

# *False Prophets* and WANDERING STARS

*Raging waves of the sea,  
foaming out their own shame...*

**The**  
**Berean**  
**Call**

SEPTEMBER 2012

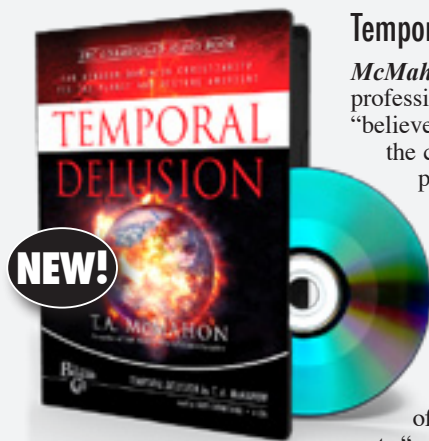
**JESUS GETS TOUGH (PART ONE)**

by T. A. McMahon



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### Temporal Delusion - (read by the author)

**McMahon**—AT THIS VERY MOMENT, millions of professing Christians are joining with millions of other “believers” to promote peace and reconciliation across the country and around the globe. These pragmatic, purpose-driven churches and organizations are uniting for the ecumenical “common good” to eliminate poverty, eradicate disease, and save the earth from political and environmental disaster—all in the name of advancing “God’s kingdom on earth.” But are all of these good works derived from a biblical blueprint for humanity? Or are these well-meaning workers building a house on foundations of sand? Many of these faithful individuals and groups are laboring to “restore America” to a faith, freedom, and prosperity

that they believe is biblical. Meanwhile, what the Bible says about the future of humanity—and the earth itself—is ignored in the name of “tolerance,” “love,” and non-judgmentalism. This raises a grave concern: Are any of these “kingdom-building” efforts bringing eternal life and salvation to the lost? Or are millions of professing Christians merely befriending the world in ways that create enmity with God? Furthermore, is the great commission of the church being compromised by ignoring the clear and unmistakable roadmap in Scripture concerning End Times events, including Christ’s “catching up” of the saints? Does it really matter what one believes about the Rapture in these increasingly perilous times? Last Days doctrines should indeed impact the direction and focus of our daily Christian walk—encouraging and equipping us to “redeem the time.” *The Berean Call*.

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## ABOUT THE BEREAN CALL

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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## **Jesus Gets Tough... Part One**

*T. A. McMahon*

When writing or even thinking about the biblical Jesus, problems may arise. One of them occurs when we focus on just one of His attributes and lose sight of His many others. This can give us a distorted view of our Lord and Savior. It's also possible for us to not even consider a particular attribute of His, which likewise can distort our true understanding of His character as revealed in Scripture. All of Christ's attributes are related, and, of course, they are all perfect in every way. Moreover, Jesus is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). He doesn't change. So, what's with this title—"Jesus Gets Tough"?

Well, the title has to do primarily with our reaction when we read that Jesus acted or said something in a way that may startle us. We're surprised because we may not have considered that particular characteristic of our Lord although it is clearly presented in Scripture. For example, He is called the "Lamb of God," and quite often we see Him reflecting qualities of meekness and gentleness, including the aspect of His being the sacrificial "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." But in contrast to that, He is also "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" (Revelation 5:5). He appeared to Joshua with sword in hand as "captain of the host of the Lord" (Joshua 5:14).

At His Second Coming, He will lead an army to rescue Israel from the nations that desire to destroy it. No characteristics that we think of as lamblike will be involved in that scenario. Neither did He reflect the characteristics of a lamb when He overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple. Yet He is and will forever be the Lamb of God *and* the Lion of Judah along with all that those titles imply. They all are an indication of the perfect qualities of the biblical Jesus. I emphasize the adjective "biblical" because it is only through the Scriptures, through which Jesus Christ has revealed Himself, that anyone can know Him in truth. All other perspectives are mostly what men think about Him. Mormons perceive Him as a family man, married to Mary Magdalene and Mary and Martha. The PETA people say that He was a vegetarian. The gays promote Him as gay, and so on.

But believers can also fall prey to a distorted view of Jesus. We therefore need to question ourselves as to where we are getting our thoughts about Him. Is our understanding from the Word Himself, or from man's opinions, speculations, and even "scholarship so-called"? If it's the latter group, then it's certain that "another Jesus" will be fashioned in our minds (2 Corinthians 11:4). He will be a counterfeit Jesus who can benefit no one. A continual refrain from the Emerging Church leaders, who desire to "reinvent Christianity" to make it more accommodating to our culture (particularly to young adults), is "We love Jesus, but we don't like his church."

You have to wonder what Jesus they're talking about. Even a cursory reading of the Bible would show them that the church is His *bride* (temporal flaws and all) who will be taken to heaven when He returns for her. Additionally, there are popular movements, trends, and books that feature *isolated characteristics* of Jesus and doctrines of the Word that distort a correct biblical view. These include books such as Rob Bell's bestseller *Love Wins* and Brennan Manning's *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, both of which take the doctrine of love far beyond the teaching of Scripture—the former in the heresy of universalism, the latter implying that God, in His love, simply winks at our sins.

Yet even we who have walked with Him for many years, who love Him and desire to please Him, can also fashion a distorted view of Jesus if we major on a particular attribute of His at the expense of others. Understanding that a biblically balanced view of Jesus is vital, we need to consider one characteristic that seems to have been intentionally dismissed—or at least purposely avoided—in the church today. In fact, in my more than three decades as a believer, I don't remember ever hearing a sermon preached on the subject of Jesus "getting tough" with His church.

To leave that characteristic out of our understanding of Him will lead to problems in our walk with Him. The gospels certainly give us information regarding His sternness with the Jewish religious leaders as Jesus confronts their hypocrisy. The Lord also offers a few rebukes directed at Peter and the other apostles, whose inspired writings became foundational for the developing church. The Epistle to the Hebrews, how-

ever, is the first book that indicates a rather tough characteristic of Jesus for those who are His own—who are, in fact, His bride: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Hebrews 12:6-7).

We're given specific reasons for the Lord's discipline of those whom He loves: it is "...for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Hebrews 12:10). Nevertheless, it's not until the Book of Revelation that we see Christ in a lengthy and very stern light regarding His bride. John, the apostle beloved of Jesus, is taken aback by the appearance of the One upon whose breast he had rested his head when Jesus dined with His disciples (John 21:20).

That former intimacy with Jesus seems to have been lost in this startling vision of his Savior:

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. (Revelation 1:12-16)

We can't know what was going through John's mind at seeing such an imposing image of his Savior, but we do know his reaction: *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead...* (v. 17).

