of time* was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman [i.e., virgin born]..." (Galatians 4:4). It is too late for the Messiah to make His *first* appearance now. There can only be a second coming, as the Bible declares. Yet the Jews still await the first appearing of the one whom they will imagine is their Messiah but who will in fact be the Antichrist.

The scepter departed from Judah about AD 7, when the rabbis

lost the right to exact the death penalty. This right was crucial to the practice of their religion, because death was the penalty for certain religious offenses. When Pilate told the rabbis he wanted nothing to do with Jesus and for them to judge Him themselves, they replied, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" (John 18:31). The Messiah had to be born before that power

was lost, and He had to be put to death afterward, for He was not to die by stoning, the Jews' manner of execution, but by *Roman crucifixion*. Amazingly, His crucifixion was prophesied centuries before that means of execution was even known: "They pierced my hands and my feet" (Psalm 22:16).

Obviously, too, the Messiah had to be born while the genealogical records still existed, or there could be no proof that He was of the seed of David. Those records were lost with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70, an event that both Daniel (in 9:26) and Christ prophesied (Matthew 24:2). Since then it has been too late for the Messiah to come, though the majority of Jews still await His first advent. Christians, on the other hand, expect the *second* coming, which also was foretold by the Hebrew prophets.

AMAZING FULFILLMENTS

Had Jesus conspired to fulfill the prophecies, He would have had to bribe Pilate to condemn the two thieves to be crucified with Him in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9. He also would have had to know what soldiers would be on duty that day in order to bribe them ahead of time to divide His clothes among them and gamble for His robe (Psalm 22:18), to give Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall (Psalm 69:21), and to pierce His side with a spear (Zechariah 12:10) instead of breaking His legs as was the custom, but which could not be done to the Messiah (Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20).

Were the rabbis also part of the plot? Was that why they paid Judas exactly 30 pieces of silver to betray Him as prophesied by Zechariah (11:12), then used the money to buy a "potter's field" for burying strangers when Judas threw it down at their feet in

*This Jesus, whom I
preach unto you is Christ
[the Messiah]. — ACTS 17:2-3*

the temple, again as foretold (Zechariah 11:13)? Is that why they crucified Him precisely when the Passover lambs were being slain all over Israel, in fulfillment of Exodus 12:6? The “Passover plot” scenario becomes increasingly ridiculous the more one examines it.

Where did Jesus get the money to pay off the multitude that lined the road into Jerusalem and hailed Him as the Messiah when He rode in on a donkey—the last beast one would expect a triumphant king to choose—precisely as foretold in Zechariah 9:9? It was Nisan 10 (April 6), AD 32, the very day the prophets had declared that this amazing event would occur—483 years to the day (69 weeks of years, as Daniel foretold it) after Nehemiah, in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus (465-525 BC), had received (on Nisan 1, 445 BC) authority to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1)! The fulfillment by Jesus of these and many other messianic prophecies in minute detail cannot be explained away.

MISSING BODY, EMPTY TOMB

Furthermore, if Jesus had successfully “plotted” to get Himself crucified on the precise date and time that was prophesied—in spite of the determination of the rabbis to the contrary (Matthew 26:5; Mark 14:2)—Jesus still had to rise from the dead. No “Passover plot,” no matter how many conspirators were involved, could accomplish that! A fake “resurrection” wouldn’t be sufficient basis for His followers to launch Christianity. Only if He really died and came back to life would they have the motivation and courage to proclaim His gospel in the face of persecution and martyrdom.

Roman soldiers didn’t sleep on duty. Had they done so while the disciples had stolen the body, they would have been on crosses the next day, and so would the disciples for their crime in breaking the Roman seal on the tomb. And if the disciples had stolen the body and somehow managed to keep it a secret, why would they die for a lie? They were such cowards that none of them had been willing to die for what they had once believed to be the truth. Yet they almost all went to their deaths as martyrs, declaring to the very end that they were eyewitnesses of the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. None of them tried to save his life in exchange for revealing where the body had been hidden. There is simply no way to explain the undeniably empty tomb except by resurrection.

Neither Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, nor any of the world’s other religions, makes any pretense that its founder is still alive. For Christianity, however, the resurrection is the very heart of its gospel. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then the whole thing is a fraud. Nor did Jesus tell His disciples to go to far-off Siberia or South Africa to preach His resurrection where no one could challenge that claim. He told them to begin in *Jerusalem*, where, had He not risen from the dead, a short walk to the grave just outside the city wall could have proven that He was still dead. How the rabbis and Roman rulers would have loved to discredit Christianity before it could gather momentum! The surest way would have been to put the dead body of Jesus on display, but they could not. The closely guarded grave was suddenly empty!