Jesus could have appeared to His beloved disciple as when John last saw Him after His resurrection, but He chose to send John (and us) a very different message. I certainly don't understand all the symbolism involved, but one doesn't need to in order to come away with a very sobering impression. His hair, His eyes, and His feet all seem to represent purity and the process of purification. The instrument Jesus chose for His purifying process is "a sharp twoedged sword." That which comes out of His mouth can only represent the "Sword of the Spirit," His Word

(Ephesians 6:17), which we learn in Hebrews 4:12 is living and powerful and is a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

There is nothing timid about the symbol that Jesus selected to represent *His Word*. A sword is not only a weapon of war; it is also used for clearing one’s path—for cutting away that which would entangle and choke out life; moreover, a surgeon’s “sword,” the scalpel, can pierce one’s “joints and marrow” to excise cancerous tumors. That is how sin in one’s life must be dealt with. The psalmist wrote, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9). Jesus prayed to the Father that those who follow Him would be *set apart* from the world by Scripture: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). That was our Lord’s prayer for the disciples who walked with Him then, and it is the same for those of us who follow Him today. The first three chapters of Revelation are quite unique in Scripture. In them we see Jesus directly addressing, encouraging, but mostly correcting the church. To say that He “gets tough” with His bride would hardly be an abuse of the text.

The churches to whom He was speaking existed during the time that John wrote Revelation and were located in the Roman province of Asia, which is now modern-day Turkey. Six of the churches were within 100 miles of each other; Laodicea, the furthest south, was about 200 miles from the northernmost church of Pergamos. None of those churches exist today, although the problems that Jesus raised can be seen throughout church history.

William MacDonald, in his *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, gives an overview: “*Ephesus*: The church of the first century was generally praiseworthy, but it had already left its first love. *Smyrna*: From the first to the fourth century, the church suffered persecution under the Roman Emperors. *Pergamos*: During the fourth and fifth centuries, Christianity was recognized as an official religion through Constantine’s patronage. *Thyatira*: From the sixth to the fifteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church largely held sway in Western Christendom until rocked by the Reformation. In the East, the Orthodox Church ruled. *Sardis*: The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the Post-Reformation period. The light of the Reformation soon became dim. *Philadelphia*: During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were mighty revivals and great missionary movements. *Laodicea*: The church of the last days is pictured as lukewarm and apostate. It is the church of liberalism and ecumenism.”

Such general observations ring true to history, but they are not exclusive. One can also see various aspects of the things Christ addressed to the seven churches in local assemblies throughout the world today. In other words, the churches of Revelation are alive and not so well (five of them at least) wherever believers dwell together today. Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea all had issues that Jesus wanted corrected. And He still wants this in our own churches. As the text clearly shows, these are not merely *suggestions* on His part.

The church at Ephesus had many stand-out qualities: good works, perseverance, and critical discernment regarding doctrine and leadership. Even so, Jesus takes the fellowship to task regarding a very important issue: “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hath left thy first love” (Revelation 2:4). We are not told exactly how the believers came to lose their “first love,” but we can get an idea from Scripture. Their good works, which should have been a byproduct that grew out of their love for Jesus, very likely took precedence over the relationship the Ephesian believers had with Him. The Apostle Paul’s admonition to the Galatians seems applicable here: “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Galatians 3:3). A believer’s love of the Lord *must* be central to whatever he does. When that begins to slip, what follows is an automatic slide into efforts generated and accommodated by the flesh. To whatever degree the flesh has its way, to that degree God’s grace is displaced. Our works need to be “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).

There’s little doubt that the church in our day would be even more prone than the Ephesians were to displace their love for the Lord, considering that we have been so influenced by the “self” teachings that have entered the church: self-esteem, self-love, self-worth, self-image, self-confidence, and on and on to self-*ad nauseam*. Furthermore, a preoccupation with self makes it difficult to recognize and receive a stern correction. We’ll see that clearly when we consider the church of Laodicea.

The common refrain is “You can’t mean me!” because most of us have been conditioned to think more highly of ourselves than we ought (Romans 12:3). Moreover, many Christians are of the opinion that Jesus surely wouldn’t say or do anything to lower a believer’s self-esteem. That’s the Jesus of psychobabble and so-called Christian psychology, who is a false Christ fashioned by fleshly men. This is the Jesus

whom the world loves, who is all about accommodating mankind, and who certainly doesn’t square with His Word. He is especially foreign to the chapters of Revelation that we are presently considering.

The consequence for the Ephesians, who were drifting away from their “first love” and who failed to repent of having abandoned their focus on the Lord, would be the removal of their “candlestick”: “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Revelation 2:5). There is no deep secret in the symbolism of the candlestick. It represents quite simply the light of Christ, who is the “Light of the World,” i.e., the Word. The only way for one’s love for Christ to increase is for believers to grow in their personal relationship with Him by the *continual reading and living out* what the Word of God teaches.

Without that discipline, the love of Christ, who is “a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,” will inevitably wax cold. And as that light dims, it follows that a believer will have no basis for biblical discernment and will therefore cease to produce any spiritual fruit. Notice that Jesus said, “*I will* come quickly, and will remove thy candlestick....” One of the points I want to emphasize here is the fact that it is *Jesus himself* who is correcting His church. He is the one “getting tough” here.

There has been a tendency throughout church history that continues today to deal with biblical correction when it is presented by “shooting the messenger” rather than heeding the message and repenting. Although the messages have been true to the Scriptures, a common ploy in rejecting the message has been to dodge the convicting biblical subject by diverting attention to God’s less-than-perfect messengers, who thus become vulnerable targets. But that’s not the case with the Messenger to the churches in the Book of Revelation. Both He and His message are perfect and cannot be subverted. Furthermore, Christ’s strict admonitions have never been more needful for His church to heed and make the necessary corrections than they are today, in this time of great spiritual delusion and rampant apostasy to which His bride finds herself more and more susceptible.

As this series continues through chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, many will have to come to grips with a characteristic of Jesus of which they may not have been aware—but it is imperative that we all know Him and love Him as He is in truth.

TBC



## Quotable .....

The word of God is His perfect message to men. If that be spurned, He has nothing more to say to them until they meet Him in judgment. Wherever that word is proclaimed, it puts those who hear it in the place of responsibility such as they never knew before. The light shines from the word. If they refuse its testimony, they prove that they love darkness rather than light. That word contains all that is necessary to show the way of life. Moses and the prophets all spake of Him. But in the New Testament we have the full-orbed revelation of Him who has come in grace to seek and to save the lost. He who believes finds deliverance. He who turns away will perish in his sins.

— H. A. Ironside  
The Continual Burnt Offering

## Q&A .....

**QUESTION:** We are trying to stand to defend the faith and have come across people believing in the evidence of gold dust, jewels from heaven – stuff from the Toronto guys ages ago. Is God limited in the way he performs miracles today in the modern era? If there is no example in the Word, then basically it's not from the Holy Spirit but another spirit? Are we "limiting" God by unbelief? Where do we draw the line between these "new miracles" and miracles mentioned in the Scriptures? If we stick to the Word-based miracles only—is that limiting God?

**RESPONSE:** We have had opportunity to see these areas of concern close up and have heard statements such as "touch not the Lord's anointed," or "don't quench the Spirit with your unbelief." This attitude is one of the weaknesses of the Pentecostal, or Charismatic, movement. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:21, we are to "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Since the Lord is not politically correct, "all things" means *all things*, including the things that are His. There is a direct implication that the Lord is confident that the things that are His will stand the test. So, no, we do not limit the Lord by the test. In fact, testing is what He commands.

Further, the signs and wonders movement turns the biblical model upside down. Too many are going from place to place seeking to have an experience. The biblical model shows us people who were seeking God, who then, in turn, had an experience.

Peter and John were not seeking an experience as they "went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer..." (Acts 3:1). They sought God in prayer. It was God who drew their attention to "a certain man lame from his mother's womb [who] was carried [and] laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple" (v. 2). We know the "experience" and opportunity created as the formerly lame man entered "walking and leaping and praising God." The experience was something arranged and orchestrated by God, not by a controlled setting, music, or other stimuli.

As you point out in your [full] letter, there is no end of fraud that has been uncovered. The "gold dust" falling from heaven has sometimes been scientifically tested, as in the case of Brazilian evangelist Sylvania Machado. As *Charisma* magazine reported, "John Arnott of the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship (TACF) canceled a scheduled four-day appearance by Machado after sending a sample of the flecks that cascaded from her head on the first night for testing. A geochemist at the University of Toronto concluded the specks did not contain any gold or platinum but were some type of plastic film" ([www.charismanews.com/news.cgi?a=145&t=search.html](http://www.charismanews.com/news.cgi?a=145&t=search.html), cited 5/7/01).

Satan always seeks to counterfeit the genuine. When Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, it became a serpent. Pharaoh's sorcerers, however, "...also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods" (Exodus 7:11-12). Up until the sorcerer's serpents were swallowed, their "feat" might have been convincing to some.

God's servants are not validated by the most amazing miracles. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). Some point to Acts 16:20, which reads, "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Please note, however, the "signs" confirmed the "word." The word remains the focus. There may be all sorts of wonderful signs, but if the word is deficient, the signs are of no value.

**QUESTION:** We're asking for counsel on the matter of biblical reproof. My first inclination is to follow the admonition in 2 Timothy 2:24-26 and 4:1-4. In light of this what do you believe is the appropriate response and action to be taken when young believers are living in error? Some of the issues include friends who are living with their

**boyfriends/girlfriends before marriage, were pregnant before marriage, are contemplating divorce and remarriage, dating nonbelievers, going out on the weekends and getting drunk at bars, joining yoga sessions, getting involved in psychology programs, fail to recognize false gospels (Catholicism, Mormonism, etc). Any advice on how to approach dear friends and discuss these issues from your experience would be appreciated. We have lost friends over this.**

**RESPONSE:** You point to 2 Timothy 2:24-25, which tells us, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

This approach is consistent throughout Scripture. In Galatians 6:1-2, we read, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Even the verses speaking of conditions approaching the last days do not depart from this approach: "I charge you therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2 Timothy 4:1-5). "Reproving," "rebuking," and even "exhorting" must be done with "great patience" and "instruction." Biblical instruction does not hastily resort to the rod. "Longsuffering" (godly patience) should be our attitude towards those being ministered to. Nevertheless, we preach.

Finally, Ecclesiastes 7:5 tells us, "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools."

It is also important to remember that though we may be initially rejected, that doesn't mean our words weren't heard or that the Lord has ceased working in the lives of these individuals, as we pray. For example, we recently heard from a woman who related that in the mid-1970s she had witnessed to her employers (a husband and wife) and had been immediately fired. Nearly twenty years later they contacted her to tell her that since then, their family had gotten saved, and the man was now a minister of the gospel. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). Well doing involves reproving, rebuking, and exhorting "with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:1-5).



# IN DEFENSE *of the* FAITH

BIBLICAL ANSWERS *to* CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

## Given Evidence and Reason, Why Faith?

**QUESTION:** If evidence and reason are essential parts of faith, I don't see why God should demand faith at all. Why not give us the proof of everything? To have to take that step of faith seems unreasonable to me.

**RESPONSE:** The answer to your question is dictated by our own limitations, not because of some unreasonable demand that God makes. In order for everything to be proved and reasoned out for us, we would have to be equal to God. Obviously we are not: We are finite and God is infinite. We simply don't have the capacity to understand everything about God and His universe. Therefore, we need to trust Him when He tells us about things that we cannot fully comprehend. That's where faith comes in.

What we can understand of the universe and of our accountability to God from reason and our conscience is sufficient to point us in the right direction. Knowing on the basis of the evidence that God exists, we ask Him to reveal Himself to us and to show us His will for our lives. We are willing to trust Him in whatever He tells us, even though we cannot understand it all. We discover (as we shall see) that He has spoken to us in the Bible, and very clearly and comprehensively.

### Faith Reveals a Universe Beyond Human Comprehension

True faith opens to us a knowledge of God and His truth that we could not otherwise discover. Such is the value of faith in God. Once we know Him and have confidence that we are indeed hearing from Him, then we understand His truth by believing what He says. As a result, we can know and understand what would otherwise be impossible for us to grasp. For example, the Bible declares:

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Hebrews 11:3)

These words, penned nearly two thousand years ago, clearly tell us that the universe was made out of an invisible substance. No one at that time nor during the many centuries that followed had the scientific knowledge to provide the evidence to support this statement. The *proof* had to wait until modern science had caught up with what the Bible had said 1,800 years earlier.

Today we know that the entire universe is composed of an invisible substance called energy. In spite of the brilliant advancements of science, however, though we know much

about energy, we still don't know exactly what it is. Yet by faith the believer knew all he needed to know: that God spoke the universe into existence by His infinite power and that He made it out of something that is invisible.

That these words are found in the Bible is one of many reasons to believe it rather than any of the other scriptures that are sacred to the world's many religions. By contrast, those scriptures, far from containing statements that science can only confirm and never refute (as is the case with the Bible), contain numerous ridiculous ideas that reflect the level of understanding of mankind at the time and of the culture when and where they were written.

It was once believed that the earth was flat and was supported on the back of a tortoise floating in a sea. The Greeks thought that Atlas, a giant, held the universe in his arms. The Egyptian account of creation involved gods (such as the sun god, which was born on a flower), some of whom were part animal and part human. Plato thought the world was a living being and that earthquakes were caused when it shook itself. The Bible, though written in the same time period and by men who lived in these same cultures, is completely free of such myths. Even the Qur'an, of far more recent origin, contains Arabian myths. As it has often been pointed out:

The Bible is the only ancient book that is accurate in all scientific details. Other ancient holy books from the East include legends and errors too childish for consideration. Even comparatively modern books like the Koran abound in historical and chronological blunders.