ENTER SAUL OF TARSUS

The proofs for the resurrection are numerous and irrefutable, but having dealt with them elsewhere, we will mention only one—a proof often overlooked. That Christ had indeed risen from the dead is the only explanation for the fact that Saul of Tarsus, the chief enemy of Christianity, became its chief apostle. A popular young rabbi, Saul was on his way to great honors for his leadership role in pursuing this aberrant sect with arrest, imprisonment, and martyrdom. Then suddenly he became one of the despised and persecuted Christians himself, and for this he was repeatedly

arrested, beaten, and imprisoned. On one occasion, he was even stoned and left for dead. Finally, he was beheaded. This stunning turnaround made no sense...unless.

Why voluntarily trade popularity for suffering and eventual martyrdom? Paul explained that he had met the resurrected Christ, and that the One who had died for the sins of the world was alive and had revealed Himself to him. That testimony, however, was not sufficient in itself to prove that Christ was indeed alive. Something more was needed.

No one could doubt Paul’s sincerity. That was demonstrated by his willingness to suffer and even die for Christ. A sincere belief, however, that Christ was alive was not sufficient proof. It was possible that Paul had hallucinated and simply imagined that Christ had appeared to him and spoken to him and was indeed alive.

The Roman governors Felix and Festus, as well as King Agrippa, heard Paul’s account of this supernatural encounter and were convinced that he was sincere but deluded (Acts 24-26). That explanation, however, did not fit the facts. Paul’s sudden intimacy with Christ’s teachings provided proof of the resurrection that could not be explained away by any means.

CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE

Paul, who had not known Christ before He was crucified, was suddenly the chief authority on what Christ had privately taught His inner circle of disciples. He had to have met Him! The apostles, who had been personally instructed by Christ for several years, had to acknowledge that their onetime enemy, Paul, without consulting any of them, knew all that Christ had taught them, and indeed had even deeper insights than they. When Paul rebuked Peter for going astray, the latter submitted to the correction (Galatians 2:11-14).

“I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you” (1 Corinthians 11:23) was how Paul began his explanation to the Corinthian church of what happened at the Last Supper and what Christ had taught His disciples on that occasion. Yet Paul had not been present, nor had he consulted any of those who had been there. “I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia” (Galatians 1:16,17) was Paul’s sworn testimony. That he was suddenly the chief apostle and authority on what Christ had taught could be explained in no other way than that he had been instructed by the resurrected Christ, exactly as he claimed.

Without consulting any of those who had been Christ’s disciples during His earthly ministry, Paul had become the chief authority on Christian doctrine, as all the church had to acknowledge. He wrote most of the New Testament epistles. “I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not of man. For I neither received it of man neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11,12) was Paul’s solemn testimony. There is no other explanation than that Christ had indeed been resurrected and had personally instructed Paul.

REASON FOR CONFIDENCE

The fulfillment of the prophecies mentioned above as well as scores of others in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ prove beyond any possible doubt that He is the Messiah of Israel, the Savior of the world. No one can examine the facts and remain an honest doubter. Those who refuse to believe in the face of such overwhelming evidence are without excuse.

Having seen that what the Bible prophesied concerning past events was fulfilled with 100 percent accuracy, we have valid reason for believing that what it tells us concerning the future will likewise be fulfilled.

THE THREE R'S OF BIBLE STUDY

➤ FROM: *ENJOY YOUR BIBLE* BY WILLIAM MACDONALD ➤

THE THREE R'S

READING: It's surprising how many believers read books *about* the Bible—and spend too little time in the sacred text itself. By all means, use these and other sound biblical helps—but remember that's all they are—helps. A reading program that covers the entire Word of God is recommended...however long it takes. Some of this reading, of course, should be...to meet your own spiritual needs. Don't always be studying. Even your non-studious reading, however, will eventually pay off in the Bible knowledge-and-understanding field.

WRITING: Always keep a pencil or pen handy when reading the Bible. Dates of reading, underlinings, and thoughts should be jotted down. Some [people] have a Bible study notebook for thoughts, questions, problems, solutions, cross-references, etc. If you don't write down your gems, you will forget most of them. Sharing them with someone else during the day will also help fix the ideas in your mind.

REFLECTING: A third important part of Bible study is reflecting upon what you've read and written down. This is also called *meditation*. In the original language of the Old Testament, the word *meditate* is used for mulling over things in the way a cow chews the cud.... Meditat[e] on the Word of God: reading, re-reading, reflecting, and going over the words and ideas as [you] take walks, drive, or sit quietly in [your] house, yard, or in the great out of doors.