There are many just a few of the many reasons for believing that the Bible is, as it claims to be, God's infallible Word.

## TBC NewsWatch

### GORE VIDAL AND THE SKY GOD

**R. ALBERT MOHLER, JR., CHRISTIAN POST, 8/9/12: GORE VIDAL AND THE SKY GOD [EXCERPTS]**—The death of author and controversialist Gore Vidal brought an end to one of America's most gifted and flamboyantly offensive literary voices. For decades, Vidal was one of America's most outrageous men of letters. His life was marked by a long series of confrontations and he died as one of the nation's most famous and infamous literary figures.

Like many in his literary generation, Vidal was born to privilege, but suffered from an unhappy childhood....His literary talents were prodigious, though he scandalized the elites early in his career by writing a novel openly celebrating homosexuality.

Most of the media coverage after his death dealt extensively with his homosexuality and radical politics. He claimed, for example, that President Franklin D. Roosevelt knew in advance of Pearl Harbor and that President George W. Bush knew in advance of the September 11, 2001 attacks. Many also mentioned his antipathy to Christianity.

But the true nature of Gore Vidal's theological protest was largely, if not totally, missing from the national coverage. In his 1992 Lowell Lecture at Harvard University, Vidal attacked not just Christianity, but the very notion of monotheism.

In his essay, "Monotheism and its Discontents," based on the lecture at Harvard, Vidal perceptively and blasphemously blamed the existence of a binding sexual morality on monotheism.

"The great unmentionable evil at the center of our culture is monotheism," Vidal asserted, "From a barbaric Bronze Age text known as the Old Testament, three anti-human religions have evolved—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These are sky-god religions."

He went on to describe the "sky-god" as patriarchal and jealous. "He requires total obedience from everyone on earth, as he is in place not just for one tribe but for all creation."

He claimed that America's founders were "not enthusiasts of the sky-god," but that devotees have had an inordinate influence throughout most of the nation's history. "From the beginning, sky-godders have always exerted great pressure in our secular republic," he argued. "Also, evangelical Christian groups have traditionally drawn strength from the

suppressed." He blamed the "sky-godders" for "their innumerable taboos on sex, alcohol, gambling."

In one scathing paragraph, he pressed his case: "Although many of the Christian evangelists feel it necessary to convert everyone on earth to their primitive religion, they have been prevented—so far—from forcing others to worship as they do, but they have forced—most tyrannically and wickedly—their superstitions and hatred upon all of us through the civil law and through general prohibitions. So it is upon that account that I now favor an all-out war on the monotheists."

Christians should pay close attention to Gore Vidal's argument, but the mainstream media have almost uniformly ignored it. The obituaries have celebrated his literary gifts and noted his radical political ideas and rejection of Christianity, but not his call for "all-out war on the monotheists."

### DOMINIONIST LEADERS COME TOGETHER

**BRIAN TASHMAN, RIGHT WING WATCH, 7/27/12: RELIGIOUS RIGHT AND DOMINIONIST LEADERS COME TOGETHER (AGAIN) FOR "AMERICA FOR JESUS" [EXCERPTS]**—Back in February, we reported that pastor Anne Gimenez was in the process of recreating the 1980 Washington for Jesus rally, which she led with her late husband, Bishop John Gimenez. The new election-oriented prayer rally, called America for Jesus, is scheduled to be held in Philadelphia's Independence Mall in September and has already received the endorsements of far-right dominionists including Cindy Jacobs, Lou Engle, Jim Garlow and Harry Jackson.

The latest solicitation mentions support from not only New Apostolic Reformation leaders like Che Ahn, Rick Joyner, Chuck Pierce, Doug Stringer and Barbara Yoder, but also from David Barton of WallBuilders, Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council and Mat Staver of Liberty Counsel. Even televangelists Kenneth Copeland, Gordon Robertson and John Hagee have endorsed the event.

In promotional materials, the event's organizers use language closely centered around Seven Mountains dominionism, which calls for conservative Christians to take dominion over the seven spheres of society: family; arts and entertainment; business; education; religion and the church; media; and government. They also dabble in some Christian Nation revisionist history, using two fake quotes attributed to founding fathers George Washington and James Madison.

### RAMADAN—SO WHAT?

**DR. JERRY RANKIN, CHRISTIAN POST, 7/25/12: RAMADAN—SO WHAT? [EXCERPTS]**—Most Americans would be unaware that Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, [has recently passed]. Many would only be casually aware that this is one of the five pillars of Islam; the date changes each year due to the lunar calendar but faithful adherents fast from dawn to dusk until the month concludes....

Having studied Islam we were familiar with this expression of piety but learned much more regarding its practice during the years we lived on the mission field. In the more fanatical countries fasting is compulsory though in most countries allowances are made for foreigners and non-Muslims. All do without food, but the more devout don't drink water and some don't even swallow their saliva.

It was intriguing to find, however, that Muslims probably eat more during the month than at any other time. Women of the house arise in the early morning hours to prepare a very elaborate breakfast intended to provide nourishment throughout the day. Then when the call to evening prayer signals the breaking of the fast, everyone hurries home to indulge in what could be described, from our understanding, as a Thanksgiving Day dinner. Not much gets done during Ramadan as offices are open for only a few hours, no one has the strength for much physical labor, and it is easier to endure the denial of food by sleeping through the afternoon.

While most Muslims may fast due to mandatory legalism, it is still a time in which they are seeking God and praying God would reveal Himself. That is ironic since they have a fatalistic faith in an impersonal God who is aloof and cannot be known. But invariably God reveals Himself to many Muslims around the world during the month of Ramadan. In fact, the final night of fasting is called the "Night of Power" in which many will seek God all night.

Testimonies are abundant of those who have dreams and visions of Jesus appearing to them and saying, "Follow Me." Others will be impressed to find someone with "the book" that tells the way to eternal life. *None of these revelations are sufficient for salvation* [TBC Emphasis] but they break down the barriers in their heart, they lead to an inquisitiveness to find out who Jesus is or to know what the Bible says. Certainly, many may not be sincere in their observing the fast and saying perfunctory prayers, but many are.



## T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

<b>Sep 15</b>	<b>Midwest Hebrew Ministries Prophecy Conference</b> Arden Hills, MN 763-427-7162
<b>Oct 13</b>	<b>Simple Truths Men's Conference</b> Calvary Chapel Pasadena, CA 626-584-9992
<b>Dec 3-5</b>	<b>21st Annual Pre-trib Study Group</b> Dallas/Ft Worth, TX 800-962-1022

## Letters .....

### Dear TBC Staff,

Greetings! Grace, peace, and mercy from God our Father and Christ Jesus the Lord. I wanted to express my appreciation for the book donation. I absolutely devour the monthly newsletters. Once I've read those I pass them around to other professing believers and then to others who may or may not be believers. So we get a lot of mileage out of your works. The same will be true of these most appreciated books. My prayer is that you, individually and corporately, will be blessed, as we are, through your gift of kindness. RW (TX, prisoner)

### TBC,

I think in two years, the *Harbinger* book will be widely regarded as a wonderful work equal to Hal Lindsey's *Late, Great Planet Earth* and Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins's "Left Behind" series. *The Berean Call* may still be around, but will never recover from the fact it let McMahon publish his attack piece. Proverbs 16:18: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." RT (email)

### Hello,

I really appreciate your writing on the anti-Christian doctrines of Roman Catholicism. While some RCs may be Christian, the Church teachings are anything but Christian. This is perhaps the greatest mission field within our nation.

I am concerned that you have chosen instead to attack Bible-believing Christians who have a different non-essential biblical view than you hold. Since Christians can differ on non-essentials, then where is the love for your brethren? SF (IN)

### Dear Tom,

I very much appreciated your article [posted on] the Bible Prophecy Blog regarding *The Harbinger*. I had pre-warned the interviewer at *Prophecy in the News*

regarding Jonathan Cahn's claims...and was so disappointed in how he was presented as if God had chosen him to bring this "warning" to America. I agree that America needed repentance for many years prior to 9/11, but I believe [this book] was a poor way to go about it—creating more harm than good—but we were warned that the "last days" would be like this. Mr. Cahn's assertions are definitely not "from God." Instead Mr. Cahn has led some astray regarding the truths in God's Word.... Thank you, along with Dave James, for presenting the truth of the scriptures. Many Christians and nonbelievers needed to hear the truth. God bless you for your faithful stand. EL (email)

### Dear Dave and all,

Thank you for *Countdown to the Second Coming*, which I recently purchased from you. I think I am beginning to get the coming events straightened out in my mind. I appreciated a short book to tell it...I pray for your ministry with a grateful heart for the truth that has come to me. I'm one of the Catholics who found her way out. When that happened I was guided by J. Vernon McGee on radio. No matter what book he was talking about, the same truths kept popping up and I was able to see what Jesus and salvation were about. CR (WA)

### Dear Berean Call Brethren,

Thank you all so much for all your hard work done for the Lord Jesus and for His lambs. He said to "feed my lambs" and you are certainly doing that. Not to mention instructing, correcting, and warning, for which I praise our God and Saviour for His goodness, mercy, and kindness. The newsletter is wonderful and so encouraging. I enjoy many hours of fellowship with Dave and Tom through books, articles, CDs, DVDs, and MP3s on my computer and iPhone....Keep up the good work. The Lord Jesus is coming back to get us soon. I can almost hear the sound of the trumpet. Come, Lord Jesus! NB (MD)

### Dear Dave Hunt,

We want to thank you for your ministry and your dedication for getting the truth out through newsletters, books, and media. Your diligence in study has been such a blessing to us as a family throughout the years since the 1980s/90s.

You are an inspiration by being a light in the darkness! You have warned us of heresies, cults, psychology, and doctrines of evil. You have helped us so much in understanding reformed theology and prophecy. Most of all you have encouraged us to be Bereans by studying the Bible daily.

We appreciate you so much for loving and serving the Lord and caring to get the message out to the world. Words cannot express how thankful we are. You are truly a servant of our Lord and Savior! D&JM (CA)

### Dear Brother in Christ,

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for the generous donation of books that you sent to our facility....Your effort to assist us in supplying the prisoners here with educational Christian literature is a true blessing, one which I'm certain will reap eternal rewards when we go home to be with our Lord. So allow me to thank you again and let you know that any donations are welcome, as our chapel library is always open for more Christian literature, and the men here will read them. God bless you for your desire to make these books available to prisoners who are hungry for Godly insight. DK (KS, prison chaplain)

### Dear Brother Dave,

I have been a recipient of your newsletters and a listener of your discussions with T. A. for many years now. I have and continue to recommend your teaching to all I know. When I saw your new *T.U.L.I.P.* book I immediately ordered four of them because I knew I would be handing them out to others. Notwithstanding that desire, in the Berean spirit, I endeavored to read it first before passing it out. I just finished [the] book and want to thank you for this marvelous resource.

When I was a Baby Believer, I was exposed to...TULIP...by a pastor at our large church. The Holy Spirit had given me enough discernment at that time to smell a dead fish. I knew this could not be right but I did not have the Bible knowledge at the time to counter it.

In the interim I have taken to lead a men's Bible study with a pastor friend of mine and over the last 15 years I have been in continual study of the Word (although I am still a tentmaker). Everything I have come to know about the Gospel during that time and through today convinces me that TULIP is false...nonsense. What I appreciate about your book is that it provides a concise listing of all the pertinent scriptures and teaching to totally obliterate this...corrosive doctrine.... BF (KS)

### Dear Dave,

I just wanted to make a thankful comment on a TBC question on Matthew 18. Your clarification of the real meaning was very helpful....I am a Christian now for 32 years...and I have listened to quite a number of sermons, with a considerable



amount of them containing dubious or questionable teachings. In case of the latter I sometimes even had to leave the church building because I was not able to listen to what was being said any longer.

I nearly always approached the preacher/speaker or the elders “in charge of” pastoring the local church afterwards—either in private...or by letter—and addressed the points [that], according to my understanding of God’s Word, had been wrong.

I always sensed somehow that this was not the right way of handling such situations—at least not according to how God wants such situations to be handled.

But this “sensing” was not strong enough that I started to question this practice of mine seriously, since it seemed to be firmly rooted in Matthew 18:15-17.

Three months ago I was in such a situation again [and] according to my hitherto practice, I first approached the leading elder of the church where the sermon had been held and expressed my astonishment that the preacher had not been corrected.... There were [many] additional telephone calls and emails [but, finally] I had to recognize that I had been taking a false approach all the time when dealing with such situations.

Since the body of Christ as a whole is “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15), corrections of false, misleading and enticing teachings are to be uttered publicly, not (never) in private with the rest of the body of Christ not involved.

Your correction of the prevalent wrong interpretation of Matthew 18:15-17 made this very clear!

To stand up publicly in the midst (or at least at the end) of a sermon in a service requires real boldness, truthfulness, true love of the Word of God...and really being led by the Holy Spirit! AS (Austria)

#### Dear Mr. McMahon,

Thank you for writing your informative article in *TBC*’s July 2012 issue, entitled “Roman Catholics: The Neighborhood Mission Field.” For years, I’ve been puzzled as to why some of my relatives are so deeply committed to their Catholic churches, and now I see why, thanks to your frank and well-defined account of your own upbringing and family’s influence on your indoctrination into Catholicism. I was particularly interested in the list of sacraments and what they meant to Catholics, and how it’s considered a grave sin to know for certain that you’re going to Heaven when you die. This explains the hostility I’ve experienced from Catholics, when I even suggest such a truth.