MORE BIBLE BASICS

THE LITERAL METHOD: One of the most important rules in Bible study is, "If you can take a passage literally, do so." In other words, if the first sense makes sense, don't look for any other sense. If the Bible says that Christ will reign on the earth for a thousand years, then He *will* reign for a thousand years. The literal interpretation of the Bible is preferable. The alternative is to try to spiritualize or allegorize everything. The trouble with the latter is that no one knows whose spiritualization is the right one!

POSITION AND PRACTICE: Distinguish between position and practice, also called standing and state. *Position* is what we are in Christ. *Practice* is what we should be in our everyday lives. In Colossians 3:1 we were raised with Christ; that is our position. We should seek those things that are above; that is our practice. Our position is perfect. Our practice never will be until we see the Savior's face, but we should be growing ever more Christlike until that time.

OFFICIAL ROLE AND PERSONAL CHARACTER: Distinguish between *official* role and *personal* character. John the Baptist was greater than any of the prophets that had gone before him (Lk 7:28). But this doesn't necessarily mean that he was greater in character.... Governmental powers are ordained by God. This means they are God's servants officially, even if they don't know Him personally.

THE TEXT IN CONTEXT: Study a text within its context. For example: *From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment* (Is 1:6). Commonly used to describe man's total depravity, it rather tells how God has punished Judah until it is black and blue from head to foot, and yet the nation has not repented....

[Another example]: *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap* (Gal 6:7). In the context, Paul is not describing the sins of a sinner but the stinginess of a saint.

BIBLE VOCABULARY: Don't get your theological definitions from a secular dictionary. Use a reputable Bible dictionary. There you will learn that, contrary to secular usage, a *mystery* is not a "mysterious" or unsolved question but a "truth hitherto unknown and humanly unknowable but now made known by the Lord."

STEPS IN BIBLE STUDY

STEP 1: OBSERVATION

When we study God's Word...we need to train our minds to see what's there and not put in what we think is there or we've been taught is there. Here are some questions to ask yourself as you observe:

- **QUESTION 1: *Who?***—Read your passage. Who is writing? To whom is it addressed? Who is speaking (if it's a quotation)? Who is acting? Who is being referred to?
- **QUESTION 2: *What?***—What is going on? What type of writing is this? Poetry? Sermon? History? Doctrine? Prophecy? What is the situation? What is the gist of the argument? What is the tone of the writer?, etc.
- **QUESTION 3: *When?***—Where in time (past, present, or future) is this text placed? Is it in the ages before Israel was founded? Is it during this current Christian era? Is it a prediction of the future? Of heaven?
- **QUESTION 4: *Where?***—Does it occur in the desert during the wanderings of Israel? In Jerusalem? In Babylon? In the coming kingdom? Place is very important in any historical event.
- **QUESTION 5: *How?***—How did the situation in the passage come about? For love? Because of a war? Rebellion? Careful planning? Divine intervention?
- **QUESTION 6: *Why?***—When we get to the reason, the interpretive factor is likely to enter in more than it should at the observation stage of Bible study. Sometimes it is quite clear why something happened: It was predicted by God; it was the natural consequence of what went before.

STEP 2: INTERPRETATION

If the first step consisted of observing what the passage *says*, the second has to do with what it *means*. Sometimes the text is so clear and simple that you don't have to work on the meaning if you're fair with the text and not out to prove some hobby horse, private emphasis, or even heresy.... Many differences among Christians are *not* that there is an ambiguous passage that various groups interpret differently. Rather, so often it's a matter of how much church *tradition* from ages past a denomination clings to.

STEP 3: APPLICATION

The last stage, logically, is applying what you've learned. What the passage says is *observation*. What the passage means is *interpretation*. What the passage means to me (or others) is *application*. Some of the commands—such as controlling our tongues—may take years of careful cultivating to obey successfully. But the *application* of James' command in 3:1-12 has to start *somewhere*!

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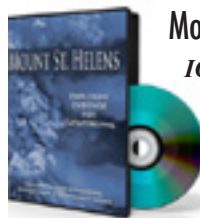
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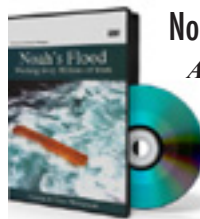
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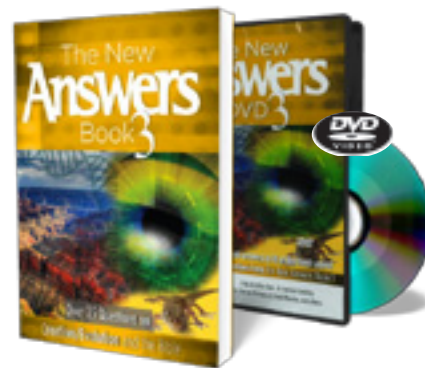


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