In closing, I’d like to acknowledge your dedication to TBC, and your persistent use of the many talents God blessed you with, in order to make clear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and, to expose and firmly abnegate false doctrines of all kinds. I’m greatly looking forward to reading the article on John Calvin and his ties to Catholicism. I’ve thought that there was a similarity, for years, but never had anyone else confirm it with me. Much appreciated, these interesting articles in *TBC* newsletter! NB (email)

#### Brothers in Christ,

I praise God for men like you. I am referring to *The Seduction of Christianity* [now out of print]. I know it is some 27 years since publication...but I have not read anything like it! My former wife (who passed in 2008) collected many Christian authors over the years, and I have finally been reading some selections in her library (a lousy attempt to explain the 27 years)... After reading some worthy books on end-time prophecy, I came across your book.

God has used all of you to open and identify most of the confusing attacks on the church that is destroying the very roots of our wonderful path of salvation. I must tell you that *Seduction of Christianity* was the frosting on the cake. It brought together all the fragmented pieces of Satan’s sneak attacks. A wonderful and incredible research effort, and I commend you both....

The effect your book has had is inexplicable. I am refocused, and all that I have learned in my “born again” 63 years, and the sorrow in my heart for the way the church is being “seduced” has influenced an even greater desire to propagate more information about what the *Bible* says....I pray the protection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be upon you, your families, and all to whom you minister. JS (TX)

#### TBC,

While we may question TBC’s Arminian leanings in terms of Predestination and how the will of man intertwines, the latest issue of the Berean Call [August 2012—“Are We Too Negative?”] is so on target as to point out probably the most significant departure of the evangelical church in America. What is the most grieving is the response/criticism of those who claim to follow the authority of God’s Word while, at the same time, ignore the many warnings, exhortations, rebukes and exposures of serious and willful neglect of these same “negative” contents of Scripture for the reproof and correction of the believer. This is one of the most needed issues ever printed, and so needed in the 21st century churches in America. DK (email)

## TBC Notes

### Save the Date!

Our family has received a number of cards in the mail this summer with bold headlines exhorting us to “Save the Date.” If you are not familiar with that phrase or how it is used in context, the cards we received announced upcoming weddings and alerted us to mark the dates on our calendar. These serve as notifications that precede the official wedding invitation in order to make sure friends and family members don’t make plans that might interfere with a very special event. It’s more than a great idea for me on two accounts: 1) One came recently from my youngest daughter and her husband-to-be (so I couldn’t be more thrilled), and 2) we are using the concept to alert one-and-all to next year’s TBC Conference (with a slight difference).

We don’t have a date yet—but we do have a month. We’re hoping for mid-August 2013. We don’t have our speakers yet, but we do have an emphasis and a theme: Alerting and Equipping the Upcoming Generation. In keeping with our newsletter article series (A Generation Adrift) we want everyone over the age of 30 to bring someone under the age of 30. We offer a special discount to everyone...it’s FREE. We don’t charge for our conferences!

So, save the *month*...until we have a date. When we lock one down, we’ll get the word out through emails and our newsletter.

T. A. McMAHON  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# WE'RE NOT LISTENING—AND YOU CAN'T MAKE US!

ANSWERING THE OBJECTIONS OF MODERN APOSTLES, PROPHETS, AND THEIR DEFENDERS —by Keith Gibson

IN DEALING with the new “apostles” and “prophets” as well as with their followers, one quickly encounters a problem. They do not wish to listen. In fact, the “prophetic movement” has developed an entire series of pat answers and knee-jerk reactions to those raising concerns about their teachings that makes any substantive dialogue on the actual issues themselves virtually impossible. Not only have modern prophets filled the church with extra-biblical and unbiblical revelations and doctrines, leading many away from the pure faith, but they have also insulated themselves from any correction by the larger body of Christ. These straw-men arguments and red herrings...must be refuted before any significant progress can be made on the larger issues.

## The Martyrdom Complex

Martyrdom is a powerful symbol in religion. The person claiming martyr status becomes untouchable, unquestionable. Further, it immediately positions the one doing the challenging as evil, a Nazi, or worse.... I have noticed a similar trend among many within the prophetic movement....To confront them, is to persecute them.

Prophetess Victoria Boyson does this repeatedly. In two different prophetic messages (“The Religious Spirit that Seeks to Convince Us It Is God” and “Warriors of Truth”) she claims that those who “speak against” other Christians release demonic activity against their lives.

Or consider the words of Rick Joyner:

Two ministries go on continually before God's throne: One is the ministry of *intercession*, the other is *accusation*.... Satan...is called “the accuser of the brethren,” and we are told that his ministry goes on “day and night” before the throne of God (Rv. 12:10). How can Satan continue to accuse the saints before God if he has been thrown out of heaven and no longer has access to the throne? The answer: Satan uses the saints, who do have access to the throne, to do this diabolical work for him. (*A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999, pp.38-39)

Moving past Joyner's interesting speculation that it is actually through the words of Christians that Satan accuses the brethren before the throne, the central point is obvious: *any form of criticism is the devil's work*.... Joyner deflects any and all criticism by attributing it to satanically inspired persecution. In his [“visionary”] book *The Final Quest*, upon seeing a vast army of Christians under the control of the devil, Joyner hears the voice of the Lord state, “This is Satan's ultimate deception. His ultimate power of destruction is released when he uses Christians to attack one another.” [The result of all this] is that no meaningful dialogue can take place when one of the parties is playing the victim. Even in the culture at large, victims get a pass.

The New Testament, however, does not support this assumption that disagreeing with a teacher's doctrine is tantamount to persecuting them. There are numerous examples of the apostles warning against false teachers and even at times calling them out by name in order to protect the rest of the body—and this is *never* equated with persecution (2 Tm 1:15, 17-18; 4:9, 14-15; 1 Cor 15; 3 Jn 9, etc.).

## Appeal to Unity

Another common tactic employed by today's prophets and apostles is to accuse those who attempt to correct false doctrine of being divisive, of sowing discord among the brothers. In his book *Overcoming Evil in the Last Days*, Joyner impugns the motives of those who would dare to be concerned about false teaching creeping into the church: “Although this spirit usually comes in the guise of protecting the sheep, the truth, or the Lord's glory, it is an evil, critical spirit that will always end up causing division and destruction.”

Unity within the body is very important. Jesus prayed that we may be one just as He and the Father are one. Paul makes a powerful appeal for unity in Ephesians 4. It is a serious issue. But biblical unity is a unity based on truth, not in opposition to it. The Bible does not advocate peace at any price....

## “You're a Pharisee!”

Joyner devotes an entire third of *Overcoming Evil* to the subject of the “religious spirit”:

The Lord had little trouble with demons while He walked on earth. They quickly recognized His authority and begged for mercy. It was the conservative, zealous, religious community that immediately became His greatest enemy. Those who were the most zealous for the Word of God crucified the Word Himself when He became flesh to walk among them. The same is still true [today]. (Destiny Image Publishers, 2003, pp. 133)

...Because Joyner mentions no names specifically, he can feel that he is staying above the fray and is not guilty of the very thing that he is condemning. In Joyner's system, to stand squarely on the truth of God's Word is to be a Pharisee and a potential enemy of God, even worse trouble than a demon....

The charge of being a Pharisee is extremely emotionally powerful—for the Pharisees stand among the worst of the bad guys in the NT. This is doubly true when it is combined with the rhetoric that it was the Pharisees who killed Christ. Mike Bickle demonstrates this attack well when he states, “It was the ones pressing into biblical orthodoxy that murdered Christ.” So, to be passionate about the truth is to be a Pharisee and a Christ-killer....

Were the Pharisees those who were biblically orthodox?...A careful study of Scripture [reveals that] the problem with the Pharisees is not that they held the Scriptures in too high esteem, but rather *they were perfectly willing to cancel them out in favor of their own doctrines*...(Mt 15:1-9, Jn 5:45-47).... The problem was not their adherence to the Bible but rather their adherence to their own doctrines, devised by men.... We see much the same thing happening in the prophetic movement. We see a host of teachers inventing new doctrines that are completely unsubstantiated by Scripture and then presenting them as fact even if they contradict the direct teachings of the Word of God.... It is not those who cling to the revealed truth of God found in the Scripture who are the true spiritual descendants of the Pharisees.

## Selective Listening

Of course, another way to refuse to deal with those who raise concerns about [false] teachings is simply to ignore them. In an



interview with *Charisma* magazine, when asked about those who have concerns about his false prophecies, doctrines, and involvement with the Knights of Malta, Rick Joyner replied, "I'm not going to listen to people I think aren't legitimate leaders in the body of Christ."...Joyner [and countless others] have thus positioned [themselves] above correction.

Other prophets have taught that a prophet can only be corrected by someone who also has [equal] or greater status. Since most of the teachers in the evangelical and protestant world would never claim to be prophets or apostles, this essentially means that modern prophets are completely uncorrectable by the vast majority of the church!

## Demonize the Opposition

Another common strategy employed by the modern prophets to deflect scrutiny away from their unbiblical teaching is to begin to discuss some kind of demonic influence in the person raising the concern.... This usually comes in the form of the "Jezebel spirit," the "religious spirit," and "the accuser of the brethren." All of these entities are defined differently by the various prophets, but it is certain that they are very bad. The religious spirit is generally applied to anyone who attempts to ask questions like, "Why hasn't the church ever believed this before?" or "Where is the doctrinal basis for these new practices?" The person is immediately painted as someone who is stuck in the "old wineskins" and is not responding to the new things that God is doing.

A religious spirit will usually give a counterfeit gift of discernment of spirits. This counterfeit gift thrives on seeing what is wrong with others rather than seeing what God is doing so that we can help them along.... Though the truth may be accurate, it is ministered in a spirit that kills. (*Overcoming the Religious Spirit*, MorningStar Publications, 1996, Fourth Printing 2002, pp. 21-22)

...But far and away, the most common demon that one can anticipate being accused of [operating under] is the Jezebel spirit. The Jezebel spirit is generally...applied to those who will not respond to the authority of these new apostles and prophets. As one prophetic disciple expressed to me, Jezebel sought to control the king, and she attacked the prophets of God. Joyner states:

Basically, the spirit of the Jezebel is a combination of the religious spirit and the spirit of witchcraft that is the spirit of manipulation and control.... This spirit attacks the prophetic ministry because that has always been the primary way in which the Lord gives timely, strategic direction to His people. (*A Prophetic Vision for the 21st Century*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999, p. 148)

...The effect of this argument is generally exactly what the prophet desired [to instill]: a fear among God's people to examine the "revelations" of the prophet [as] the light of God's revealed Word, and silence when the new teachings fail to pass the test.

## "Don't Put God in a Box!"

So you think that manifestations like spiritual drunkenness, jerking, roaring, barking, and crawling around like an animal don't seem consistent with God's revelation of Himself and His instructions to the church given in Scripture? You are concerned that Ekstasis worship seems more like the trance states induced in pagan worship practices? Well, this is the answer for you: You're trying to put God in a box. You are trying to dictate and limit what God can and can't do.

The power of this argument stems from the fact that the Scriptures portray God as an awesome Being who does amazing and unexpected things, who is not formulaic in His ways. The net result of the argument, though, is an "anything goes" approach to divine activity. As long as the worshipper himself/herself feels good about what is happening, the source is assumed to be God—and no one can state differently.

But the question is not one of trying to box God in but rather one of *taking God at His word*. If God has said that He is not the author of confusion in the worship service but of peace (1 Cor 14) can we believe that or not? If it is true, then doesn't that give us guidelines for determining that some manifestations are contrary to God's nature as He has revealed it Himself? Are the Scriptures truly sufficient as they claim? If this is so, then won't they give us the parameters for the activities of the Holy Spirit? Shouldn't we apply these parameters in evaluating the modern manifestations? Taking God at His word is the essence of faith. It [doesn't mean we are] limiting God [if we] seek to live and worship according to the boundaries He has established. God has given these boundaries and warnings for the protection of His people...so that we can determine what is and what is not from Him.

## "God Offends the Mind to Reveal the Heart"

[These leaders] imply that if you are not willing to shelve your brain and follow along, you have a heart problem. But the Bible...does not treat the intellect as a problem. The heart and mind are frequently used interchangeably in Scripture. [The statement "God offends the mind to reveal the heart"] is a doctrine written by modern apostles and repeated so frequently that it has gained acceptance among the biblically illiterate....In reality, this is just the modern apostle/prophet's way of saying, "You think too much. Just go with the flow and see where it leads." Once again, the underlying message is crystal clear. Don't think. Don't question. This approach to Christianity is both unbiblical and unwise.

## "God's Gonna Judge You!"

If the attempt at silencing their critics through guilt doesn't work, the modern prophets will move to intimidation: "God will judge you!" Look at the words of apostolic pastor Dutch Sheets in a prophecy about the "Shift in 2006":

Those who refuse to move in current truth will begin to openly criticize leaders in the Body of Christ that are moving in the flow of the apostolic and the prophetic....When they do, God is going to begin to judge them.

This warning by Dutch Sheets would actually make sense if these modern apostles and prophets were truly in the mold of the Old Testament prophets or New Testament apostles. These men spoke with God's authority. To reject their word was to reject the Word of God. But since today's apostles and prophets are frequently wrong and will not subject themselves to the biblical tests, they are engaged in something far different.

By attacking anyone who expresses concern based on doctrinal issues, the modern prophets have created an environment of passive acceptance. They place themselves above rebuke and correction, even from the Word of God. [Tragically], this may truly lead to a case of the blind leading the blind.

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*EXCERPTED FROM* Wandering Stars: Contending for the Faith with the New Apostles and Prophets *by Keith Gibson. See resource pages to order. To read the entire chapter (excerpted above) for free, go to [www.TheBereanCall.org/](http://www.TheBereanCall.org/)*

# "THE HANDWRITING IS ON THE WALL, AMERICA!"

EXCERPTED FROM "CHRISTIAN ACTIVISM:  
IS IT BIBLICAL? —by Dave Hunt

**I**ncreasing numbers of Christians are engaging in social and political activism for the astonishing purpose of attempting to coerce an ungodly society into adopting Christian standards of conduct.... There are numerous cases of civil disobedience in Scripture, but it was never engaged in for the purpose of forcing an ungodly society to obey biblical principles. The Hebrew midwives, for example, disobeyed Pharaoh's edict and spared the lives of the male babies, even lying to cover up their "rescue operation" (Ex 1:15-22). This was, however, a matter of individual conscience before God, not an organized attempt to pressure the pagan Egyptians by mass demonstrations into adopting Israel's God-given morals.

The same is true of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's refusal to obey the king's command to bow to an idol, and of Daniel's defiance of the royal decree against prayer. Though boldly witnessing for God even to kings, Daniel never used his high government position to attempt to pressure a pagan society to abandon its evil practices to begin a godly way of life. Nor did Joseph or Esther pressure the pagan societies in which they held high positions to adopt biblical morals. So it was with Ezra and Nehemiah. They used their influence with kings to obtain permission to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple but made no attempt to change the practices of those societies, though they practiced abortion, homosexuality, and other evils.

There are no biblical examples to support "Christian activism." Christ "suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." He sternly and repeatedly rebuked Israel's false *religious* leaders, yet He never spoke out—not even once—against the injustices of Roman civil authority! Nor did He advocate, organize, or engage in any public protests to pressure Rome into changing its corrupt system or the society of His day its evil ways. He submitted to unjust authorities, as Romans 13 tells us we should do today: "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pt 2:21-25).

Yes, Paul told the centurion who was about to have him unlawfully scourged that he was a Roman citizen; and he told the local officials at Philippi to come and apologize for beating him and Silas without trial. That was not, however, political/social activism. He was not attempting thereby to change society. He was simply *standing up for his personal rights under the law* (as we also should do), and that includes voting. Paul was determined to obey God rather than men and never held back from preaching the gospel, though it meant his life....

Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, offers neither example nor doctrinal teaching to support the idea that Christians ought to engage in political/social activism, lobbying, the takeover methods of [various evangelical organizations and "spiritual warfare" rallies]—or that Christians in public office could or should influence society to adopt biblical standards of conduct. Don't forget, any change would have to be effected through a corrupt political system involving an ungodly majority above and below. Romans 13 tells us to obey rulers, and 1 Timothy 2 to pray for them—not to attempt to change them by coercion. It is not only foolish but counterproductive to attempt to persuade the unsaved to live like Christians. They can't do it—and if they could it would only blind them the more to their sin and need of a Savior.

Acts 19:23-41 tells how a large group of citizens in Ephesus staged a huge "demonstration" against Paul and the gospel he preached. A crowd of probably several thousand persons tore their clothes, threw dust in the air and for two hours vociferously chanted their praise to the locally manufactured god that was their chief source of income. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" they cried. Should Paul have gathered a

larger crowd of Christians to cry out yet more loudly and longer and thereby impose their will upon the local authorities? Of course not! Such un-Christian conduct is demeaning of our Lord and His gospel and would have been unthinkable for the early church. Yet that is basically what Christian activism involves today—the well-meaning but foolish attempt to force "Christian principles" upon a godless society through more effective lobbying, larger demonstrations, and greater social upheaval than the homosexuals, abortionists, or pornographers can produce.

Rather than pressure the ungodly to live like saints, we must win them to Christ that they might live wholly by God. Our personal lives must be lived in obedience to God's laws even if that brings us into conflict with civil laws. In addition to avoiding idolatry and immorality, Christians must preach the gospel to everyone everywhere, regardless of government edicts to the contrary. In so doing, the apostles made that historic declaration: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29)!

Though forbidden by the authorities, the apostles persisted in preaching the gospel. Like their Lord, however, they made no attempt to lobby in Rome for an end to prostitution and abortions; nor did they stage public demonstrations for a change in unjust laws. There is a danger of being so caught up in the social aspect of good causes that one forgets and neglects the chief Christian calling. *The Great Commission does not involve exerting a Christian influence upon society.* We are not to "change society" but to "convert individuals." There is much talk today about "changing the world for Christ." In fact there is no biblical teaching or example to support that popular slogan. Rather than persuading sinners to live like saints, we must call them to heavenly citizenship through "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

We must not only rescue the unborn but the children in public schools, who are being perverted through the teaching of immorality, witchcraft, and occultism. We must identify psychology as the major vehicle of so much of this evil and root it out of our churches, seminaries and universities.

We must denounce sin, call for national repentance, and preach the gospel in convicting power. Christians must call for *repentance* not only for homosexuality, child abuse, pornography, and abortion but for more subtle forms of rebellion against God and rejection of Christ. *The church* must be indicted both for its lack of social concern and for its heresies and failure to preach the truth. We must denounce the destructive false teachings that abound. It is hypocritical for the church to protest the world's sins while tolerating and even honoring within its ranks those who preach a false gospel and are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

Instead of protesters, we need prophets to call the world to repentance: Enochs who walk with God and warn of judgment (Heb 11:55; Jude 14-15); Noahs, preachers of righteousness (2 Pt 2:5), who warn of judgment to come and invite sinners into an ark of safety. What if, instead of building the ark, Noah had tried to reform society! We need Daniels: "*Mene, mene, tekel upharsin*"—the handwriting is on the wall, America! You've been weighed in the balance and found wanting! Murdered babies, the abomination of homosexuality, and society's flippant, deliberate rebellion against God have aroused His anger beyond any possibility of reprieve! We need Isaiahs and Jeremiahs!

[But] "Christian activism" is not Christian. It represents a detour from the straight path the church is to walk before the world. It can confuse the real issues, lead to compromise and unholy alliances, and divert time and effort that would better be used in proclaiming the gospel. Weigh the demands upon your time and set priorities. Be fully engaged in rescuing souls for eternity.

(TBC, November 1989)



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